



ILO EVALUATION

- **Evaluation Title:** **Strengthening Skills Development in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar through South