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Ensuring Decent Work and Reducing Vulnerabilities for Women and Children in the Context of Labour Migration in Southeast Asia/ Protection of the Rights of Women and Children in Labour Migration (PROTECT)

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List of Acronyms and abbreviations

ADW	Association of Domestic Workers
APINDO	Asosiasi Pengusaha Indonesia (Indonesian Employers' Association)
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
EIEUNR	Electronics Industry Employees' Union Northern Region
EU	European Union
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FLEP	Foundation for Labor and Employment Promotion
IDWF	International Domestic Workers' Federation
ILO	International Labour Organisation
JBM	Jaringan Buruh Migran (Migrant workers' association)
LSCW	Legal Support for Children and Women
LSNF	Legal Status Network Foundation
MOHR	Ministry of Human Resources
MoSVY	Ministry of Social Affairs, Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation
MOWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
PRODOC	Project Document
PROTECT	Short name of the project "Ensuring Decent Work and Reducing Vulnerabilities for Women and Children in the Context of Labour Migration in Southeast Asia"
PSC	Project Steering Committee
PUNO	Participating United Nations Organisations
RPAC	Regional Project Advisory Committee
ROAP	Regional Office Asia Pacific
SERC	State's Enterprises Workers Relations Confederation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Executive Summary

Background of the project and its objectives

World Bank statistics indicate that, by 2022, 8% of the world's migrants originate from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, and ASEAN hosts 4% of the world's migrants.¹ Migration can have significant benefits for the economic development of host and origin countries, and for migrants themselves.

However, migration can create significant risks for those involved, particularly for more vulnerable migrants (e.g. women and children) and those involved in irregular migration flows (e.g. through smuggling). Women migrants face particular risks during their migration process, including harassment and violence against women, and trafficking, which are exacerbated by intersecting factors related to education, poverty, immigration status, etc.² The main reasons for children's migration include paying off household debts, paying for siblings' school fees, covering medical expenses, and generally contributing to the family household.³

The project “*Ensuring Decent Work and Reducing Vulnerabilities for Women and Children in the Context of Labour Migration in Southeast Asia*” (known as “PROTECT”) was designed by the ILO, UN WOMEN, UNICEF and UNODC and launched in 2024. The project has a combined focus on the promotion of decent work and safe and orderly migration, and the reduction of vulnerabilities of women, children, and other at-risk groups. Overall, the project aims to **protect the rights of women migrant workers and migrant children in Southeast Asia**. The priority countries covered by the project are Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand; some activities also take place at the regional (ASEAN) level.

The project uses three pathways (“specific objectives”) to enhance the protection of migrants' rights, namely by **1)** ensuring that national legislation and policy frameworks are in line with international standards for the protection of women and children migrants; **2)** by improving institutional capacity and protection mechanisms to reduce rights violations; and **3)** by increasing access of the target groups to information, social and legal services, counselling and to relevant associations.

Purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation

This mid-term review systematically assesses the performance of the project against a set of key criteria and derived questions and makes recommendations for improved results or the development of future interventions. Emerging good practices and lessons learnt are highlighted. Its objectives include:

- Provide an **independent assessment of progress** towards the stated objectives of the PROTECT results frameworks, assessing performance as per the established indicators vis-à-vis interventions and implementation modalities chosen and management arrangements;
- Assess the continued relevance of the project in the current and emerging external environment in which PROTECT operates; **provide strategic recommendations** to inform the development of strategies, interventions and implementation of the project
- Serve as a **basis for reflection and dialogue** amongst the project, the European Commission and key stakeholders, to ensure continued support and innovation for

¹ ASEAN Migration Outlook, 2022. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/ASEAN-Migration-Outlook-Final.pdf>

² PROTECT project document.

³ Vigil, S., Steiner, C., Kim, D., Flores, D., and Davis, M. (2024): Climate change, vulnerability and migration: Impacts on children and youth in Southeast Asia. World Vision International and Stockholm Environment Institute, Bangkok.

ensuring decent work and reducing vulnerabilities for women and children in the context of labour migration in this region.

The mid-term review covers all four project countries (and the ASEAN region), activities and PUNOs involved in the PROTECT project, from 1 January 2024 until 31 March 2025.

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

The following questions (as proposed in the ToR) are answered through the mid-term review. The full matrix is provided in Annex 2.

Relevance and strategic fit

1. To what extent are the objectives of PROTECT remain consistent with beneficiary requirements, country needs, global priorities, international normative frameworks, and partners' and donor policies, especially with regards to migrant workers' rights, gender equality, child protection?
2. To what extent does PROTECT respond and adapt appropriately and according to the priorities and needs of stakeholders within the shifting and dynamic context at regional and country levels?

Coherence

3. To what extent is the project complementing/creating synergies between the PUNOs (ILO, UN Women, UNICEF and UNODC) and other development partners with respect to project objectives?
4. To what extent are the expected "interlinkages" of the outcomes (specific objectives) sufficiently defined and implemented coherently?
5. To what extent is the project approach strategic and making use of the ILO, UN Women, UNICEF and UNODC's comparative advantages?

Efficiency

6. To what extent is PROTECT progressing with the planned work, and to what extent have the PUNOs used their human and financial resources efficiently?
7. How effectively does the project management team employ results-based monitoring approach?
8. Have the PUNOs' organizational structures, managerial support and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the coherent delivery of the project? This should include the structures at the regional and national levels.

Sustainability

9. Taking into account current programming and results, what is the likelihood that the results of PROTECT are durable and sustainable?

Cross-cutting issues (incorporated under the relevance criterion)

10. To what extent is the project responding to cross-cutting priorities of non-discrimination, gender equality, disability inclusion, human rights, international labour standards, tripartism and social dialogue? To what extent is the project applying a rights-based approach in its implementation?
11. To what extent are environmental safeguards integrated in the project approach?

Evaluation methodology

The review relied on a mixed-methods approach, attempting as much as possible to include diverse stakeholders for the purpose of the independence of the review, while recognising the limitations listed below.

The first step of data collection was desk research, which includes a review of all available project documentation so far. The desk research was carried out in two broad stages:

- **Initial desk research:** during the inception stage and before the start of the interviews. This will help to tailor the interview questionnaires, to maximise the relevance of the questions and collect only that data which cannot be found through desk research (i.e. minimising stakeholder fatigue).
- **Additional desk research:** during the data collection stage, additional desk research was conducted based on the information gathered. This provided an opportunity to contextualise the data collected through interviews, as well as triangulate the data found.

To complement desk research, online interviews with PUNO staff and stakeholders were conducted at country and regional level. The interview programme was implemented in two stages:

- **Inception meetings** were conducted online during the Inception Stage to better understand the specific context for the review and the project's expectations regarding the review. These included two ILO staff members.
- **In-depth interviews** for data collection were conducted during the data collection stage and will focus on specific evaluation questions.

Stakeholder interviews reached a total of 23 organisations, of which: Three regional organisations; seven organisations in Cambodia; four organisations in Indonesia; one organisation in Malaysia, and eight organisations in Thailand. Several interviews were supported by interpreters.

Additionally, one **Focus Group Discussion** was carried out with each of the UN Agencies (four in total).

After completion of the report, a workshop with PUNO staff and the donor was held to discuss the findings and the way forward.

Qualitative data was collected from desk research, and interviews. Interviews were summarised in writing and anonymised. Quantitative information was collected through desk research (programme statistical data). All data collected was triangulated.

The mid-term review provided a lighter touch evaluation compared to the traditional mid-term evaluation. This is visible through the following **limitations**:

- Firstly, only the most involved stakeholders so far were contacted, to mitigate stakeholder fatigue during the final evaluation. This means that each country had a light touch (max. 5 interviews), and no in-depth review of the changes is provided.
- Secondly, delays faced by the project, as well as the six-month Inception Phase resulted in the fact that many activities were only recently implemented or are still being implemented. No assessment of effectiveness can take place at this stage.

This evaluation was guided by the main international ethical considerations applicable to evaluations (e.g., the evaluation will comply with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) [Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#), UNEG [Guidelines for Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations](#), [UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system](#)

UNEG [Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation](#)). These considerations will be integrated into the design, data collection, and reporting

Key findings

Relevance

Some regional trends affected the situation and needs of migrant workers more broadly, but no significant changes in the specific needs of women and children during the implementation period were reported. The PROTECT project maintained its relevance considering existing and ongoing needs of beneficiaries, particularly due to its flexibility to include other at-risk groups.

Stakeholders were overwhelmingly positive about the alignment of PROTECT with their organizational and country-level priorities. The project also managed to start addressing some emerging trends during the implementation period.

The PROTECT project largely aligned with, and integrated, cross-cutting concerns in its design and execution. Gender equality and non-discrimination principles are particularly visible in the project, with a more general touch upon social dialogue and international labour standards. Environmental sustainability was not integrated in the project design.

Coherence

The ToC remains valid, as proven by initial signs of results. The implementation of activities in silos may hinder the achievement of more holistic outcomes. The review has found both strengths and weaknesses of the multi-agency approach and its ability to create synergies so far. While agencies have provided technical input to each other's activities and strengthened coordination, the actual value of the multi-agency approach for this project was not extensively elaborated in the design, and the design therefore did not account sufficiently for the differences in agency structures and approaches.

No examples of overlaps or unnecessary duplications were found. PROTECT efforts were well-coordinated with other UN agencies, mostly IOM.

Progress overview

The annual report for 2024 showed visible progress of the project. Namely, the vast majority of targets for 2024 were either achieved or exceeded. The vast majority of stakeholders similarly commented that they already achieved initial results under their allocated activities and were largely grateful for the support from the PUNOs to create and support these results. Particularly, several organisations noted that the PROTECT project strengthened their role in policy discussions as priorly they were not taken seriously by their governments. Although the project did not include extensive engagement with beneficiaries yet, some progress and foundations for results were found among associations of migrant (domestic) workers.

The majority of stakeholders replied that they do not have critical feedback for the PUNOs yet since their work is progressing well so far, or because not enough work had been conducted to really experience challenges. A few challenges were noted by some of the stakeholders.

Some stakeholders noted that the project implementation (and their own work) is affected by the priorities and behaviour of the government. PROTECT activities could be affected by the political tension between Cambodia and Thailand. Stakeholders noted that it is too early to assess the impact of the tension on the project.

Efficiency

So far, the project is mostly on track with spending and has not experienced significant changes in expected costs. However, the time gap between the submission of the request for the next tranche payment and the release of funds are creating activity delays and challenges for the PUNOs.

Overall, both PUNOs and stakeholders are satisfied with the project management and with the frequency of communication. Some stakeholders would like more regular communication. Stakeholders lack a broader understanding of the project beyond their activities and responsible PUNO.

The M&E system is well-designed and implemented so far. However, it causes a large workload for the PUNOs and does not always reflect the real progress.

Sustainability

The PROTECT project created various results that are likely to be sustainable, but the vast needs of migrants in the region require continued support by the PUNOs. The main foundation for sustainability is the support of PROTECT to the development of legal and policy instruments. Although more support may be needed for their implementation, they serve as a solid foundation for the governments to design further policies on, and for stakeholders to use to hold governments accountable.

ASEAN-level activities were considered highly relevant for sustainability and impact, considering that regional-level action plans and discussions can have regional-level impact (beyond the PROTECT countries) and facilitate peer learning.

Interviewed stakeholders largely expressed the need for continued funding and support after the completion of the PROTECT project. A key reason links to the short timeline of the PROTECT project itself, which is perceived to be too short to address all needs and challenges of the region.

Conclusions

The findings of the mid-term review demonstrate that the project is progressing well, and stakeholders are largely satisfied with the project in terms of its design, implementation, and management.

The project has been responsive to emerging trends, while navigating continued and new challenges in the region, thereby remaining consistent with the needs of beneficiaries and relevant to the priorities of the partner countries, ASEAN, and international frameworks. The project is particularly complementary to other initiatives in the region, as various examples of collaboration with IOM are found, and no examples of duplications.

Both the logframe for 2024 and the stakeholder interviews demonstrated that the project is on track with its activities and expected results by the time of the mid-term review. Particularly, several organisations noted that the PROTECT project strengthened their role in policy discussions as priorly they were not taken seriously by their governments. Furthermore, stakeholders generally praised the responsiveness of PUNOs, and the general management of the project.

The main challenge experienced by the project is the siloed implementation of activities by the PUNOs. While PUNOs have regular meetings to develop workplans together, examples of joint activities are scarce. Stakeholders were generally not aware of the PROTECT project's objectives beyond their own activities and objectives. The siloed approach to activities also hinders national-level stakeholders from collaborating to jointly achieve the specific objectives.

The potential for the added value of a multi-PUNO project is clearly articulated by PUNOs but not yet realized in practice. The design of the project also does not outline how the multi-PUNO composition creates added value, which hinders PUNOs from relying on the ProDoc for inspiration.

The project has a clear focus on sustainability through its activities linked to creating suitable policy environments and institutional capacity. ASEAN-level activities were considered highly relevant for sustainability and impact. However, the vast number of vulnerable migrants in the region requires continuous investment in support mechanisms on the ground, and the capacity of social workers and CSOs to assist them.

Recommendations

- *Recommendation 1:* Enhance the added value of the multi-PUNO approach through joint activities, and stimulation of coordination between different partners at country-level.
- *Recommendation 2:* Develop a more realistic set of indicators at the start of future projects.
- *Recommendation 3:* Support ASEAN-level interventions and their implementation at national level.
- *Recommendation 4:* Increase follow-up conversations and efforts after provision of capacity-building activities.
- *Recommendation 5:* Strengthen the capacity of CSOs and service providers to negotiate with government agencies and provide direct support.

1. Description of the Project

1.1. Project context

World Bank statistics indicate that, by 2022, 8% of the world's migrants originate from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, and ASEAN hosts 4% of the world's migrants.⁴ Migration can have significant benefits for the economic development of host and origin countries, and for migrants themselves. For example, the ILO estimated in 2019 that migrant workers represent 4.9% of the global labour force, which reduced to 4.3% in 2022 (likely related to COVID-19).⁵ Although numbers decreased globally, emigration out of 13 main Asian countries of origin was 34% higher in 2023 compared to 2019, demonstrating an increase in migration compared to before the pandemic.⁶

However, migration can create significant risks for those involved, particularly for more vulnerable migrants (e.g. women and children) and those involved in irregular migration flows (e.g. through smuggling). 2020 data show that, overall in Asia-Pacific, 33.4 million migrants were male and 33.2 million were female.⁷ Women migrants face particular risks during their migration process, including harassment and violence against women, and trafficking, which are exacerbated by intersecting factors related to education, poverty, immigration status, etc.⁸

Moreover, the majority of migrant workers in ASEAN are less-educated individuals who work in lower-skilled occupations and are more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.⁹ In fact, the number of victims of forced labour has grown globally by 2.7 million persons between 2016 and 2022. Asia and the Pacific hosts more than half of the global victims (15.1 million), and ILO/IOM research demonstrates that migrants are particularly vulnerable. Forced labour also affects men more than women.¹⁰ UNODC noted furthermore that displaced populations, who often lack legal protection and economic opportunities, are among those most vulnerable to trafficking networks.¹¹

Lastly, figures for 2020 estimate that there are approximately 1.27 million children migrants in the Southeast Asian region, of which many have irregular migration statuses. The main reasons for children's migration include paying off household debts, paying for siblings' school fees, covering medical expenses, and generally contributing to the family household.¹²

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated many of these risks through the general economic collapse, lack of social protection and benefits for migrant workers, lack of paid salaries, and through inability to stay in the host country or return to the country of origin. Irregular migrants were unable to access even the most basic social services.¹³ For these reasons, ILO's and other UN agencies' focus areas in Asia for 2024-2025 included among others the protection

⁴ ASEAN Migration Outlook, 2022. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/ASEAN-Migration-Outlook-Final.pdf>

⁵ ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers, 2022. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/MIGRANT%20E2%80%9320ILO%20Global%20Estimates%20Exec%20Summary_Embargo.pdf

⁶ ILO Brief: Labour Migration in Asia and the Pacific. <https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-04/2%202025%20Labour%20Migration%20Brief%202025%20-27022025-2.pdf>

⁷ Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) (2024) "Asia-Pacific Migration Report 2024: Assessing Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration." <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/ap-c1369-escap-2024-rp-apmr-2024-s.pdf>

⁸ PROTECT project document.

⁹ ASEAN Migration Outlook, 2022. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/ASEAN-Migration-Outlook-Final.pdf>

¹⁰ ILO, IOM and Walk Free (2022) Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_norm/%40ipec/documents/publication/wcms_854733.pdf

¹¹ UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, 2024. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2024/GLOTIP2024_BOOK.pdf

¹² Vigil, S., Steiner, C., Kim, D., Flores, D., and Davis, M. (2024): Climate change, vulnerability and migration: Impacts on children and youth in Southeast Asia. World Vision International and Stockholm Environment Institute, Bangkok.

¹³ ASEAN Migration Outlook, 2022. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/ASEAN-Migration-Outlook-Final.pdf>

of children, and women migrant workers, as well as other at-risk groups and the support to regional cooperation on labour migration.

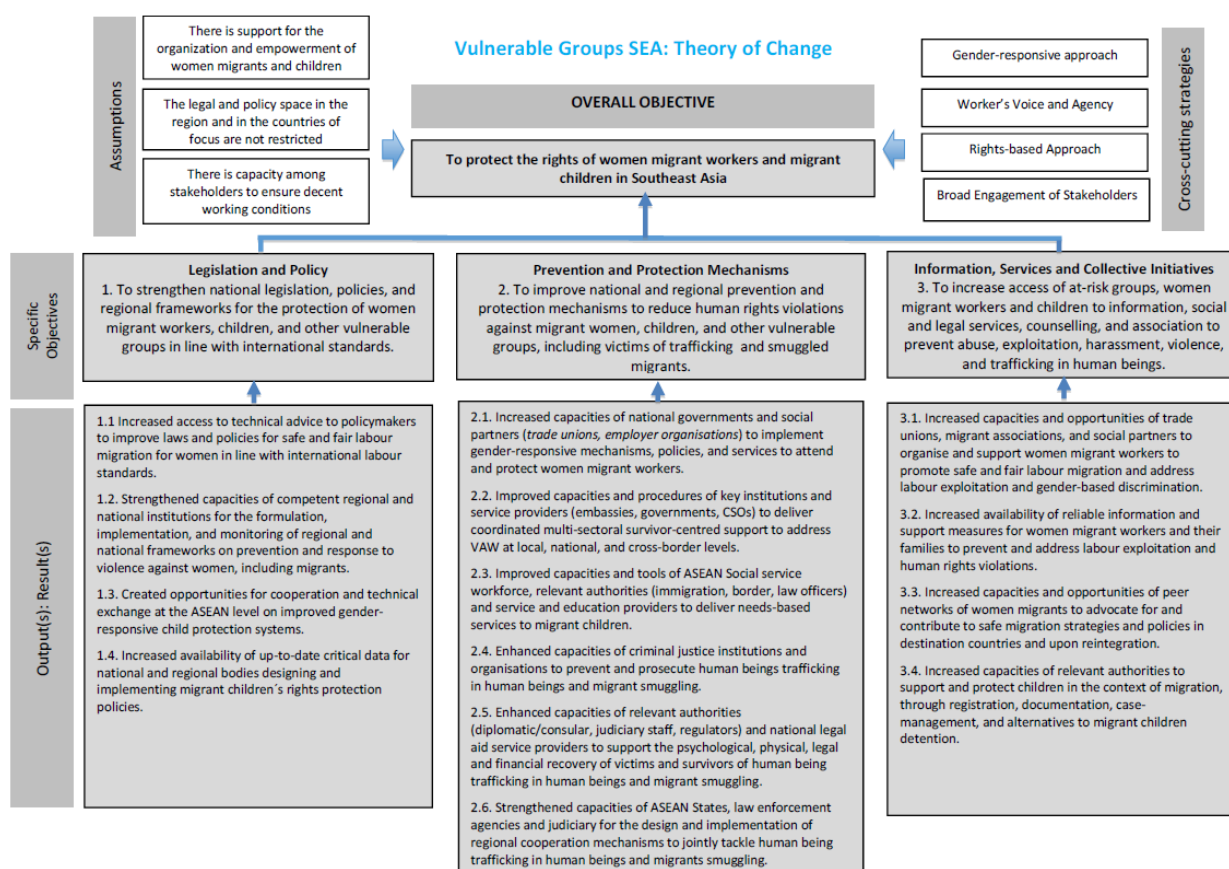
1.2. Project design

The project “*Ensuring Decent Work and Reducing Vulnerabilities for Women and Children in the Context of Labour Migration in Southeast Asia*” (known as “PROTECT”) was designed by the ILO, UN WOMEN, UNICEF and UNODC and launched in 2024. The project has a combined focus on the promotion of decent work and safe and orderly migration, and the reduction of vulnerabilities of women, children, and other at-risk groups. Overall, the project aims to **protect the rights of women migrant workers and migrant children in Southeast Asia**. The priority countries covered by the project are Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand; some activities also take place at the regional (ASEAN) level.

The project uses three pathways (“specific objectives”) to enhance the protection of migrants’ rights, namely by **1)** ensuring that national legislation and policy frameworks are in line with international standards for the protection of women and children migrants; **2)** by improving institutional capacity and protection mechanisms to reduce rights violations; and **3)** by increasing access of the target groups to information, social and legal services, counselling and to relevant associations.

In this regard, the project is governed by the following Theory of Change:

Figure 1. Theory of Change of the PROTECT project



Source: Terms of Reference for the Mid-Term Review.

Across the three dimensions, the project applies several **cross-cutting topics**, namely by mainstreaming a gender-responsive approach, worker's voice and agency; rights-based approach; and broad engagement of stakeholders. Additionally, the project focuses on the corridor-based approach, to ensure that interventions benefit migrants across the migration continuum.

The project targets a broad range of stakeholders and beneficiaries. **Key stakeholders** involved in the project include States' government authorities; workers' organizations; employers' organizations and recruitment agencies and their associations; civil society organizations; community-based organizations; families and communities; research institutions and academia, media networks, youth, and the general public. Beneficiaries, namely women, men and children migrants, are also key stakeholders of the project.

The **final beneficiaries** of the project are current, potential and returnee women migrants, children and at-risk groups in the context of labour migration; but also the broader beneficiaries in the context of labour migration including accompanying family members of women migrants; women and girl survivors of violence, their families and communities; vulnerable groups to trafficking such as youth and men (the latter are becoming a prominent target of trafficking for forced labour and exploitation); other groups of children in the context of labour migration, in particular those who are born from migrant workers in countries of destination and risk statelessness.

1.3. Project management

The PROTECT project was designed and is implemented by four Participating United Nations Organisations (PUNOs): The ILO as the lead partner and UN Women, UNICEF and UNODC as the partners for the implementation. PROTECT is financed by the European Union. The partnership between the PUNOs is governed by a Multi-Partner Contribution Agreement and managed through a **Project Steering Committee** (PSC) comprising all four PUNOs and the EU.

In addition to the Project Steering Committee, other stakeholders are involved in project management and strategic decision making at different stages of the project through the **Regional Project Advisory Committee (RPAC)**. Participants include the European Commission as donor and chair, as well as the EU Delegations, and relevant ASEAN bodies, and tripartite partners. The RPAC provides guidance on the implementation of the project and endorses a proposed regional annual work plan.

Each country furthermore has its own **National Project Advisory Committee** comprised of the tripartite partners and the EU Delegation, to provide guidance on the implementation of the project and endorses a proposed annual work plan at national level.

2. Purpose, scope and clients of the mid-term review

2.1. Purpose of the review

Per the Project Document (PRODOC), the ILO's Policy guidelines for results-based evaluation provide the framework for carrying out the project's independent mid-term review. These guidelines adhere to the norms and standards of evaluation adopted by the United Nations Evaluation Group and the OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Standards. Additionally, the review aligns with standards of evaluation described in UN Women's Evaluation Handbook¹⁴; the Evaluation Policy of UNICEF¹⁵; and the evaluation handbook of UNODC.¹⁶

This mid-term review systematically assesses the performance of the project against a set of key criteria and derived questions and makes recommendations for improved results or the development of future interventions. Emerging good practices and lessons learnt are highlighted. Its objectives include:

- Provide an **independent assessment of progress** towards the stated objectives of the PROTECT results frameworks, assessing performance as per the established indicators vis-à-vis interventions and implementation modalities chosen and management arrangements;
- Assess the continued relevance of the project in the current and emerging external environment in which PROTECT operates; **provide strategic recommendations** to inform the development of strategies, interventions and implementation of the project
- Serve as a **basis for reflection and dialogue** amongst the project, the European Commission and key stakeholders, to ensure continued support and innovation for ensuring decent work and reducing vulnerabilities for women and children in the context of labour migration in this region.

2.2. Review scope

The mid-term review covers all four project countries (and the ASEAN region), activities and PUNOs involved in the PROTECT project, from 1 January 2024 until 31 March 2025.

2.3. Clients of the evaluation

The main clients for the mid-term review are:

- Management team of the PROTECT project
- The project donor (European Union)
- Technical and administrative units of ILO, UN Women, UNODC and UNICEF at field office (ROAP)
- ILO, UN Women, UNODC and UNICEF evaluation units at regional offices and headquarters

Secondary parties making use of the results will include tripartite constituents and civil society organizations who have partnered with the project, as well as other agencies working on labour migration, violence against women, children in migration and human trafficking at national and regional levels.

¹⁴ <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/05/un-women-evaluation-handbook-2022>

¹⁵ <https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/revised-evaluation-policy-unicef-srs-2023>

¹⁶ https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/Tools/UNODC_Evaluation_Handbook.pdf

3. Evaluation criteria and questions

The review is theory-based, using the **Theory of Change** (ToC) as foundation to measure progress and assess whether activities so far are indeed creating initial results (or are expected to do so) in accordance with the ToC.

Secondly, the review scope is set by the **evaluation matrix**, comprising the main and sub-questions with their sources and indicators. The review answers these questions through the available project data and literature and through interviews with the PUNOs, donor, and selected stakeholders.

The following questions (as proposed in the ToR) are answered through the mid-term review. The full matrix is provided in Annex 2.

Relevance and strategic fit

1. To what extent are the objectives of PROTECT remain consistent with beneficiary requirements, country needs, global priorities, international normative frameworks, and partners' and donor policies, especially with regards to migrant workers' rights, gender equality, child protection?
2. To what extent does PROTECT respond and adapt appropriately and according to the priorities and needs of stakeholders within the shifting and dynamic context at regional and country levels?

Coherence

3. To what extent is the project complementing/creating synergies between the PUNOs (ILO, UN Women, UNICEF and UNODC) and other development partners with respect to project objectives?
4. To what extent are the expected "interlinkages" of the outcomes (specific objectives) sufficiently defined and implemented coherently?
5. To what extent is the project approach strategic and making use of the ILO, UN Women, UNICEF and UNODC's comparative advantages?

Efficiency

6. To what extent is PROTECT progressing with the planned work, and to what extent have the PUNOs used their human and financial resources efficiently?
7. How effectively does the project management team employ results-based monitoring approach?
8. Have the PUNOS' organizational structures, managerial support and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the coherent delivery of the project? This should include the structures at the regional and national levels.

Sustainability

9. Taking into account current programming and results, what is the likelihood that the results of PROTECT are durable and sustainable?

Cross-cutting issues

10. To what extent is the project responding to cross-cutting priorities of non-discrimination, gender equality, disability inclusion, human rights, international labour standards, tripartism and social dialogue? To what extent is the project applying a rights-based approach in its implementation?
11. To what extent are environmental safeguards integrated in the project approach?

4. Methodology and limitations

The review relied on a mixed-methods approach, attempting as much as possible to include diverse stakeholders for the purpose of the independence of the review, while recognising the limitations listed below.

4.1. Desk Research

The first step of data collection was desk research, which includes a review of all available project documentation so far. The desk research was carried out in two broad stages:

- **Initial desk research:** during the inception stage and before the start of the interviews. This will help to tailor the interview questionnaires, to maximise the relevance of the questions and collect only that data which cannot be found through desk research (i.e. minimising stakeholder fatigue).
- **Additional desk research:** during the data collection stage, additional desk research was conducted based on the information gathered. This provided an opportunity to contextualise the data collected through interviews, as well as triangulate the data found.

The evaluator requested the Client to submit all project data produced so far.

4.2. Interviews

To complement desk research, online interviews with PUNO staff and stakeholders were conducted at country and regional level. The interview programme was implemented in two stages:

- **Inception meetings** were conducted online during the Inception Stage to better understand the specific context for the review and the project's expectations regarding the review. These included two ILO staff members.
- **In-depth interviews** for data collection were conducted during the data collection stage and will focus on specific evaluation questions.

To minimise stakeholder fatigue – but maximising the quality of the review, the interview programme comprised stakeholder respondents which were identified by PUNOs as most involved so far. Criteria for selection included that all four countries were covered and that each country would have a mix of stakeholders with different views and involvement. As only two PUNOs are active in Malaysia and Indonesia, they have a respectively lower number of interview participants.

Regional (3)	Cambodia (7)	Indonesia (4)	Malaysia (2)	Thailand (8)
• ASEAN secretariat: poverty eradication and gender division (1) • ASEAN Commission for Women and Children (1) • International Domestic Workers' Federation (IDWF)	• Ministry of Justice • Legal Support for Children and Women (LSCW) • Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre (CWCC) • Association of Domestic Workers (ADW) • Ministry of Women's	• Deputy Executive President Office • Migrant workers' association (JBM) • APINDO • Ministry of Indonesia Migrant Workers Protection	• PERTIMIG NGO • C4CENTER	• Labor Protection Network • Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, • State's Enterprises Workers Relations Confederation (SERC) • Division of Protection of Informal Workers, Department of Labour Protection and Welfare

	- Affairs (MOWA) - Ministry of Social Affairs, Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation (MoSVY) - National Committee for Counter Human Trafficking			- FLEP, HOMENET - Department of Children and Youth, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security - Legal Status Network Foundation (LSNF) - Shero
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4.3. Focus Group Discussions

Four FGDs were conducted, one per UN agency involved in the project. Each FGD comprised regional and national staff most involved in the project (national officers and regional project managers and specialists). They were conducted online.

4.4. Stakeholder workshop

After submission of the Draft Review, and a first round of feedback by the Evaluation Reference Group, a stakeholder workshop was held online to discuss the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the review. The focus was particularly on identifying together whether any adjustments need to be made for the remaining months of the project, and what a potential follow-up phase should look like, focus on, and/or do differently.

4.5. Analysis and reporting

All data was coded using data collection and coding template in Word. The template was prepared according to the evaluation framework and questions presented in Annex 2. This allows the evaluator to review all data for one question and therefore facilitates analysis and triangulation.

Qualitative data was collected from desk research, and interviews. Interviews were summarised in writing and anonymised. **Quantitative information** was collected through desk research (programme statistical data). **All data collected was triangulated**, meaning that data from different sources were analysed together and used to answer an evaluation question. This enhanced validity and reliability of the findings as the findings from one data source were tested and validated using data from other sources.

In the **Final Review Report**, the evaluator provides an analysis of the (triangulated) findings by evaluation criteria, and subsequently provides conclusions and recommendations more holistically across the project countries and evaluation criteria. Generally, each sub-section of the report's findings section is structured as follows:

- One or two sentences introducing what the evaluation question describes (e.g. defining relevance to the needs of stakeholders).
- One or two sentences providing the main conclusion statement towards the evaluation criteria and questions.
- One paragraph providing evidence (interviews, desk research findings, etc.) that supports the main conclusion
- One paragraph providing nuances, discrepancies, exceptions regarding the main conclusion, if any.

4.6. Limitations

The mid-term review provides a lighter touch evaluation compared to the traditional mid-term evaluation. This is visible through the following limitations:

- Firstly, only the most involved stakeholders so far were contacted, to mitigate stakeholder fatigue during the final evaluation. This means that each country had a light touch (max. 5 interviews), and no in-depth review of the changes is provided. Secondly, delays faced by the project, as well as the six-month Inception Phase resulted in the fact that many activities were only recently implemented or are still being implemented. No assessment of effectiveness can take place at this stage.

4.7. Ethical standards

This evaluation was guided by the main international ethical considerations applicable to evaluations (e.g., the evaluation will comply with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) [Norms and Standards for Evaluation](#), UNEG [Guidelines for Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations](#), [UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system](#) UNEG [Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation](#)). These considerations will be integrated into the design, data collection, and reporting.

The main ethical concerns during data collection included the safe participation of beneficiaries. The decision not to involve final beneficiaries links to their potential fatigue, the time limitations, and the limited activities that have taken place so far. The interview with migrant domestic workers' through PERTIMIG is an exception. However, to respect their views, NGOs representing their needs and interests were interviewed, such as domestic worker foundations (IDWF, PERTIMIG, ADW).

To enhance accessibility to the interviews of stakeholders, interpretation services were arranged for Thai, Khmer and Bahasa Indonesia.

In the process of reporting, the evaluator gave due respect to the needs of beneficiaries. The report also ensured that the voices of female respondents are emphasized and that the perceptions of NGOs representing women and other vulnerable groups are given sufficient weight in the findings and conclusions.

5. Evaluation Findings

5.1 Relevance

According to the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, “relevance” indicates the extent to which an intervention addresses the needs of beneficiaries and stakeholders. The following chapter presents to what extent the project addressed these needs in its design and was flexible to adapt to changing needs and contexts.

5.1.1. To what extent do the objectives of PROTECT remain consistent with beneficiary needs?

The PROTECT project targeted various beneficiaries aligned with the priority areas of the four PUNOs. Women and children migrants are most explicitly mentioned in the project design, but the project was open to explore other vulnerable or at-risk groups as well, for example male migrants in the context of trafficking for forced labour or trafficking in persons for the purpose of organ removal.

Some regional trends affected the situation and needs of migrant workers more broadly, but no significant changes in the specific needs of women and children during the implementation period were reported. The PROTECT project maintained its relevance considering existing and ongoing needs of beneficiaries, particularly due to its flexibility to include other at-risk groups.

Various challenges were mentioned by stakeholders regarding migrants’ challenges overall. Some of the main trends influencing the needs of, and challenges faced by migrants (women, children, other vulnerable groups) over the past year include the ongoing instability in **Myanmar**, resulting in a large influx of migrants and refugees from Myanmar mainly in Thailand. This vastly increased the number of vulnerable migrants in the country.¹⁷

Some Thai stakeholders reported that the public attitude to migrants is becoming more **xenophobic** (potentially due to the increase in migrants mentioned above), resulting in harassment and violation of their rights. In this regard, stakeholders mentioned that migrant workers are hesitant to speak or work with the UN agencies as they are afraid of repercussions for their work. One stakeholder mentioned that the only solution was to bring other migrant workers along during discussions.¹⁸

During the implementation of this mid-term review, **border tensions** between Thailand and Cambodia increased again. While stakeholders did not mention explicit changes in the needs of migrants (yet), this may still occur in the upcoming months.

The PROTECT project document reported that **women migrants** face particular risks during their migration process, including harassment and violence against women, and trafficking, which are exacerbated by intersecting factors related to education, poverty, immigration status, etc. These findings were based on various reports by the PUNOs and other organisations.¹⁹

Interviewed PUNO staff and stakeholders noted that trends regarding violence against women, and their needs for assistance remained unchanged during the period of

¹⁷ Interviews with stakeholders in Thailand.

¹⁸ Interviews with stakeholders in Thailand.

¹⁹ E.g. ILO and UN Women (2020). Policy Brief: COVID-19 and Women Migrant Workers in ASEAN; World Health Organization (2021). Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018.

implementation so far, highlighting the continued relevance of activities focused on eliminating violence against women.²⁰

Some stakeholders noted that broader trends, such as technology-facilitated Gender-Based Violence (GBV), might impact violence against women in the upcoming years. In this regard, the activities of different PUNOs focusing on online recruitment and scams were considered relevant.²¹

In its project document, PROTECT also noted that **children** can be particularly vulnerable in the context of labour migration, due to the lack of a family environment, dependency on irregular migration routes and smugglers, and their lack of legal capacity. They can also face risks of sexual and physical abuse, neglect and exploitation, as well as the risk of being trafficked.²²

Some stakeholders noted that the trends and needs of children on the move remained consistent during the implementation of PROTECT so far, although some suggested that the number of migrant children may be increasing, particularly in Thailand due to the political situation in Myanmar. Similar to women migrants, stakeholders warned of the growing risks associated with digital technology.²³

Lastly, gender and age are not the only factors influencing vulnerabilities in migration. Other **at-risk groups** exist based on diverse characteristics, including poverty, nationality, migration status, sector of work, etc. They are more likely to fall victim to organised crime, particularly in the form of human trafficking and smuggling.

To properly address the needs of at-risk groups, some activities under PROTECT (particularly by UNODC and ILO) focuses on the crimes or risks themselves (such as human trafficking and exploitation) rather than on the specific characteristic of an at-risk group (e.g. gender). This allowed the project to provide a more inclusive approach to the victims of such crimes. As one PUNO staff member explained: “*We look at who is vulnerable and who needs to be protected*”.²⁴ UNODC approaches this from the organised crime perspective, while ILO approaches this from the decent work perspective.

The evaluability assessment found that the concept of “at-risk groups” was not well-defined in the project document, which contributes to the flexibility of PUNOs to address those who need to be protected.²⁵ This was subsequently updated. The current PROTECT logframe includes the following reference: “UNODC lists at-risk or risk-population groups as beyond female migrant workers and children, this can include LGBTQI, irregular status, men vulnerable to exploitation in particular sector, and etc.” On the other hand, this may hinder a more targeted or in-depth approach to specific groups or issues. Considering the short timeline of this project and the ambitious objectives, the project could risk spreading too thin by helping all those who are vulnerable.

Some PUNO staff and stakeholders also reflected on the target groups of the project, namely that support to migrants should go beyond the focus on “the labour migrant” but consider their broader family and applying an intersectional lens. Some interviewees noted that while labour migrants often travel legally, their families might migrate through irregular pathways and therefore are more vulnerable. Respondents believe that the approach to protecting labour migrants should therefore have a family-level approach.

²⁰ Interviews with stakeholders, FGDs with PUNO staff.

²¹ Interviews with stakeholders.

²² PROTECT Project Document and UNICEF (2019). Assessment of Child Protection Services for Migrant Children in Thailand.

²³ Interviews with stakeholders

²⁴ FGD with staff of one PUNO

²⁵ Loes van der Graaf (2024) Evaluability Assessment Report PROTECT.

5.1.2. To what extent does PROTECT address key country, global, and stakeholder priorities?

This section focuses on the extent to which PROTECT's project design included responses to the main challenges and priorities at national and regional/global level, but also whether the project was flexible in case new priorities and trends were identified during the implementation.

Stakeholders were overwhelmingly positive about the alignment of PROTECT with their organizational and country-level priorities. The project also managed to start addressing some emerging trends during the implementation period.

Regardless of the project activities and engaged PUNOs, stakeholders across the PROTECT project **countries** confirmed that the project was aligned with their priorities in their country. Stakeholders were consulted during the inception of the project, and they confirmed that they were able to express their priorities and influence the design of activities. This enhanced the project's continuous alignment with national priorities.²⁶ Additionally, the main country-level priorities and strategies were already identified in the ProDoc, as well as the approach of PROTECT to address them.²⁷

Most PUNO staff also felt that the national-level consultations were valuable to identify potential partners, raise awareness on the project, and gather stakeholders' priorities. However, some PUNO staff expressed concerns regarding the national-level consultations that were carried out. Namely, as the project was already designed and approved by the donor, the national stakeholders did not have a lot of influence on the content of the project anymore during the consultations.

Similarly, the work done by PROTECT at **ASEAN** level was perceived as well-coordinated and largely included technical support to existing efforts and policy development by ASEAN.²⁸ Interviewed regional stakeholders were satisfied with the alignment of PROTECT with their regional priorities and the ASEAN agenda. One stakeholder also emphasized that PROTECT was also respectful of the ASEAN structure, requiring consensus among member states.²⁹

*"ASEAN has a broad agenda on elimination of violence against women, due to the high political commitment of member states to address this issue. The framework for EVAW does not only include the on Eliminating Violence Against Women (RPA on EVAW),, but also other strategies on the care economy, on women, peace and security, and on eliminating violence against children. There is a clear link, and nexus, between violence against women and violence against children."*³⁰

Some PUNO staff noted that, on request by ASEAN, the regional-level support was even increased during the PROTECT implementation so far. Furthermore, both PUNO staff and stakeholders noted the importance of connecting the ASEAN-level achievements with national-level work, to ensure the national-level implementation of the regional frameworks and commitments. Stakeholders also requested additional support for this aspect through future projects.³¹

PUNOs reported in the first Annual Report that stakeholders and research uncovered new trends and challenges in the region, as related to **trafficking in persons for the purpose of organ removal**.³² While the project document, indicators and targets were already set, the reference in the document to "addressing emerging trends" enabled PUNOs to direct some

²⁶ Interviews with stakeholders.

²⁷ ProDoc

²⁸ Interviews with stakeholders, FGDs with PUNOs.

²⁹ Interviews with stakeholders.

³⁰ Interview with a stakeholder

³¹ Interview with stakeholders.

³² First Annual Report, FGD with staff of a PUNO.

activities towards these newly identified issues. As one PUNO indicated: *“our counterparts told us that this was the first time they ever had training on this topic”*.³³

Various PUNO staff and stakeholders also noted the recent surge in online scams and the increase in **scam centres**.³⁴ Given the limited awareness of stakeholders regarding the scam centres, several interviewed stakeholders found the PROTECT activities on this topic of great use.³⁵

“Many foreign nationals are being trafficked and coerced into working in scam compounds within the country. Significant gaps remain in victim identification and service provision for foreign victims, making effective protection and support extremely challenging”.³⁶

*“It is more of a convoluted issue as opposed to traditional trafficking where victims are coerced into, for example, sexual slavery. Scam centres do not include the traditional approach taking advantage of vulnerable people because it is not the vulnerable people who are the victims. It is the well-educated and computer-savvy people. Furthermore, they are manipulated into committing crimes in the scam centres which makes them perpetrators, but they are also victims. We do not know how to handle this situation.”*³⁷

*“I want to touch upon forced criminality, because this is something new. And as a frontline officer, I noticed that forced criminality is something that is quite prevalent and increases in severity.”*³⁸

However, trends regarding technology also involve other dimensions, such as online recruitment, online scams, but also technology-facilitated violence against women: *“Technology-facilitated gender-based violence is quite prominent in the region and I think globally. Therefore, this issue is now more explicitly integrated in the new Regional Plan of Action, with the support of PROTECT.”*³⁹

Another concerning trend reported by PUNOs was the continuing **shrinking space for civil society organisations** in ASEAN region. The PROTECT project actively works with CSOs and aims to enhance their visibility in policy discussions. Interviewed CSOs and NGOs noted the particular added value of collaborating with PUNOs due to the legitimacy it adds to their organisation in the face of the government. *“Working with the UN helped build credibility for me and my organisation. First, they saw me as just a young woman, but after working alongside the UN, the government see that I can work and deliver, and now they call me for additional support, and they respect me.”*⁴⁰ The establishment of a regional CSO network was mentioned as important step to address this challenge.⁴¹

PUNO staff and some stakeholders mentioned the importance of focusing on the **care economy**, in the context of migrant domestic workers. They reported an increase in demand for care workers, combined with their high vulnerability. The 2024 ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening the Care Economy and Fostering Resilience Towards the Post-2025 ASEAN Community emphasizes that *“most paid care workers are women, including migrant workers, working in the informal economy under poor conditions with low wages and are often not provided with sufficient and accessible legal and social protections that ensure their safety and dignity.”*⁴² Stakeholders and some PUNO staff noted that future efforts should target this sector more actively.

³³ FGD with staff of a PUNO

³⁴ Interviews with stakeholders and FGDs with PUNOs.

³⁵ Interviews with stakeholders.

³⁶ Interview with a stakeholder.

³⁷ Interview with a stakeholder.

³⁸ Interview with a stakeholder

³⁹ Interview with a stakeholder

⁴⁰ Interview with a stakeholder.

⁴¹ FGD with staff of PUNOs

⁴² ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening the Care Economy and Fostering Resilience Towards the Post-2025 ASEAN Community

The Project Document describes the effort of the project to contribute to or align with **international frameworks**, such as ILO's International Labour Standards and various human rights conventions (CEDAW, CRC) and SDGs.⁴³

No significant adjustments have been made to the activities during the implementation so far, meaning that the conclusions of the Evaluability Assessment are still valuable. Namely, the project aligns particularly with various ILO conventions and with international frameworks on gender equality and elimination of violence against women.

In terms of activities, one stakeholder explicitly mentioned that PROTECT supports their work under the Global Compact of Migration.⁴⁴ Another stakeholder highlighted the role of PROTECT in ensuring that recruitment agencies comply with international standards.⁴⁵ The annual report for 2024 highlights specific support provided by UN WOMEN aligned with CEDAW.

UN WOMEN supported the development of the *Fourth National Action Plan to Prevent Violence against Women (NAPVAW IV)* in Cambodia, by providing technical guidance aligned with global standards such as the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and its Optional Protocol 2010, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, and Women and Children and UN Security Resolutions (UNSCR) 1325, 1920, 1888 related to women, peace and security agenda.⁴⁶

5.1.3. To what extent does the project include and respect cross-cutting priorities?

Different agencies have different mandates and priorities regarding the inclusion of certain topics across all projects and activities. For PROTECT PUNOs, these priorities include non-discrimination, gender equality, disability inclusion, human rights, international labour standards, tripartism and social dialogue, and lastly environmental safeguards.

The PROTECT project largely aligned with, and integrated, cross-cutting concerns in its design and execution. Gender equality and non-discrimination principles are particularly visible in the project, with a more general touch upon social dialogue and international labour standards. Environmental sustainability was not integrated in the project design.

The EA conducted an initial review of the alignment of PROTECT with key cross-cutting concerns of the PUNOs, and drew the following conclusions:

Reference to the contribution of the action to ILO's DWCP and CPOs is limited in the ProDoc, but it refers to coherence with International Labour Standards and human rights conventions (CEDAW, CRC) and SDGs. Most of the main cross-cutting priorities of ILO are represented in the project design, namely the gender-lens, inclusion of persons with disabilities, social dialogue and tripartism, international labour standards. However, there is no reference on how the project contributes to environmental sustainability.⁴⁷

The mid-term review demonstrates that this conclusion is still largely valid. As presented in the section above, the project is highly relevant for the needs of women and aligns with international frameworks on gender equality. The non-discrimination principle is particularly visible in the work of UNODC, which aims to take a broad interpretation to who is a "victim" or "at-risk group".

⁴³ Loes van der Graaf (2024) Evaluability Assessment Report PROTECT.

⁴⁴ Interview with a stakeholder

⁴⁵ Interview with a stakeholder

⁴⁶ First Annual Report.

⁴⁷ Loes van der Graaf (2024) Evaluability Assessment Report PROTECT.

ILO activities included some efforts regarding social dialogue, for example through the “Tripartite Plus” composition of the NPACs and specific activities (e.g. Tripartite Workshop on Labour Migration, Smuggling of Migrants and Trafficking in the Malaysian Context). Similarly, the project aims to align policies, guidelines and capacity-building efforts with provisions in International Labour Standards.⁴⁸ However, there is no evidence that social dialogue is a core mechanism to achieve project objectives or that social dialogue is an objective in itself.

The annual report refers only to one activity with a focus on climate change (a symposium on “Connectivity: Conflict, Crime, Care and Climate: Navigating Shared Responsibilities Under Growing Complexities.”). Interviewees noted that climate change-induced migration is a growing concern and could be a topic of great importance for future projects.

5.2. Coherence

According to the OECD/DAC criteria, this evaluation looks at the project’s internal and external coherence. As for internal coherence, it assessed the logic of the project, and whether the project so far managed to leverage the comparative strengths of the PUNOs. External coherence evaluates consistency with other projects/initiatives in the region.

5.2.1. To what extent is the Theory of Change still valid and logical?

The Theory of Change presents the expected causal relationship between the implemented activities and the expected results. The first review of the ToC took place during the EA. While the EA did not notice any issues at that time, it was also noted that the ToC’s indicators were agreed upon with the donor, leaving little space for (significant) adjustments. At the mid-term stage, the assessment of the ToC would include a review of whether initial signs of outcomes are witnessed as a result of the implemented activities, and whether these outcomes are indeed the ones expected.

The ToC is still valid, as proven by initial signs of results. The implementation of activities in silos may hinder the achievement of more holistic outcomes.

At the time of the mid-term review, there were no signs showing that the ToC is not valid. Interviews with stakeholders demonstrated progress towards the outputs/results listed in the Theory of Change (section 1.2.). This is particularly prominent so far in the activity streams under Specific Objective 1 and 2.

While the ToC is still valid in principle, there are some potential challenges related to the ability of outputs to create outcomes. Namely, the listed outcomes rely on the strengthening of various institutions and policy frameworks and strategies together. However, the activities implemented so far have focused on specific actors and target groups. As explained in the efficiency section below (5.4), partners of the PROTECT project are often not aware of the overall objectives of the project, of the other PUNOs (besides the one they work with directly) and of the other organisations supporting PROTECT. Therefore, national-level actors largely work towards PROTECT outputs in siloes, which hinders their ability to actually change the functioning of systems and achieve the outcomes holistically together.

5.2.2. To what extent is the project creating synergies between the PUNOs (ILO, UN Women, UNICEF and UNODC)?

The PROTECT project is implemented by four UN agencies, each with a specific and unique mandate and area of focus: ILO brings the labour standards, labour migration, and decent work perspective; UN WOMEN focuses on gender equality and violence against women;

⁴⁸ PROTECT annual report 2024.

UNICEF addresses the needs and challenges faced by children; and UNODC focuses on the most severe forms of abuse and exploitation, mainly from a criminal justice perspective that is involved in the risks faced by migrants and at-risk groups in the region (particularly trafficking).

The review has found both strengths and weaknesses of the multi-agency approach and its ability to create synergies so far. While agencies have provided technical input to each other's activities and strengthened coordination, the actual value of the multi-agency approach for this project was not extensively elaborated in the design, and the design therefore did not account sufficiently for the differences in agency structures and approaches.

The original Project Document describes in detail the expertise and prior regional experience that each Agency brings to the PROTECT project.⁴⁹ The EA also noted that “*UNICEF, ILO, UN WOMEN and UNODC bring their own comparative advantages to the project and should contribute, where relevant and needed, to the activities and outputs of others*”.⁵⁰ Interviews under the EA confirmed that PUNO was responsible for the development of indicators related to their activities and mandate and calculated their own baselines and targets.⁵¹

Indeed, the implementation of PROTECT so far allowed the four PUNOs to focus on their areas of expertise and address the vulnerabilities of migrants from the perspective of their mandate and target groups.⁵² Additionally, in Thailand, UNODC invited ILO, UNICEF and UN WOMEN to participate and speak in their national forum involving youth, migrant women, civil society, and human trafficking experts to raise awareness about trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling and make the online environment safer for at risk populations.⁵³

FGDs with PUNOs indicate that the multi-agency approach brings clear value to the project. Various examples were found of one agency providing technical expertise to the activities of another agency, such as UN WOMEN providing technical input to the development of the Labour Migration Policy in Cambodia, led by ILO.⁵⁴

*“The ACWC organised a workshop on their new Work Plan, where the topic of technology-facilitated violence against women was discussed as well. Following this workshop, a full day of dialogue with UN Women and UNICEF took place on how to unpack this issue. What is very exciting about that conversation is that there is a clear articulation of the nexus between ERAW and EVAC, which is a pioneering initiative of ASEAN.”*⁵⁵

Additionally, some PUNOs mentioned that the four-agency approach significantly strengthens coordination of efforts, as compared to general coordination efforts between agencies working on separate projects. As stated by one PUNO but echoed in other FGDs: “*the coordination work [outside the project] tends to be rather loose and tends to not have the same rigor in terms of shared planning [as having a joint project]*”. The PROTECT project forces agencies to actively co-create workplans and focus on complementary efforts.⁵⁶

The mid-term review found two challenges regarding the project's full use of the PUNOs' complementary expertise. Firstly, due to the delays in the implementation of the project, the PUNOs have focused primarily on getting their own activities off the ground. While some examples of joint activities were mentioned, **there have not been clear examples or**

⁴⁹ Project Document.

⁵⁰ Loes van der Graaf (2024) Evaluability Assessment Report PROTECT.

⁵¹ Loes van der Graaf (2024) Evaluability Assessment Report PROTECT.

⁵² First Annual Report and FGDs with staff of PUNOs.

⁵³ First Annual Report and FGD with staff of a PUNO.

⁵⁴ FGDs with staff of all PUNOs

⁵⁵ Interview with a stakeholder

⁵⁶ FGDs with staff of all PUNOs

evidence of how the four agencies actually work together (rather than implementing activities in silos). The Project Document also does not explicitly describe the added value of having this multi-agency approach compared to four individual projects.⁵⁷

The interviews with stakeholders confirm this finding, given that they were aware only of their own activities with their respective PUNO. There are a few stakeholders who work with two PROTECT PUNOs (though through different departments) but do not coordinate internally or work together. Several stakeholders noted that they did not know which other PUNOs were involved, or even which other organisations in their country were involved in the project. *“We understand there is another UN agency working on PROTECT in the country, but we don’t know who their partners are. It would be nice to be able to make a connection with the other national partners.”*⁵⁸

Secondly, some agencies noted that the **agencies are quite different in their approaches to the topic of labour migration**. UNICEF and UN WOMEN focus on specific target groups (children and women respectively) while ILO and UNODC focus more on the type of rights violation (from a labour and from a criminal/justice perspective respectively).⁵⁹ This also means that one risk/violation is addressed from different perspectives (e.g. forced labour, which is a form of human trafficking, is addressed by the ILO’s International Labour Standards, as well as a form of organised crime under criminal law from UNODC’s perspective).⁶⁰ This can create both opportunities and challenges, as perceived by PUNOs. It is worth noting that the Project Document does not mention how such differences should be overcome or how PUNOs could maximise opportunities for complementarity.

5.2.3 To what extent is PROTECT complementary to, or duplicating, other projects in the region?

Stakeholders noted that there are various projects ongoing in the ASEAN region, focusing on support to migrants. This section presents the extent to which PROTECT was well-coordinated with other efforts, to enhance complementarity and reduce overlap and contradictions.

No examples of overlaps or unnecessary duplications were found. PROTECT efforts were well-coordinated with other UN agencies, mostly IOM.

Stakeholders unanimously responded that the PROTECT project did not duplicate other projects and did not perceive gaps in relation to coordination. Particularly the government-level stakeholders indicated that they themselves actively ensured coordination between UN agencies to divide tasks and areas of work.⁶¹ One stakeholder explained that, due to their lack of resources, they rely on the combination of projects to fund staff and achieve objectives.⁶²

IOM was most commonly mentioned as non-PROTECT partner of the stakeholders, but it was mentioned that IOM worked in other geographical areas or sectors, or on completely different activities and beneficiaries.⁶³ For example, *“our collaboration with IOM is strengthening the ILO programme. ILO works with us on creating partnerships between recruitment agencies and the government, and on working with the government to enhance protection of migrant workers. IOM, on the other hand, works directly with migrant workers through pre-departure trainings”*.⁶⁴

⁵⁷ Project Document and FGD with staff of PUNOs.

⁵⁸ Interview with a stakeholder

⁵⁹ FGDs with staff of two PUNOs

⁶⁰ FGDs with staff of two PUNOs

⁶¹ Interviews with stakeholders.

⁶² Interview with a stakeholder

⁶³ Interviews with stakeholders.

⁶⁴ Interview with a stakeholder

Various examples were found of PROTECT PUNOs working directly with IOM or other UN agencies to strengthen and coordinate efforts or working efficiently in the same field.

“Both UNICEF (under PROTECT) and IOM work in a specific transit centre in Cambodia, but their activities and target groups are very different. UNICEF works in the transit centre with returning migrant children by providing victim support, while IOM targets labour migrants by providing pre-departure information”.⁶⁵

“For the technical support to the MoU, PROTECT also discussed with IOM and other organisations who have experiences with protections of victims of trafficking and migrant workers”.⁶⁶

When asked about the added value of PROTECT and the support of the PUNOs, stakeholders across the project countries most commonly replied that they value the specific technical expertise of the agencies in their mandated area of work.⁶⁷

5.3. Progress overview

5.3.1. What aspects of PROTECT are working well?

The annual report for 2024 showed visible progress of the project. Namely, the vast majority of targets for 2024 were either achieved or exceeded⁶⁸. This section provides a brief overview of stakeholders' perceptions of the project's progress and good practices so far.

The vast majority of stakeholders similarly commented that they already achieved initial results under their allocated activities and were largely grateful for the support from the PUNOs to create and support these results.⁶⁹ Examples were provided of progress made towards the development of guidelines and manuals, as well as progress towards updates of policy documents. A few examples from stakeholders include:

“We already developed the manual and toolkit for labour inspectors, so the next step will be to conduct the training with inspectors.”

“Normally, we only interviewed the rescued victims, but during the trainings by the UN, we saw what the scam compounds actually look like firsthand, and we also are heard a real-life case and victim testimonial of how they were treated.”

“With PROTECT support, we developed the draft Memorandum of Understanding with our Thai counterparts on improving collaboration in the area of child protections in the context of migration.”

“PROTECT supported the development of the fourth National Action Plan to Prevent Violence Against Women, including reference to migrant women. Now, there is also a provision on monitoring, since we did not have usable data before.”

Although the project did not include extensive engagement with beneficiaries yet, some progress and foundations for results were found among associations of migrant (domestic) workers. Examples included increased dialogue with the government, capacity building for such dialogue, and increased organisation of migrant workers.

“A key achievement is the advocacy for the Conventions 187 and 189. We are very proud to see that the government is paying more attention to domestic workers and migrant workers”.⁷⁰

⁶⁵ Interview with a stakeholder

⁶⁶ Interview with a stakeholder

⁶⁷ Interviews with stakeholders.

⁶⁸ First Annual Report – Results framework.

⁶⁹ Interviews with stakeholders

⁷⁰ Interview with a stakeholder

“June 16 was the celebration of international Domestic Workers Day. For the first time, a major Malaysian newspaper included a headline about the demand of the migrant domestic workers for a weekly day off, based on an interview with one of our staff. This meant a lot to us to have representation and a voice”.⁷¹

5.3.2. What challenges does PROTECT face?

The majority of stakeholders replied that they do not have critical feedback for the PUNOs yet since their work is progressing well so far, or because not enough work had been conducted to really experience challenges. A few challenges were noted by some of the stakeholders.

Some stakeholders noted that the project implementation (and their own work) is affected by the priorities and behaviour of the government. *“It will be easier for us to work if the government is taking our side. But in the current political situation, the government priorities are currently more about economic empowerment.”⁷²* One stakeholder mentioned that governments across ASEAN are not yet “willing to admit” the challenges they face regarding scam centres, which hinders the development of regional solutions, exchange of practices, and action plans.⁷³

PROTECT activities could be affected by the political tension between Cambodia and Thailand. Stakeholders noted that it is too early to assess the impact of the tension on the project.⁷⁴ *“We don’t know yet how long the political tension will last. If it will end soon, is not a problem, but if it prolongs, we will need to make adjustments to the project.”⁷⁵*

5.4. Efficiency

According to the OECD/DAC, the efficiency criterion considers the extent to which available resources can deliver expected activities, outputs, and outcomes in an economical and timely manner. This section analyses how efficiently the PROTECT project was implemented so far, including in terms of management and monitoring.

5.4.1. How efficient has the project implementation been so far?

The efficiency of implementation at the mid-term stage comprises the use of financial and human resources so far, in alignment with expected spending, as well as the timeliness of implementation and adherence to the workplan.

The project so far is mostly on track with spending and has not experienced significant changes in expected costs. However, the time gap between the submission of the request for the next tranche payment and the release of funds are creating activity delays and challenges for the PUNOs.

Most of the PUNOs indicated that they are mostly on track with **resource spending** and did not experience significant changes in expected expenses. Only small challenges in this regard were mentioned, such as unforeseen increase in staff costs, higher translation and interpretation costs, and fluctuations in exchange rates.⁷⁶ National consultations were also mentioned by one PUNO as quite time-and resource-intensive.

The key challenge listed by all PUNOs and some stakeholders is the delays in the release of the fund tranches by the donor. As one PUNO stated, and others echoed: *“we cannot implement if we don’t have funds in our account”*. Progress made between in the payment

⁷¹ Interview with a stakeholder, who confirmed that PROTECT support enabled this achievement.

⁷² Interview with a stakeholder

⁷³ Interview with a stakeholder

⁷⁴ Interview with a stakeholder.

⁷⁵ Interview with a stakeholder

⁷⁶ FGDs with staff of PUNOs

vacuum (i.e. after available money was spent and before arrival of the next tranche) depended completely on the ability of each individual PUNO to “borrow” money, e.g. from another project or from their regional office.⁷⁷ Therefore, some PUNOs were less affected by the delays than others.

The tranche payment delays may also affect the future efficiency of the project. Namely, one PUNO explained that *“if we get our final transfer only mid-year [2026] and we only have six months left to implement the activities, that's going to cause challenges”*.⁷⁸

According to the PUNOs, the delays in payments occurred during the feedback process from the donor to the reporting (i.e. the timeline for feedback and providing responses were longer than expected, which also related to differences in internal procedures across the PUNOs). This comprised both comments to the financial report and the justification of costing. The donor explained⁷⁹ that generally a month is needed to review the reports and release payments. In this instance, the receipt of comments, reply by the agencies and internal validation by the PUNO HQ in some cases, and subsequent review by the donor all took time and delayed the payment.⁸⁰ This experience has strengthened PUNO familiarity with the procedures, which should ensure more timely and efficient reporting in the future, and thus possibly a speedier release of funding.

Almost none of the stakeholders expressed concern regarding their contracts and funding. One stakeholder noted that the short-term contracts of up to six months hindered them from preparing better for the work and planning more long-term interventions (*“normally we have contracts of up to 18 months, but due to budget limitations, we received a shorter contract”*).⁸¹ One stakeholder expressed a broader concern that the length of the project and its funding is not sufficient to address the challenges faced by the target groups.⁸² One stakeholder also reported a delay in their payment.⁸³

In line with the findings on financial efficiency, the **timeliness** of the project implementation is linked closely to PUNO’s ability to “borrow” money (as noted above). Therefore, there are clear differences in progress made between different PUNOs. However, most PUNOs reported that they experienced only minor delays and are generally on track, which was confirmed by most stakeholders as well. As reported in the previous section, stakeholders also perceived that the project was mostly on track, while only a few stakeholders felt that there were some delays.⁸⁴ One PUNO expressed concern regarding the project timeline, in terms of the number of activities still to be completed before the project ending.⁸⁵

5.4.2. How efficient is the project’s coordination

The project is led by ILO as lead implementing partner and coordinated by regional staff of each PUNO. The project furthermore has a Steering Committee and a Project Advisory Committee at regional level, as well as National Project Advisory Committees.

Overall, both PUNOs and stakeholders are satisfied with the project management and with the frequency of communication. Some stakeholders would like more regular communication. Stakeholders lack a broader understanding of the project beyond their activities and responsible PUNO.

⁷⁷ FGDs with staff of PUNOs

⁷⁸ FGD with staff of one PUNO

⁷⁹ Written feedback from the donor

⁸⁰ FGD with staff of PUNOs

⁸¹ Interview with a stakeholder

⁸² Interview with a stakeholder

⁸³ Interview with a stakeholder

⁸⁴ Interviews with stakeholders

⁸⁵ FGDs with staff of PUNOs

Generally, **PUNOs** were satisfied with the overall, regional management of the project by ILO and no criticism was received regarding the set-up of the project's management mechanisms.⁸⁶ Although each agency has to report to its own internal management and has its own bureaucratic procedures (as is usual with multi-agency projects), this was not mentioned as creating significant hurdles or delays affecting overall project coordination.

Similarly, national PUNO staff indicated that they have regular meetings with their PROTECT counterparts in each country, which allows for efficient coordination, planning and exchange of practices and lessons learned.⁸⁷

At national-level, **stakeholders** appreciated their communication with their respective PUNOs and perceived that the project was well-managed. This did not differ by PUNO or country. Stakeholders felt involved and were kept in the loop on project developments. They explained that staff were reachable through different media and were highly responsive.⁸⁸

*"When they are trying to follow up with us, they do not disturb us. They are very polite. They always ask permission when they are going to call us to ask for our availability."*⁸⁹

*"We are very pleased and satisfied with the partnership established under PROTECT. The collaboration has been smooth and responsive, with regular updates, timely fund disbursements, and consistent technical support provided whenever needed."*⁹⁰

One stakeholder also explicitly praised a two-PUNO event, highlighting that the coordination between the two PUNOs seemed to be particularly smooth.⁹¹

A few stakeholders mentioned that they would like to be involved more, in terms of follow-up. This applied both to continued engagement with staff in general, but also follow-up after training activities. *"I know gathering people is difficult, but sometimes, for example, we have a meeting in February and then they disappear. So it kind of loses the momentum."*⁹² Similarly, another stakeholder explained that *"in our culture, pre-and post-implementation, you keep a network. But it felt like the UN only contacted us when they needed information. If there was no activity or no information needed, they did not contact us"*.⁹³

As mentioned before, several stakeholders noted that the project content and objectives were not completely clear from the beginning. *"We were aware of the launch of the new project but did not have a clear picture of how we would work with the project and how it connected to the previous Safe and Fair project."*⁹⁴ A few stakeholders did not know the project "PROTECT", only their dedicated activity. Therefore, the project seems to be implemented in a fragmented manner at country-level, with a focus on activities rather than higher-level outcomes.⁹⁵

Two stakeholders expressed concerns about staff turnover within the PUNO project teams. *"It would be best to have one person as point of contact. Sometimes there are change in staff, and it's like you have to explain everything over again."*⁹⁶

⁸⁶ FGDs with staff of PUNOs

⁸⁷ FGDs with staff of PUNOs.

⁸⁸ Interviews with stakeholders

⁸⁹ Interview with a stakeholder

⁹⁰ Interview with a stakeholder

⁹¹ Interview with a stakeholder

⁹² Interview with a stakeholder

⁹³ Interview with a stakeholder

⁹⁴ Interview with a stakeholder

⁹⁵ Interviews with stakeholders.

⁹⁶ Interview with a stakeholder

5.4.3. How efficient is the project monitoring so far?

As lead agency, ILO is responsible for monitoring and reporting. The monitoring approach was largely taken over and adapted from the Safe and Fair project.

The M&E system is well-designed and implemented so far. However, it causes a large workload for the PUNOs and does not always reflect the real progress.

According to the Evaluability Assessment, the PROTECT project benefits from a comprehensive and good quality M&E approach that will provide sufficient information to ensure adequate tracking of project progress by PUNOs; to provide insights into progress for key stakeholders and the donor; and to collect suitable data for external evaluations. All PUNOs were involved in the design of the overall M&E framework and its indicators⁹⁷

The PUNOs confirmed that the M&E framework is still generally logical and clear. PUNOs with dedicated M&E staff for PROTECT did not experience significant difficulties with the workload of the monitoring system. Furthermore, the PUNOs involved in Safe and Fair were also able to adopt the M&E framework more efficiently.⁹⁸ The project submitted its first annual report, for 2024, to the EU in February 2025, which comprised a detailed overview of the project's progress, both descriptively and against the targets.⁹⁹

PUNO staff indicated that monitoring data has been used primarily to track project progress and report to the donor, as well as provide the foundation for Steering Committee meetings. *"The reporting indicators are also used to see which parts of the work plan need to be enhanced, which activities need to perhaps track or push a little bit more on. It is something that colleagues can also use in terms of identifying partnerships and developing new interventions."*¹⁰⁰ However, as some indicators reflect on long-term results (e.g. prosecution), the absence of monitoring results would incorrectly suggest that no progress is made, and therefore some indicators are not suitable for intermediate project decision-making, but only to measure long-term results.

Some PUNOs mentioned the challenge of balancing monitoring requirements with the need to focus on actual implementation within the limited timeframe for the project. Monitoring requirements were perceived as quite heavy and complex, particularly the reporting system of the EU which is added on top of the system used for the project itself.¹⁰¹

Some PUNO staff were unsure about the (EU) logframe's ability to truly reflect the impact that the project is expected to make. Firstly, due to their perception that the EU's indicators do not fully align with their work and activities (while noting that the indicators were agreed on jointly between the EU and PUNOs). Secondly, some indicators were deemed out of scope of control of PUNOs or not measurable within the project timeline.

The "*# of migrant children registered/documented by institutions strengthened by the intervention*" as indicator is not in the scope of control of the PUNOs, as this is an action completed by the government.

The "*# of cases related to human trafficking and migrants smuggling prosecuted by national authorities per year*" is considered unsuitable as such cases can take place over multiple years and therefore the conclusion of the case may not be visible within the project timeline.

⁹⁷ Loes van der Graaf (2024) Evaluability Assessment Report PROTECT.

⁹⁸ FGDs with staff of PUNOs

⁹⁹ First Annual Report

¹⁰⁰ FGD with staff of a PUNO

¹⁰¹ FGDs with staff of PUNOs

Lastly, PUNO staff warned that the higher-level indicators are quite ambitious for a short project like PROTECT.¹⁰²

5.5. Sustainability

According to OECD/DAC criteria, sustainability analyses the extent to which a project's achievements can be maintained in the future. While the PROTECT project is only midway into its implementation, this section explores whether sustainability measures have been taken so far and whether signs of factors supporting sustainability can already be detected.

The PROTECT project created various results that are likely to be sustainable, but the vast needs of migrants in the region require continued support by the PUNOs.

The sustainability strategy for PROTECT was developed in the Inception Stage of the project, led by ILO, with input from all PUNOs and discussed during Steering Committee meetings. PUNOs did not express a high level of awareness or use of the strategy itself (potentially due to PUNO staff turnover), but indicated that sustainability is included in the design of the project, as all activities and outcomes are designed to be sustainable (particularly through capacity building).¹⁰³ This is confirmed by the Evaluability Assessment, which highlighted that *“the strong focus of the project on creating the right policy environment, as well as institutional capacities are important foundations for sustainability. However, the short project timeline may limit what the project can achieve in terms of supporting the implementation of new policies”*.¹⁰⁴

The main foundation for sustainability is the support of PROTECT to the development of legal and policy instruments. Although more support may be needed for their implementation, they serve as a solid foundation for the governments to design further policies on, and for stakeholders to use to hold governments accountable. This applies in particular to achievements at ASEAN level. This finding is supported by the expressed commitment of stakeholders to continue addressing the various issues addressed by PROTECT. A good example in this regard is the commitments made by governments in the context of ASEAN and eliminating violence against women (although some stakeholders noted the need for additional support to implement the commitments nationally).¹⁰⁵

Interviewed stakeholders largely expressed the need for continued funding and support after the completion of the PROTECT project. A key reason links to the short timeline of the PROTECT project itself, which is perceived to be too short to address all needs and challenges of the region. The key concern in this regard is the support provided to vulnerable groups on the group, as supported by PROTECT. Many stakeholders noted that the number of people in need is not decreasing and that PROTECT only covered a small group of them. More resources are needed to continue support to women and children, and other at-risk groups.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰² FGDs with staff of PUNOs

¹⁰³ FGDs with staff of PUNOs

¹⁰⁴ Loes van der Graaf (2024) Evaluability Assessment Report PROTECT.

¹⁰⁵ Interviews with stakeholders

¹⁰⁶ Interview with a stakeholder

6. Conclusions

The findings of the mid-term review demonstrate that the project is progressing well, and stakeholders are largely satisfied with the project in terms of its design, implementation, and management.

The project has been responsive to emerging trends, while navigating continued and new challenges in the region, thereby remaining consistent with the needs of beneficiaries and relevant to the priorities of the partner countries, ASEAN, and international frameworks. The project is particularly complementary to other initiatives in the region, as various examples of collaboration with IOM are found, and no examples of duplications.

Both the logframe for 2024 and the stakeholder interviews demonstrated that the project is on track with its activities and expected results by the time of the mid-term review. Stakeholders provided various examples of implemented activities and initial results and praised the value of the project for the challenges faced by migrants and at-risk groups in their countries. Particularly, several organisations noted that the PROTECT project strengthened their role in policy discussions as priorly they were not taken seriously by their governments. The project therefore had an unintended positive effect to enhance government respect for CSO staff.

ASEAN-level activities were considered highly relevant for sustainability and impact, considering that regional-level action plans and discussions can have regional-level impact (beyond the PROTECT countries) and facilitate peer learning. However, some stakeholders are concerned that countries lack technical capacity to implement ASEAN-level action plans, and the development of regional-level plans and subsequent national implementation support requires a longer-term intervention beyond the PROTECT timeline.

Furthermore, stakeholders generally praised the responsiveness of PUNOs, and the general management of the project. PUNOs themselves also reported positive coordination experiences at national and regional levels, despite the delays in payment of tranches, which caused delays in implementation for some PUNOs.

The main challenge experienced by the project is the siloed implementation of activities by the PUNOs. While PUNOs have regular meetings to develop workplans together, examples of joint activities are scarce. Stakeholders were generally not aware of the PROTECT project's objectives beyond their own activities and objectives. These findings align with some of the challenges listed in the efficiency section, namely that some stakeholders felt they did not receive sufficient follow-up or regular engagement. The siloed approach to activities also hinders national-level stakeholders from collaborating to jointly achieve the specific objectives.

The potential for the added value of a multi-PUNO project is clearly articulated by PUNOs but not yet realized in practice. The design of the project also does not outline how the multi-PUNO composition creates added value, which hinders PUNOs from relying on the ProDoc for inspiration.

The project has a clear focus on sustainability through its activities linked to creating suitable policy environments and institutional capacity. Therefore, many of the results of the project (current and forthcoming) have a strong potential to be sustainable and to form the foundation for subsequent interventions supporting their implementation. However, the vast number of vulnerable migrants in the region requires continuous investment in support mechanisms on the ground, and the capacity of social workers and CSOs to assist them.

8. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the review, the following recommendations are proposed for the continuation of the PROTECT project and a potential future effort, in order of priority.

- **Recommendation 1: Enhance the added value of the multi-PUNO approach through joint activities, and stimulation of coordination between different partners at country-level.**

The review found that the added value of the multi-PUNO approach was described by PUNOs, but not fully visible in practice, due to the siloed implementation of activities. The ProDoc did not provide sufficient guidance on the added value of this composition. As a result, some PUNOs felt that the project approach and M&E did not align well with their way of working, while stakeholders were not aware of the project's work outside their country and PUNO.

The following actions are recommended for the continuation of the project and for the design of future initiatives:

For the remaining time of PROTECT, the PUNOs should:

- Enhance the visibility of PROTECT as an EU-supported multi-PUNO project, including its overall objectives, so stakeholders better understand the broader context and plan accordingly.
- Explore opportunities to connect stakeholders in the same country, for example to exchange progress with the project so far, as to allow stakeholders to see how their work links with the work of others, and explore how these efforts reinforce each other.
- In case of one stakeholder working with multiple PUNOs, organize joint meetings to demonstrate the coherence between the different activities and work streams.
- Where relevant, continue inviting EU and other PUNO staff to activities, to bring additional perspectives from the other PUNO activities, but also to use activities as platforms to explore other joint activities.

For future projects, the PUNOs should:

- Clearly indicate the added value of the multi-PUNO approach, not just in terms of how complementary they are, but why this approach is needed to achieve the objectives, and how activities of one PUNO link to those of another.
 - Design joint activities allowing different stakeholders to meet and discuss comprehensive solutions to the vulnerabilities of migrants in the region. The ASEAN approach to linking ERAW and EVAC is a good example.
 - Such joint activities are of particular importance when multiple agencies work with the same ministry or organisation (just different departments) to enhance the capacity of ministries to identify holistic, cross-cutting solutions among their department staff.
- **Recommendation 2: Develop a more realistic set of indicators at the start of future projects.**

The indicators of the PROTECT logframe were jointly designed and agreed upon with the donor. In this process, the four PUNOs collectively created 57 indicators, which is a very large amount for the duration of the project. This also links to the fact that the four agencies are siloed in their activities and therefore need specific indicators achievable only by their own work. In this regard, there are on average 14 indicators per agency.

In the implementation of Recommendation 1, the agencies should also look at developing both a shorter and more realistic list of indicators that align with the project timeline, but also focus

on the joint achievement of indicators, which would result from joint activities towards joint outputs and outcomes.

The following actions are recommended for the continuation of the project and for the design of future initiatives:

For the remaining time of PROTECT, the PUNOs should:

- Ensure that the Final Evaluation consultants do not strictly rely on the Logframe to assess the project's achievements, but explore progress more qualitatively, particularly for those indicators that are a) outside the scope of the PUNO's control and b) focus on long-term results.
- Explore with the donor opportunities to remove the indicators that do not sufficiently reflect the project progress (as a) and b) above), without taking away PUNO responsibility in terms of activities and target groups.

For future projects, the PUNOs should:

- Reflect more extensively on what can realistically be achieved in the project timeline.
- Develop indicators jointly by relying on joint efforts
- Develop indicators that reflect progress achieved by the agencies and are within PUNO control
- Reduce the number of indicators to an amount that supports the measurement of project progress but does not overburden M&E staff in all agencies.

- **Recommendation 3: Support ASEAN-level interventions and their implementation at national level.**

The ASEAN framework is a highly useful platform for development of action plans, strategic plans, declarations, etc., which are applicable to all ASEAN members, allowing them to subsequently exchange experiences and good practices. Furthermore, it can be a tool of oversight and consultation in the implementation of commitments. This review has shown great progress towards ASEAN action plans but also showed stakeholders' needs for assistance to translate those into national policies.

The following actions are recommended for the continuation of the project and for the design of future initiatives:

For the remaining time of PROTECT, the PUNOs should:

- Continue supporting ASEAN but also start investigating how ASEAN-level strategies (e.g. the RPA on ERAW) should be implemented at national level. Actual national-level support may not be feasible anymore during the current project but should be explored as foundation for future projects.

For future projects, the PUNOs should:

- Design concrete activities that assist ASEAN Member States to translate regional strategies and declarations into national policies.
- Facilitate the exchange of lessons learned and good practices on the implementation of regional strategies, among the Member States.
- Include longer-term planning exercises in projects focusing on ASEAN-level activities, to allow stakeholders to already focus on (support to) national-level implementation which may occur after project ending.

- **Recommendation 4: Increase follow-up conversations and efforts after provision of capacity-building activities.**

A key element of PROTECT is institutional capacity-building, to strengthen capacity of institutions and mechanisms to support migrants. However, several stakeholders and PUNO staff noted that one training session is not enough to ensure that new approaches and knowledge are truly integrated into the activities of the respective organisation.

The following actions are recommended for the continuation of the project and for the design of future initiatives:

For the remaining time of PROTECT, the PUNOs should:

- Follow-up with the participants of training sessions to assess to what extent they retained their new knowledge and skills. If not, offer additional refresher materials.

For future projects, the PUNOs should:

- Allocate more resources to training to allow for refresher training and follow-up conversations and support.
- Besides training, focus on organizational change (e.g. structure, strategies) to enhance the capacity of the organisation as a whole to respond to the needs of vulnerable people.¹⁰⁷

- **Recommendation 5: Strengthen the capacity of CSOs and service providers to negotiate with government agencies and provide direct support.**

Various stakeholders noted that the space for CSOs is shrinking and CSOs themselves highlighted that they need the backing of the PUNOs in order to be taken seriously by the government. CSOs are often at the forefront of support for vulnerable migrants and provide important insights (e.g. in response to the work of UN rapporteurs). Therefore, for the sustainability of the PROTECT results, as well as for general improvement of support to vulnerable groups in the region, the capacity of CSOs to do their work is of great importance.

The following actions are recommended for the continuation of the project and for the design of future initiatives:

For the remaining time of PROTECT, the PUNOs should:

- Build on the existing efforts of PROTECT to establish a network of CSOs, by inviting CSOs working with all PUNOs to join policy discussions and NPAC meetings (if not yet done so). This will also contribute to the first recommendation, by allowing CSOs to exchange on their achievements, and by presenting the broader objectives of PROTECT.
- Explore avenues at national level to strengthen government-CSO collaboration and the legitimacy of CSOs as advisors and contributors to national objectives.

For future projects, the PUNOs should:

- Continue ensuring that CSOs and migrant worker representatives are part of policy discussions and can contribute to the design of strategies and policies, at both national and ASEAN level.
- Continue facilitating the CSO network, its activities and meetings, to ensure that CSOs across the region can share information and experiences, and jointly advocate for changes (including at ASEAN level).

¹⁰⁷ E.g. using the method of UN Women called "Beyond Training".

Annex 1. Terms of Reference (ToR)

Ensuring Decent Work and Reducing Vulnerabilities for Women and Children in the Context of Labour Migration in Southeast Asia/ Protection of the Rights of Women and Children in Labour Migration (PROTECT)

MID-TERM REVIEW Terms of Reference

Key Facts

Title of project	Ensuring Decent Work and Reducing Vulnerabilities for Women and Children in the Context of Labour Migration in Southeast Asia/ Protection of the Rights of Women and Children in Labour Migration (PROTECT)
Project DC code	RAS/23/06/EUR
Project Period	1 January 2024 – 31 December 2026
Type of Review (e.g. independent, internal)	Independent mid-term review
Review period	1 January 2024 – 31 March 2025
Donor	European Union
Administrative Unit in the ILO responsible for administrating the project	ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ILO ROAP)
Technical Unit(s) in the ILO responsible for backstopping the project	MIGRANT
Relevant SDG(s)	SDGs 5, 8, 10, 16, 17
Project Budget	Total budget: US\$14,991,151.27 EU contribution: US\$ 14,280,500

Project background information

1. Nearly half of the 10.6 million documented migrants in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region are women, and 1.3 million are children. Migration offers considerable development opportunities to both countries of origin and destination, and to migrants themselves. Yet these opportunities can be adversely affected by risks of labour exploitation, decent work deficits, violence against women and girls (VAWG) and harassment (including violence and harassment in the world of work), trafficking in human beings and smuggling across the migration cycle, in particular for women, and women migrant workers in low wage elementary occupations. Age, gender, and migrant status can amplify these risks – both in terms of their occurrence, and also in terms of the harmful impact on survivors and their families. These risks increase during crises, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Access to labour or other migration-related information and essential services, including for women and girls subject to violence, can also vary depending on the nature, and location of work, as well as migrant status.

2. Labour migration in Southeast Asia also affects children accompanying migrant workers and in destination countries in different ways. Children may be deprived of a supportive family environment, and/or be dependent on irregular migration routes and smugglers. Children in destination countries face multiple challenges, particularly in terms of having their educational, physical and emotional needs met. They can also face risks of sexual and physical abuse, neglect and exploitation, as well as the risk of being trafficked. This vulnerability may also be inherent to their status as a child, namely that they often lack legal capacity and are likely to be economically and socially vulnerable.
3. Uneven economic development and the demand for low-wage labour in Southeast Asia have been major factors driving trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling within the region. Technology has become one of the most effective tools used by criminal groups to traffic migrant workers into sophisticated cyber scams in numerous sites across the Southeast Asian region. Trafficking for forced criminality is just one element of highly-organized and thriving transnational organized crime in the region, which is driven by corruption, weak rule of law and the vulnerability of migrant workers.
4. COVID-19 has had adverse impacts for migrants and their families in Southeast Asia; as countries seek to build back better, occupation, gender, age, migrant status are key considerations of vulnerability that can place women and children in the context of labour migration at risk of labour exploitation, violence against women and girls, and trafficking, especially for those who are in informal work, and irregular migration situations.

About the PROTECT project

5. Ensuring Decent Work and Reducing Vulnerabilities for Women and Children in the Context of Labour Migration in Southeast Asia (also known by its shorter title 'Protection of the Rights of Women and Children in Labour Migration' or PROTECT) is three-year (2024-2026) project implemented by the ILO, UN Women, UNICEF and UNODC, led by the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, and funded by the European Union.
6. The PROTECT project promotes decent work, while reducing the vulnerabilities of women, children, and other at-risk groups, in the context of labour migration, in particular through preventing and responding to violence against women and children, human trafficking and migrant smuggling. It does this through addressing legal, policy and institutional gaps and barriers faced by women migrant workers, children and other vulnerable groups, in the context of labour migration, including in the protection of fundamental principles and rights at work, as well as enhance their access to safe, orderly, and regular migration by addressing violence, exploitation, forced labour, trafficking and migrant smuggling. To ensure that laws and policies can be effectively implemented, the project seeks to enhance national and regional capacities and mechanisms for policy implementation, service provision and prevention efforts, while empowering concerned women migrant workers and children to mitigate the risks of abuse and exploitation and access services.

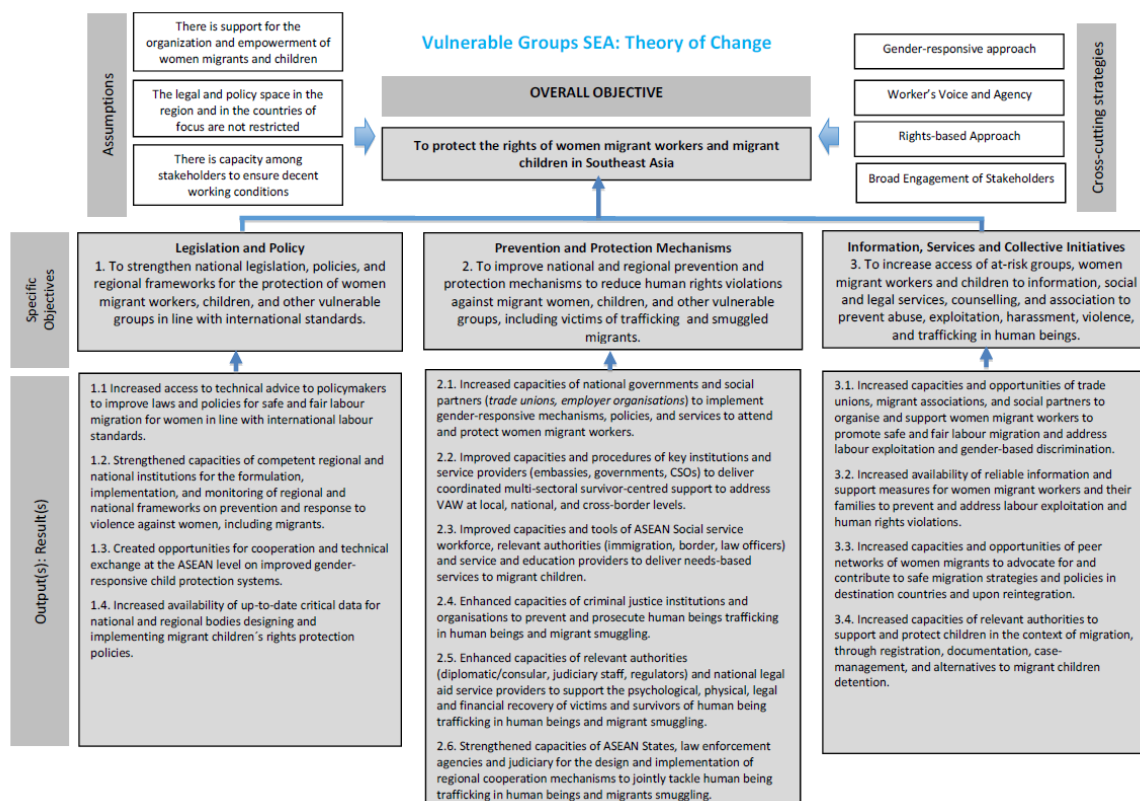
Project Objectives and Strategy

7. The Overall objective of the PROTECT project is to protect the rights of women migrant workers and migrant children in Southeast Asia.

- Specific objective 1: To strengthen national legislation, policies and regional frameworks for the protection of women migrant workers, children and other vulnerable groups in line with international standards;
- Specific objective 2: To improve national and regional prevention and protection mechanisms to reduce rights' violations against migrant women, children, and other vulnerable groups, including victims of trafficking and smuggled migrants; and
- Specific objective 3: To increase the access of at-risk groups, women migrant workers and children to information, social and legal services, counselling, and association to prevent abuse, exploitation, harassment, violence, and trafficking in human beings.

8. *Theory of change*: The project strategy and the selection of outcomes (objectives) and outputs (results) were based on the theory that strengthened national legislation, policies, and regional frameworks for the protection of women migrant workers, children, and other vulnerable groups in line with international standards; improved national and regional prevention and protection mechanisms to reduce human rights violations against migrant women, children, and other vulnerable groups, including victims of trafficking and smuggled migrants; and increased access of at-risk groups, women migrant workers and children to information, social and legal services, counselling, and association to prevent abuse, exploitation, harassment, violence, and trafficking in human beings will contribute in the long-term to the protection of the rights of women migrant workers and migrant children in Southeast Asia.

9. The diagrammatic presentation of PROTECT's theory of change is as follows:



10. Target groups covered by the project: Current, potential and returnee women migrants, children and at-risk groups in the context of labour migration; states' government authorities; workers' organizations; employers' organizations and recruitment

agencies and their associations; civil society organizations; community-based organizations; families and communities; research institutions and academia, media networks, youth, and the general public.

11. Final beneficiaries: Current, potential and returnee women migrants, children and at-risk groups in the context of labour migration; but also the broader beneficiaries in the context of labour migration including accompanying family members of women migrants; women and girl survivors of violence, their families and communities; vulnerable groups to trafficking such as youth and men who are becoming a prominent target of trafficking exploitation; other groups of children in the context of labour migration, in particular those who are born from migrant workers in countries of destination and risk statelessness.
12. The project strategy adopts a corridor-based approach to ensure that interventions benefit migrants across the migration continuum. The priority countries covered by the project are Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Thailand; some activities also take place at the regional (ASEAN) level. The use of an asymmetrical approach means that project activities vary by country. The project also has a multidisciplinary approach bringing together labour migration, gender equality and ending violence against women, child rights and anti- trafficking stakeholders.
13. The project strategy further mainstreams the following cross-cutting topics: gender-responsive approach, worker's voice and agency; rights-based approach; and broad engagement of stakeholders.

Institutional framework and management arrangements

14. This project is implemented in indirect management through a Multi-Partner Contribution Agreement with the ILO as the lead and UN Women, UNICEF and UNODC as the Partners for the implementation. ILO is the responsible agency for this project, ensuring cooperation and communication with collaborating entities and with the EU Delegations in Southeast Asia. As the lead agency ILO ensures coordination with UN Women, UNICEF and UNODC for the implementation of activities. UN Women, UNICEF and UNODC are also a part of the Project Steering Committee.

Governance framework

15. A governance framework provides strategic and technical governance to the project at regional and national levels. The European Commission, EU Delegations and relevant ASEAN bodies, government and non-government stakeholders are involved at appropriate levels. At the inception of the project, a Project Steering Committee (PSC) was set up to ensure management oversight, coordination between ILO, UN Women, UNICEF and UNODC in implementation, to ensure information flow with the EU Delegations in the region facilitated through the EU Delegation in Thailand, as well as to provide an opportunity to identify and exchange good practices. The PSC met twice in 2024; it serves as an accountability mechanism.
16. In addition, a Regional Project Advisory Committee (RPAC) is convened at the regional level on an annual basis and comprises key tripartite plus stakeholders at the regional level including ASEAN bodies, and representatives of relevant EU Delegations and European Commission HQ. The RPAC provides guidance on the implementation of the project and endorses a proposed the regional annual work plan. At country level, a tripartite plus National Project Advisory Committee (NPAC) is convened annually in close coordination with the EU Delegation on the ground to provide guidance on the

implementation of the project and endorses a proposed annual work plan at national level.

Coherence with global and regional policy and international normative frameworks

17. This project is informed by and contributes to the 2030 Agenda particularly goals 5,8, 16 and 17. The project is grounded in international labour standards through the widely ratified ILO conventions of general application as well as those that contain specific provisions on migrant workers. Each of the ASEAN Member States also have obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Convention on the Rights of the child (CRC), and the widely ratified Protocol to Prevent Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children.
18. The project contributes to the implementation of the objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The project benefits from ILO's General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment and definition of recruitment fees and related costs, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, and the 2019 ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work.
19. 19. The project was designed to contribute to ASEAN regional commitments (ASEAN Consensus on the protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers (ASEAN Consensus); ASEAN Declaration on the Rights of Children in the Context of Migration; Regional Plan of Action on Implementing the ASEAN Declaration on the Rights of Children in the Context of Migration ASEAN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women and Children; ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Women (ASEAN RPA on EVAW); ASEAN Regional Plan of Action on the Elimination of Violence against Children (ASEAN RPA on EVAC); ASEAN Convention against Trafficking in Persons and Plan of Action against Trafficking in Persons; the Bohol Trafficking in Persons Work Plan; Hanoi Declaration and Road Map on Strengthening Social Work for Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN Community and ASEAN Regional Guidance on Empowering Women and Children: delivering quality social work services for those at risk of or affected by violence ; Declaration and Regional plan of Action on the Protection of Children from All Forms of Online Exploitation and Abuse in ASEAN).
20. PROTECT also engages with other stakeholders on labour migration, anti-trafficking, violence against women migrants and rights of children in migration, in the Asia-Pacific region such as in the UN Regional Network on Migration for Asia and Pacific; this offers opportunities to shape the agenda on the topic in the region and ultimately at a larger scale by contributing to the next International Migration Review Forum to be held in 2026

Synergies with EU strategies and political frameworks

21. The project responds to the EU's policy priorities for external relations and development cooperation on migration, through rights-based, gender, child-sensitive and survivor-centred policies and practices, as called for by the new EU Pact on Migration and Asylum, the EU Regional Multi-annual Indicative Programme for Asia and the Pacific (2021-2027), and the priorities set out by the EU Strategy to tackle Organised Crime (2021-2025), the EU Strategy on Combatting Trafficking in Human Beings (2021-2025), Renewed EU action plan against migrant smuggling (2021-2025) (COM (2021) 591 final), the EU Strategy on the Rights of the Child, EU Communication

on The Protection of Children in Migration (EU/COM2017/211), the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence, the EU Gender Action Plan III (GAP III) and relevant country level implementation plans, and the EU Gender Equality Strategy 2020-2025. Since implementation has commenced, the project also responds to the EU's Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive.

Rationale for the Mid-Term Review

22. Per the Project Document (PRODOC), the ILO's Policy guidelines for results-based evaluation provide the framework for carrying out the project's independent mid-term review. These guidelines adhere to the norms and standards of evaluation adopted by the United Nations Evaluation Group and the OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Standards.
23. The Project's PRODOC specifies that "[t]he mid-term evaluation which will take place around 18th months after the Action starts. It will be an independent evaluation, managed by an ILO certified evaluation manager and conducted by an independent evaluator. The midterm evaluation will assess the continued relevance of the interventions and progress made towards the planned objectives. The midterm evaluation will also offer an opportunity to make modifications to ensure that the objectives are achieved;" (page 36).
24. 24. Immediately following the Inception Phase from January-June 2024 the project undertook an independent Evaluability Assessment to ensure that project met minimum standards for monitoring and evaluation. This adheres to the OECD/DAC definition of evaluability as follows: "the extent to which an activity or a program can be evaluated in a reliable and credible fashion."¹ The Evaluability Assessment assessed and informed the M&E framework for the entire project cycle of the PROTECT project.
25. Recognising that throughout the 36 months of implementation, the project will undergo several internal and external reviews, the Evaluability Assessment noted concerns relating to stakeholder fatigue; too short time to implement recommendations; too short time since the project start, to measure progress; and the overall short time between the mid-and end-term that would cause significant overlap of the reports. It recommended that if a mid-term review must take place, some suggestions for the review:
 - Assessing, based on desk research and [participating UN organisations] PUNO interviews, whether contextual factors and trends have changed and whether project activities adapted to them.
 - identifying areas that are less effective or require potential (minor) adaptation. The PUNOs can jointly agree on the specific areas of interest (e.g. "is the route-based approach effective so far?" and "How committed is the government so far?").
 - Minimise the involvement of stakeholders in interviews or other consultations
26. This mid-term review will systematically assess the performance of the project against a set of key criteria and derived questions, and make recommendations for improved results or the development of future interventions. Emerging good practices and lessons learnt may also be highlighted. To ensure that the review addresses the information needs of all parties, the Evaluation Manager will work closely with the mid-term evaluation management group (EMG) in reviewing and endorsing the Terms of

Reference, qualifications of the independent consultant, mid-term review questions and schedule of meetings.

27. The Mid-Term Review report will be submitted to the relevant ILO, UN Women, UNICEF and UNODC departments, and the European Commission, as well as presented to other key stakeholders. The report may be made publicly available on the respective website of each organization. A management response to the recommendations will be developed and approved by the regional management team of the project in consultation with the Commission, ILO, UN Women, UNODC and UNICEF clearly stating the follow-up actions to be taken.

Purpose, scope and clients of the Mid-Term Review

Purpose

28. The Mid- Term Review will serve the following main purposes:
 - Provide an independent assessment of progress towards the stated objectives of the PROTECT results frameworks, assessing performance as per the established indicators vis-à-vis interventions and implementation modalities chosen and management arrangements;
 - Assess the continued relevance of the project in the current and emerging external environment in which PROTECT operates; provide strategic recommendations to inform the development of strategies, interventions and implementation of the project
 - Serve as a basis for reflection and dialogue amongst the project, the European Commission and key stakeholders, to ensure continued support and innovation for ensuring decent work and reducing vulnerabilities for women and children in the context of labour migration in this region.

Scope

29. The PROTECT project is a three-year project covering the period 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2026. The review will cover the implementation period 1 January 2024 – 31 March 2025, covering implementation in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand, as well as regional level. The mid-term review will look to determine ways in which the project can make mid-course corrections in order to fully realize its outcomes. The review will also attempt to contribute to organizational learning by assessing the changing external context and priorities of which PROTECT programming must remain cognizant. This information can inform future interventions.
30. The mid-term review will use the project documents, the evaluability assessment report, and other documentation as prepared for the implementation and monitoring of the PROTECT project. Desk review will be accompanied by key informant interviews (online), and online focus group discussions with key stakeholders (such as representative of beneficiary, participating governments, civil society partners, implementing partners at the national and regional levels, and partner agencies, as well as the project steering committee members); other data collections tools may also be utilized.
31. The mid-term review will be undertaken to include non-discrimination, gender equality, disability inclusion, human rights, international labour standards, tripartism and social dialogue, and environmental sustainability as crosscutting themes throughout its deliverables and process. In this regard, it will be guided by ILO's evaluation guidance

notes on gender, COVID-19, non-discrimination, disability inclusion, social dialogue and tripartism.

Clients

32. The main clients for the mid-term review are:
- Management team of the PROTECT project
 - The project donor (European Union)
 - ILO, UN Women, UNODC and UNICEF evaluation units at headquarters
 - Technical and administrative units of ILO, UN Women, UNODC and UNICEF at field office (ROAP)
33. Secondary parties making use of the results will include tripartite constituents and civil society organizations who have partnered with the project, as well as other agencies working on labour migration, violence against women, children in migration and human trafficking at national and regional levels.

Review criteria and questions

34. Keeping in line with the OECD/DAC Principles and the UNEG, ILO, UN Women, UNODC, UNICEF and EU evaluation guidelines, this mid-term review will be based on four criteria (relevance, coherence, efficiency, cross-cutting priorities and sustainability). For each criterion, questions are suggested in the table below. The consultant is expected to refine the below key questions and elaborate sub-questions and means for answering them in an evaluation matrix (to be provided in the inception report).
35. The mid-term review will explicitly apply key principles for human rights and gender-responsive evaluation (see guidance documents in the links provided below). To the extent possible, the project's M&E Plan will also serve as a reference to guide the review. These guidelines adhere to the evaluation norms and standards of the OECD-DAC Evaluation Quality Standards.
36. The proposed questions are available below. These questions could be subject to change during the review's inception phase, as relevant.

OECD/DAC criteria	Proposed questions for the mid-term review
Relevance and strategic fit	1. To what extent are the objectives of PROTECT remain consistent with beneficiary requirements, country needs, global priorities, international normative frameworks, and partners' and donor policies, especially with regards to migrant workers' rights, gender equality, child protection? 2. To what extent does PROTECT respond and adapt appropriately and according to the priorities and needs of stakeholders within the shifting and dynamic context at regional and country levels?
Coherence	3. To what extent is the project complementing/creating synergies between the PUNOs (ILO, UN Women, UNICEF and UNODC) and other development partners with respect to project objectives? 4. To what extent are the expected "interlinkages" of the outcomes (specific objectives) sufficiently defined and implemented coherently?

	5. To what extent is the project approach strategic and making use of the ILO, UN Women, UNICEF and UNODC's comparative advantages?
Efficiency	6. To what extent is PROTECT progressing with the planned work, and to what extent have the PUNOs used their human and financial resources efficiently? 7. How effectively does the project management team employ results-based monitoring approach? 8. Have the PUNOs' organizational structures, managerial support and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the coherent delivery of the project? This should include the structures at the regional and national levels.
Sustainability and cross-cutting priorities	9. To what extent is the project responding to cross-cutting priorities of non-discrimination, gender equality, disability inclusion, human rights, international labour standards, tripartism and social dialogue? To what extent is the project applying a rights-based approach in its implementation? priorities 10. To what extent are environmental safeguards integrated in the project approach? 11. Taking into account current programming and results, what is the likelihood that the results of PROTECT are durable and sustainable?

37. These questions can be refined by the consultant in the inception report. In doing so, the consultant will consider availability and reliability of data, how the answers will be used and if the data are regarded as credible. Other questions can be proposed at inception phase too for the consideration of the Evaluation Management Group.

Approach and methodology and timeframe for the mid-term review

Approach

38. This independent mid-term review will take a summative as well as formative approach. It will provide insights into the relevance, coherence, efficiency of the design and implementation of the PROTECT project (summative). It will also be forward-looking and provide findings and lessons learned and emerging trends for improved decision-making within the project (formative). A theory-based approach is recommended as the overarching framework for the review to test and refine the causal logic of the project's theory of change, and its effects on individuals, project outputs and policy outcomes.

Methodology

39. The methodology for the mid-term review will be based upon the ILO's evaluation policy and procedures, which adhere to international standards and best practices, articulated in the OECD/DAC Principles and the Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations System approved by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) – links to the guidance is available at the end of the ToR. Data collection will involve desk reviews, quantitative and/or qualitative methods (such as interviews), through electronic medium.

40. The methodology should ensure triangulation of information. The methodology should be selected for its ability to meet the mid-term review's criteria, answer the questions and meet the objectives of the mid-term review. It is strongly recommended that the

methodology allow the project management team to assess the factors that will lead to success and outcomes.

41. The methodology should ensure that recommendations from the mid-term review be strongly linked to the findings of the review and should provide clear guidance on how to address them.
42. The specific methodology will be defined by the consultant in consultation, and finalised in agreement, with the evaluation manager, and will be elaborated in detail in the inception report.
43. The ILO will establish an evaluation management group for this mid-term review, that will contribute to the relevance, credibility and utility of the independent mid-term review by offering in an advisory capacity a range of viewpoints. The Evaluation Manager will liaise with the management group, for them to provide comments to the different deliverables, and share with the consultant.
44. It is expected that the methodology for this mid-term review will include the following:
 - a) Desk Review: Review of documents and its component materials, publications, data, among others.
 - b) Inception meeting with the EMG to develop a common understanding on the technical and financial status of the project, the priority topics and questions for the mid-term review, the data collection process, the stakeholders to be consulted, and the outlines of the inception report and the final mid-term review report. This meeting will be online.
 - c) Development of an Inception Report with the final methodology and Work Plan. The draft inception report will be shared with the Evaluation Manager for feedback from the EMG. The Inception Report should transparently address and/or integrate all feedback and comments provided by the EMG. The consultant's response to the feedback received to the inception report should be tracked in a comment-tracking template for the purpose of transparency. The final Inception Report and the Work Plan will be subject to approval by the Evaluation Manager, EMG, and the ILO Evaluation Office. The report will indicate the steps/phases and dates of the process in which the mid-term review will take place; the inception report should include the data collection tools.
 - d) Data collection via structured/semi-structured interviews (through virtual means). The list of participants in the data collection will be drawn up by the project team, in consultation with the EMG, the evaluation manager, and the consultant.
 - e) Draft mid-term review report will be submitted to the evaluation manager, who will share it with the EMG for their feedback and clarifications (as required). The consolidated feedback will be submitted to the consultant for consideration. A Comment-tracking template will be used to ensure that the consultant's responses to the feedback is tracked for the purposes of transparency.
 - f) Online stakeholders' workshop where the consultant will present the preliminary findings, validate any data gaps, discuss the lessons learnt and identify key recommendations. The workshop with the stakeholders and EMG can take place online, simultaneous to the submission and review of the draft mid-term review report. The workshop will be technically organized by the consultant (i.e. setting the agenda for the discussions), in consultation with the evaluation manager, and with the logistic support of the project team.
 - g) Final report will be submitted to the evaluation manager after the consultant has addressed, as appropriate, the comments received to the draft report. The final report will be shared with the EMG and with the evaluation departments of each of the participating UN agencies in this project.

Timeframe

45. The proposed time frame and working days is as follows:

Tasks	Person responsible	# proposed working days required
1. Consultant briefed on ILO evaluation policy and the project	Evaluation manager	0.5
2. Inception meeting		0.5
3. Submission of the draft inception report	Consultant	3
4. Circulate draft inception report for feedback and share consolidated feedback to the consultant	Evaluation manager	-
5. Revision, finalisation and approval of inception report	Consultant, evaluation manager, EMG	2
6. Fieldwork/Data collection (as per the agreed list of stakeholders)	Consultant, project team	7
7. Submit draft mid-term review report with findings, recommendations (with annexes)	Consultant	4
8. Stakeholders' workshop (presentation of findings and recommendations, preparation and workshop)	Consultant, project team, EMG	1
9. Circulate draft mid-term review report for feedback and share consolidated feedback from EMG and other stakeholders to the consultant	Evaluation manager	-
10. Submit final mid-term review report (with annexes) and summary	Consultant	3
11. Review and approve the final report	Evaluation manager/EVAL/EGM	-
12. Final report is shared with the participating UN agencies and also shared with stakeholders	EVAL, project team	-
Total no of working days		21

Main outputs

46. The mid-term review should comprise the following deliverables, which must be presented in English and submitted to the Evaluation Manager in electronic version compatible with Word for Windows:

- a) Inception report
- b) Draft mid-term review report
- c) Final mid-term review report
- d) Mid-term Review Summary
- e) Presentation materials for the stakeholders' workshop

a) Inception report

47. The inception report will be prepared following a review of the available documents and an initial discussion with the EMG. The report should adhere to the ILO/EVAL Checklist 'Writing the Inception Report' (checklist 4.8).

48. The inception report should:

- Describe the conceptual framework that will be used to undertake the mid-term review;
- Elaborate the methodology and questions to be used, based on what has been proposed in the terms of reference, with any changes as required;
- Set out in some detail the data required to answer the review questions, data sources by specific evaluation questions, data collection methods, sampling and selection criteria of respondents for interviews (the instruments need to make provision for the triangulation of data wherever possible), limitations of the methodology, as well as the ethical norms to be adopted for the data collection.
- Detail the work plan for the mid-term review, indicating the phases in the mid-term review, their key deliverables and milestones;
- Include a stakeholder analysis and identify key stakeholders to be interviewed, the criteria for their selection (to keep a gender balance to the extent possible), and the tools to be used for interviews and discussions; and
- Provide an outline for the final mid-term review report.

49. The draft inception report will be circulated with mid-term evaluation group (EMG) for their feedback. The final inception report will incorporate and address any comments received from ILO, and the EMG involved in the review of the inception report.

50. The inception report should be approved by the evaluation manager before the consultant proceeds with the field work and data collection.

b) Draft mid-term review Report

51. The report must be prepared as per the ILO/EVAL Checklist 'Preparing the Evaluation Report' (checklist 4.2). In particular, the mid-term review report must include future-looking, practical and specific recommendations, including the identification of the project approaches, materials, tools, products and intervention models that could potentially be replicated or scaled.

- i. Cover page with key project and mid-term review data (please use checklist 4.3; the cover page should use the ILO cover page template)
- ii. Executive summary (which contains the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations; it should follow the guidance provided)
- iii. Acronyms and abbreviations
- iv. Context and description of the project including reported key reported results
- v. Methodology of the review (including limitations and ethical considerations)
- vi. Findings, which respond to all the review questions
- vii. Key results achieved by the project as per its objectives (including both expected and unexpected results). A table showing output and outcome level results through

- indicators and targets planned and achieved and comments on each, should be included.
 - viii. Lessons learnt and good practices (using the templates provided: template 4.1 for lessons learnt and template 4.2 for good practices)
 - ix. Clear set of conclusions, recommendations and possible future directions. Recommendations should clearly indicate the stakeholders to whom the recommendations are addressed.
 - x. Annexes should include the TOR, the questionnaires, the interview details of the stakeholders (dates, place, and organisation affiliation), and timeline of the consultations (interviews/FGD schedules) with the beneficiaries, bibliography, evaluation matrix
52. The draft mid-term review report will be reviewed by the evaluation manager and circulated internally by the evaluation manager for review and feedback from key stakeholders.

c) Final mid-term review Report

53. The final report will be submitted after the consultant has addressed the feedback received from the EMG, and the comments received from the internal review of the draft mid-term review report.
54. The final report, excluding annexes but including the executive summary (as per template provided in ILO Policy Guidelines for Evaluation) should not exceed 25 pages.
55. The quality of the report will be determined based on quality standards defined by the ILO Evaluation Office. The report should include a cover page (see list of documents below). The final version is subjected to final approval by EVAL.

d) mid-term review Summary

56. A summary of the final mid-term review report will be sent following the approval of the final report. The summary will be draw on the executive summary, the findings, and the recommendations of the final mid-term review report. The summary should adhere to ILO/EVAL checklist “preparing the evaluation report summary” (checklist 4.4 and utilise the ILO template).

e) Presentation materials

57. A powerpoint presentation of the findings and recommendations should be provided as part of the preparations for the stakeholders’ workshop.

Consultants should please note:

58. All the deliverables will be in English (unless specified otherwise), utilising the templates provided by ILO/EVAL prepared for this purpose (see list of templates below). The quality of the reports will be assessed against the relevant ILO/EVAL guidelines.
59. All drafts and final outputs, including supporting documents, analytical reports and raw data should be provided in electronic version compatible for Word for Windows. All intellectual property rights arising from the execution of these Terms of Reference are

assigned to the ILO. ILO will disseminate the final mid-term review report to the project's donor and other relevant internal and external stakeholders. Use of the data for publication and other presentation will only be made with prior agreement of the ILO. Key stakeholders will be able to make appropriate use of the mid-term review report in line with the original purpose and with appropriate acknowledgement.

Management arrangements

60. The mid-term review will be funded from the M&E budget of the PROTECT project. The funds will cover the daily fees of the consultant, and any expenses incurred by the consultant in relation to communication and data collection. The management arrangements are as follows:
61. Evaluation Manager: ILO will appoint a certified Evaluation Manager to manage this independent mid-term review, with oversight and in close collaboration with the EMG and the ILO Evaluation Office.
62. The evaluation manager is the main point of contact for the consultant on all technical and methodological matters related to the mid-term review. In addition, the evaluation manager is responsible for the following tasks:
- Prepare the mid-term review TOR with inputs from key stakeholders; selecting and contracting an independent consultant in coordination with ILO EVAL and the EMG.
 - Brief the consultant on ILO evaluation policies and processes; introduce them to the project team.
 - Review the criteria, questions and methodology with the consultant and liaise with concerned stakeholders as necessary
 - Monitor the implementation of the mid-term review's methodology, as appropriate and in such a way as to minimize bias in the findings
 - Review the draft deliverables and provide initial comments
 - Circulate the draft deliverables to all relevant consultants for their comments; forward the consolidated comments to the consultant for their action
 - Ensure that the final version of the deliverables addresses the stakeholders' comments (or an explanation why any has not been addressed) and meets ILO requirements
 - Liaise with the project team whenever their engagement is required to fulfil the requirements above
 - Liaise with ILO EVAL and the EMG on issues regarding the management of the mid-term review.
63. Mid-term Evaluation Management Group (EMG): PROTECT is jointly implemented by the ILO, UN Women, UNODC and UNICEF with the ILO as the lead agency. A TOR will be prepared for the EMG. Each agency will nominate a focal point to the EMG which is an advisory body to guide and serve as a reference point for the management of the eval mid-term review. The Evaluation manager will be the lead contact to liaise with the EMG on all matters related to the management. The EMG will be responsible for the following:
- Review and give feedback to the ToR of the Mid-Term Review.
 - Review the applications of potential consultants and agree on the selection of the consultant.
 - Review and give feedback to the draft inception report, workplan and tools

- Review and give feedback to the early findings, and the draft mid-term review report prior to finalisation, to ensure the technical soundness of the findings
- Participate in meetings related to the mid-term review as required
- Liaise/manage internal coordination processes/requirements as needed for their agency

Consultant: The mid-term review will be conducted by one independent consultant

64. The consultant will report to the Evaluation Manager and be responsible for the timely submission of deliverables, including the final mid-term review report, which should comply with ILO's Evaluation Policy Guidelines and related checklists and templates.
65. The consultant will be selected through a competitive process as per the criteria identified in the section below. The cost of the External Collaboration Contract for the consultant and, if applicable, the Service contract will be in accordance with ILO rules and regulations. The fees for will be for a total of 21 work days.
66. The consultant will be responsible for the following:
 - Design and implement the mid-term review using an approach agreed with evaluation manager
 - Draft and finalise the deliverables in accordance with this TOR's specifications and timeline
 - Report to the evaluation manager, keep her apprised of all phases of the mid-term review and consult with her in the preparation and finalisation of the deliverables
 - Facilitate contact with the stakeholders; facilitate contact, liaise with, and seek clarifications from, the project team and other stakeholders, as required, to ensure the satisfactory delivery of the deliverables
 - Make themselves available, if required, to take part in briefings and discussions, online on dates to be agreed, in line with the work outlined in these TOR
 - Develop the agenda of the stakeholder group workshop; present the preliminary findings of the mid-term review.
 - Adhere to ILO's Code of Conduct for Evaluators at all times, and report any violation to the evaluation manager.
67. The consultant should note that all data and information received from the ILO, UN Women, UNODC and UNICEF for the purpose of this mid-term review will be treated confidentially and are only to be used in connection with the execution of this TOR.
68. Project Team: PROTECT is jointly implemented by the ILO, UN Women, UNODC and UNICEF with the ILO as the lead agency. The ILO PROTECT project team will be responsible for administrative contractual arrangements with the evaluator and provide any logistical and other assistance as may be required. The project team (i.e the project representatives from all agencies, unless specified) will be responsible for the following tasks:
 - Provide all relevant project documents, materials and information to the evaluator and ensuring that all the documentation is up-to-date and easily accessible;
 - Prepare a comprehensive list of recommended interviewees, providing their contact details, and facilitating introductions and providing logistical support (as required)
 - Be interviewed and provide inputs as requested by the evaluator during the mid-term review process;

- Review and provide comments on draft inception and mid-term review reports, as requested (and manage internal coordination processes/requirements as needed for their agency);
- Support the preparation and finalisation of the management response to the findings of the mid-term review, in consultation with the PSC, and the EU clearly stating the follow-up actions to be taken
- Organize and participate in stakeholder consultations, other relevant briefings and discussions as appropriate; and
- Provide other logistical and administrative support to the evaluator(s) as may be required.

Desired profile of consultant/evaluator:

69. The consultant will have:

- A graduate degree in law, social sciences, gender, migration or other relevant academic fields;
- At least 7 years' experience in Monitoring and Evaluation of which at least 5 years' experience as an independent evaluator/team leader in evaluating projects and programmes at the international level related to labour migration, gender and migration, or comparative experience;
- Experience in conducting evaluations for UN organizations, including, mid-term evaluations of projects and programmes; experience in conducting joint evaluations is highly desirable.
- Expertise in qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods; experience of utilising online methodologies of data collection would be an asset.
- Familiarity with the ASEAN region, and with evaluating projects and interventions related to women's labour migration, violence against women migrant workers, children in the context of migration, and anti-trafficking
- Excellent analytical and communication skills;
- Ability to meet ILO standards of utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy and accountability
- Ability to communicate effectively in writing and produce high quality reports
- Attention to detail and the ability to produce high-quality deliverables under time constraints.
- Understanding of the UN system, the UN evaluation norms and standards is desirable.

70. The consultant must have no previous involvement in the implementation of the PROTECT project.

Timeline and work plan

71. A tentative timeline for the mid-term review is proposed as follows:

- a) Submission of draft inception report: mid-May 2025
- b) Submission of final inception report: late-May 2025
- c) Submission of draft mid-term report: mid-June 2025
- d) Presentation of the draft report to the EMG and key stakeholders: mid-June 2025
- e) June 2025
- f) Submission of comments to the final report from the EMG and key stakeholders: mid-June 2025
- g) Submission of final report: end-June 2025

Completion of the evaluation: end-June 2025

Payment terms

72. The total value of this contract is US\$ 8,400. The daily rate is US\$ 400 per day. The payments will be undertaken as follows:
- First payment – 20% (USD 1680) upon submission of the final inception report to the satisfaction of the ILO and technical authorisation of the evaluation manager
 - Second payment – 30% (USD 2520) upon submission of the draft evaluation report to the satisfaction of the ILO and technical authorisation of the evaluation manager
 - Final payment – 50% (USD 4200) upon submission of the final evaluation report, evaluation summary and final presentation materials to the satisfaction of the ILO and technical authorisation of the evaluation manager

Insurance

73. This is a homebased assignment, and the External Collaborator is not required to travel. The ILO accepts no liability in the event of death, injury or illness of the External Collaborator. The External Collaborator attests that he/she is adequately covered by insurance for these risks. In no circumstances shall the External Collaborator be covered by any ILO insurance and it is his/her responsibility to take out, at his/her own expense, any personal insurance policies he/she may consider necessary, including a civil liability insurance policy.

Ethical considerations

74. The mid-term review will strictly comply with UN standards for evaluations as specified in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation and be guided by the ILO Evaluation Policy. A copy of the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system is attached to these terms of reference and the evaluator is expected to familiarise themselves with, and adhere to, the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation.
75. The consultant should adhere to the highest level of technical and ethical standards. They should fulfil the criteria of professionalism, impartiality and credibility. They should not have any links to project management, nor any conflict of interest that would interfere with the independence of the mid-term review. The evaluators are expected to disclose any possible conflicts of interest that could interfere with the independence of the mid-term review. The consultant will also commit to adhere to the ILO Code of Conduct for Evaluators (link below). As per ILO Office Directive (IGDS 695), they have to complete the mandatory online training module on the “prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) by UN Personnel”.
76. The mid-term review will observe confidentiality with regard to sensitive information and feedback obtained through individual and group interviews. The mid-term review and the consultant will use respectful language and behaviour when communicating with, and about, persons with disabilities.

Additional documentation

77. The consultant is expected to seek guidance from and familiarise themselves with the following documentation:

ILO Policies related to Evaluation

1. ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations, <https://www.ilo.org/publications/ilo-policy-guidelines-results-based-evaluation-principles-rationale>
UN Guidance for Evaluations
2. UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016). Available at: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>
3. UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation , https://www.uneval.org/uneval_publications/uneval-ethical-guidelines-evaluation
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ILO Guidance for Evaluators

4. Checklist 4.5: Documents for Project Evaluators, https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_mas/@eval/documents/publication/wcms_746812.pdf
5. Guidance Note 3.1: Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation, https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_mas/@eval/documents/publication/wcms_746716.pdf
6. Guidance Note 3.2: Adapting evaluation methods to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746717.pdf
7. ILO Code of Conduct Agreement for Evaluators (to be signed along with the contract), <https://www.ilo.org/publications/ilo-code-conduct-agreement-evaluators>
8. Protocol on collecting evaluative evidence on the ILO's COVID-19 response measures through project and programme evaluations, https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_mas/@eval/documents/publication/wcms_757541.pdf

ILO EVAL Templates for evaluators

9. Checklist 4.8 Writing the inception report, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746817.pdf
10. Checklist 4.2 Preparing the evaluation report, https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746808.pdf
 - template for the title page (see also checklist 4.3),
 - <https://intranet.ilo.org/collaborate/evalsp/Documents/Template%204.4%20-%20title%20page%20EN.docx>
 - template for executive summary,
 - https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/@ed_mas/@eval/documents/publication/wcms_746822.pdf
 - template for completing lessons learned,
 - https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746820.pdf
 - Template for emerging good practices,
 - https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746821.pdf
11. Checklist 4.3 Filling in the title page (see also “template for the title page”),

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746810.pdf

12. Checklist 4.4 Writing the evaluation summary,
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746811.pdf

- Template for the evaluation summary,
<https://intranet.ilo.org/collaborate/evalksp/Documents/Template%204.3%20-%20Summary%20EN.docx>

Additional Materials

13. OECD/DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance,
<https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/sub-issues/development-co-operation-evaluation-and-effectiveness/evaluation-criteria.html>

Annex 2. Evaluation matrix

Table 1. Relevance and strategic fit

QUESTION	SUB-QUESTIONS	METHODS & SOURCES	INDICATORS
TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE OBJECTIVES OF PROTECT REMAIN CONSISTENT WITH BENEFICIARY REQUIREMENTS?	To what extent does the PROTECT project continue to address the main needs of women migrants?	- Desk research on project design and women migrants' needs - Interviews with PUNOs - Interviews with stakeholders	Extent to which project objectives and activities address the main issues faced by women migrants, as reported by respondents and in literature Extent to which respondents perceive that the project addresses the main needs of women migrants
	To what extent does the PROTECT project continue to address the main needs of children migrants?	- Desk research on project design and child migrants' needs - Interviews with PUNOs - Interviews with stakeholders	Extent to which project objectives and activities address the main issues faced by child migrants, as reported by respondents and in literature Extent to which respondents perceive that the project addresses the main needs of child migrants
	To what extent does the PROTECT project continue to address the main needs of other at-risk migrants and communities?	- Desk research on project design and at-risk groups' needs, and on most vulnerable migrant groups - Interviews with PUNOs - Interviews with stakeholders	Extent to which project objectives and activities address the main issues faced by vulnerable migrants, as reported by respondents and in literature Extent to which respondents perceive that the project addresses the main needs of at-risk groups
TO WHAT EXTENT DO THE OBJECTIVES OF PROTECT REMAIN CONSISTENT WITH INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORKS?	To what extent does the project continue to align with Gender Equality frameworks and partners' policies on this topic?	- Desk research on GE frameworks, UN WOMEN (and other PUNOs') policies, and their reference in the project design - Interviews with PUNOs	Extent to which the project objectives align with the objectives of global frameworks. Extent to which project activities align with UN WOMEN and PUNO's policies Extent to which respondents perceive that the project aligns with and complies with global frameworks and policies
	To what extent does the project continue to align with Child Protection frameworks and partners' policies on this topic?	- Desk research on child protection frameworks, UNICEF (and other PUNOs') policies, and their reference in the project design - Interviews with PUNOs	Extent to which the project objectives align with the objectives of global frameworks. Extent to which project activities align with UNICEF's and PUNO's policies Extent to which respondents perceive that the project aligns with and complies with global frameworks and policies

TO WHAT EXTENT DOES PROTECT ADDRESS KEY COUNTRY AND GLOBAL PRIORITIES?	To what extent does the project continue to align with migrants' rights frameworks and partners' policies on this topic?	- Desk research on migrants' rights frameworks, PUNOs' policies, and their reference in the project design - Interviews with PUNOs	Extent to which the project objectives align with the objectives of global frameworks. Extent to which project activities align with PUNOs' policies on migrants' rights Extent to which respondents perceive that the project aligns with and complies with global frameworks and policies
	To what extent does the project continue to respond to country-level needs and priorities?	- Desk research on the migration context in each country, and on project design - Interviews with PUNOs - Interviews with stakeholders	Extent to which the project design identified key issues and priorities in each country Extent to which the project design targets the main issues and priorities in each country Extent to which respondents perceive that the project addressed each country's main needs and priorities
	To what extent does the project continue to respond to regional- and global-level needs and priorities?	- Desk research on the migration context in the region, and on project design - Interviews with PUNOs - Interviews with stakeholders	Extent to which the project design identified key issues and priorities across the region Extent to which the project design targets the main issues and priorities in the region Extent to which respondents perceive that the project addressed ASEAN's main needs and priorities
	To what extent has the project adapted to changing needs and priorities at different levels, e.g. emergence of online scams?	- Desk research on migration trends over the past year and on project implementation reports - Interviews with PUNOs - Interviews with stakeholders	Examples of, and extent to which national and regional migration contexts and trends have changed recently Examples of adjusted project activities to accommodate these changes in the project activities Extent to which respondents perceive that the project adapted to changing needs and circumstances

Table 2. Coherence

QUESTION	SUB-QUESTIONS	METHODS & SOURCES	INDICATORS
TO WHAT EXTENT IS THE PROJECT COMPLEMENTING/ CREATING SYNERGIES BETWEEN THE PUNOS (ILO, UN WOMEN, UNICEF AND UNODC) AND OTHER DEVELOPMENT	To what extent does the project strategy, design and implementation so far rely on the specific strengths and comparative advantage of each PUNO?	- Desk research on the project design, roles of each PUNO and reflection on their comparative advantage - Interviews with PUNOs - Interviews with stakeholders	Extent to which the project design identified the comparative strengths of each PUNO and allocated tasks and activities accordingly Extent to which respondents perceive that each PUNO's role relates to their comparative advantage
	To what extent has the project explored and created synergies with other projects and organisations?	- Desk research on other initiatives in the region and on project documentation	Extent to which the PROTECT objectives and activities share commonalities with other initiatives Extent to which project documentation reflects on interactions and coordination with other initiatives (if any)

PARTNERS WITH RESPECT TO PROJECT OBJECTIVES?		- Interviews with PUNOs - Interviews with stakeholders	Extent to which respondents perceive that the project was able to explore synergies and mutual reinforcement with other initiatives
	To what extent has the project faced duplications or overlaps with other initiatives in the region?	- Desk research on other initiatives in the region and on project documentation - Interviews with PUNOs - Interviews with stakeholders	Extent to which the PROTECT objectives and activities share commonalities with other initiatives Extent to which project documentation reflects on interactions and coordination with other initiatives (if any) Extent to which respondents perceive that the project overlapped or created unnecessary duplications with other initiatives
TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THE EXPECTED "INTERLINKAGES" OF THE OUTCOMES (SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES) SUFFICIENTLY DEFINED AND IMPLEMENTED COHERENTLY?	To what extent can the linkage between outputs, outcomes under the first objective be witnessed and verified?	- Desk research on project implementation - Interviews with PUNOs - Interviews with stakeholders	Extent to which the planned activities and outputs under Objective 1 were achieved Extent to which initial signs of results under Objective 1 are visible Extent to which respondents perceive that initial results can be attributed to the activities of the project
	To what extent can the linkage between outputs, outcomes under the second objective be witnessed and verified?	- Desk research on project implementation - Interviews with PUNOs - Interviews with stakeholders	Extent to which the planned activities and outputs under Objective 2 were achieved Extent to which initial signs of results under Objective 2 are visible Extent to which respondents perceive that initial results can be attributed to the activities of the project
	To what extent can the linkage between outputs, outcomes under the third objective be witnessed and verified?	- Desk research on project implementation - Interviews with PUNOs - Interviews with stakeholders	Extent to which the planned activities and outputs under Objective 3 were achieved Extent to which initial signs of results under Objective 3 are visible Extent to which respondents perceive that initial results can be attributed to the activities of the project

Table 3. Efficiency

QUESTION	SUB-QUESTIONS	METHODS & SOURCES	INDICATORS
HOW EFFICIENT HAS THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION BEEN SO FAR?	How efficient has the project been with its financial resources?	- Desk research on project budget and work plans - Interviews with PUNOs	Extent to which the current project status aligns with planned spending at this stage Examples of over-or underspending Examples of cost mitigation, cost-sharing, savings made Extent to which respondents perceive that the project was efficient so far

HOW EFFICIENT IS THE PROJECT MONITORING SO FAR?	How efficient has the project been with its human resources?	- Desk research on staff planning and onboarding - Interviews with PUNOs	Extent to which all planned staff was hired according to the plan and timeline Extent to which respondents perceive that human resource allocation has been efficient so far
	How timely has the project been so far and what caused delays (if any)?	- Desk research on project design, timelines, and implementation reports - Interviews with PUNOs	Examples of discrepancies according to the initial timeline Examples of factors causing delays, as reported in project documentation and by respondents
	Are the project monitoring tools used correctly and timely across the PUNOs?	- Desk research on M&E tools and reporting - Interviews with PUNOs	Extent to which the M&E plan is followed, and data is available as planned Extent to which respondents perceive that M&E is conducted timely and correctly
	How are monitoring results used for project decision-making so far?	- Desk research on implementation reports, meeting minutes - Interviews with PUNOs	Examples of adaptations and discussions based on M&E data Extent to which respondents perceive that M&E data influences project meetings and decision-making
HOW EFFICIENT IS THE PROJECT'S COORDINATION	How efficient is project management and coordination at national level?	- Desk research on meeting minutes and implementation reports - Interviews with PUNOs - Interviews with stakeholders	Examples of management mechanisms, meeting minutes, project timeliness and efficiency Extent to which respondents perceive that the project is well-managed at national level
	How efficient is project management and coordination at regional level?	- Desk research on meeting minutes and implementation reports - Interviews with PUNOs - Interviews with stakeholders	Examples of management mechanisms, meeting minutes, project timeliness and efficiency Extent to which respondents perceive that the project is well-managed at regional level
	What benefits and challenges arise from the multi-agency structure?	- Desk research on meeting minutes and implementation reports - Interviews with PUNOs - Interviews with stakeholders	Examples of efficiency and inefficiencies created by the multi-agency structure as reported in documentation and by respondents Extent to which respondents perceive that the PUNO structure brings benefits Extent to which respondents perceive that the PUNO structure brings challenges

Table 4. Sustainability

Question	Sub-questions	Methods & Sources	indicators
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<i>Taking into account current programming and results, what is the likelihood that the results of PROTECT are durable and sustainable?</i>	Does the project have a suitable exit strategy or sustainability strategy, or other measures to ensure sustainability?	- Desk research - Interviews with PUNOs	Existence of an exit or a sustainability strategy Extent to which respondents perceive that the project has a sufficient focus on its sustainability Extent to which respondents are satisfied with the exit/sustainability strategy
	Are there initial signs of ownership among stakeholders?	- Desk research on project implementation - Interviews with PUNOs - Interviews with stakeholders	Examples of ownership by stakeholders reflected in activities (e.g. hosting activities, participation of staff, co-writing publications, initiative on activities, etc.) Extent to which respondents perceive that stakeholders show ownership of the project and its initial results
	Do stakeholders have / will stakeholders have sufficient capacity and resources to sustain the results?	- Desk research on project implementation - Interviews with PUNOs - Interviews with stakeholders	Examples of project activities focused on building capacity to sustain results Examples of budget lines, staff, or other signs showing integration of the activities in daily work of stakeholders Extent to which respondents perceive that stakeholders have sufficient capacity and resources to sustain the results

Annex 3. Evaluation schedule

The evaluation was conducted along **three main phases**: 1) inception phase, 2) data collection 3) reporting and finalisation.

	May				June				July				Aug				Sept	
	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7	Week 8	Week 9	Week 10	Week 11	Week 12	Week 13	Week 14	Week 15	Week 16	Week 17	Week 18
Kick-off call with ILO																		
Initial desk research and interviews																		
Elaboration of the methodology																		
Submission of the Inception Report																		
Feedback and resubmission of the IR																		
Online interviews and FGDs																		
Analysis and reporting, presentation																		
Submission of the Draft Report																		
Receipt of feedback																		
Resubmission and finalisation Stakeholder workshop																		
Stakeholder workshop																		

Annex 4. Documents reviewed

Background reports

ASEAN Migration Outlook, 2022. <https://asean.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/ASEAN-Migration-Outlook-Final.pdf>

ASEAN Declaration on Strengthening the Care Economy and Fostering Resilience Towards the Post-2025 ASEAN Community

Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) (2024) "Asia-Pacific Migration Report 2024: Assessing Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration. <https://asiapacific.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/ap-c1369-escap-2024-rp-apmr-2024-s.pdf>

ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers, 2022. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2024-12/MIGRANT%20E2%80%9320ILO%20Global%20Estimates%20Exec%20Summary_Embargo.pdf

ILO Brief: Labour Migration in Asia and the Pacific. <https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/2025-04/2%202025%20Labour%20Migration%20Brief%202025%20-27022025-2.pdf>

ILO, IOM and Walk Free (2022) Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage. https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_norm/%40ipec/documents/publication/wcms_854733.pdf

ILO and UN Women (2020). Policy Brief: COVID-19 and Women Migrant Workers in ASEAN; World Health Organization (2021). Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018.

UNICEF Evaluation Policy. <https://www.unicef.org/executiveboard/revised-evaluation-policy-unicef-srs-2023>

UNICEF (2019). Assessment of Child Protection Services for Migrant Children in Thailand.

UNODC Evaluation Policy. https://www.unodc.org/documents/evaluation/Tools/UNODC_Evaluation_Handbook.pdf

UNODC Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, 2024. https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/glotip/2024/GLOTIP2024_BOOK.pdf

UN WOMEN evaluation policy. <https://www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2022/05/un-women-evaluation-handbook-2022>

Vigil, S., Steiner, C., Kim, D., Flores, D., and Davis, M. (2024): Climate change, vulnerability and migration: Impacts on children and youth in Southeast Asia. World Vision International and Stockholm Environment Institute, Bangkok.

Project reports

PROTECT project document.

Loes van der Graaf (2024) Evaluability Assessment Report PROTECT.

PROTECT First Annual Report 2024.

Annex 5. List of interview respondents

Table 5. Stakeholder interviews

#	Organization	# of respondents	Country	Gender of participants
1	Ministry of Social Affairs, Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation	Three	Cambodia	One female, two males
2	Ministry of Social Affairs, Veteran and Youth Rehabilitation	Two	Cambodia	One female, one male
3	Cambodian Women's Crisis Centre	One	Cambodia	Female
4	Legal Support for Children and Women	One	Cambodia	Male
5	National Committee for Counter Trafficking	Three	Cambodia	One female, two males
6	Ministry of Women's Affairs	Two	Cambodia	Two females
7	Association of Domestic Workers	One	Cambodia	Female
8	Min. of Social Development and Human Security, division of anti-trafficking (2)	One	Thailand	Female
9	Labour Protection Network	One	Thailand	Female
10	Legal Status Network Foundation	One	Thailand	Male
11	FLEP/HOMENET	One	Thailand	Female
12	Shero	One	Thailand	Female
13	State's Enterprises Workers Relations Confederation	One	Thailand	Female
14	Ministry of Labour	One	Thailand	Female
15	APINDO	One	Indonesia	Male
16	JBM	One	Indonesia	Female
17	President's Office	One	Indonesia	Female
18	KP2MI	Two	Indonesia	One male, one female
19	PERTIMIG	Nine	Malaysia	Eight females, one male
20	C4CENTER	One	Malaysia	Male
21	ASEAN Poverty Eradication and Gender Division	One	ASEAN	Male
22	ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children	One	ASEAN	Female
23	International Domestic Workers Federation	One	ASEAN/ regional	Female

Table 6. PUNO Focus Group Discussions

#	PUNO	# of participants
1	UNODC	Six: three regional and three national staff
2	UNICEF	Six: two regional, and four national staff
3	ILO	Seven: four regional, three national staff
4	UN WOMEN	Six: four regional, two national staff

Table 7. Additional consultations

#	Name	Organisation	Position
1	Deepa Barathi	ILO	Regional PROTECT manager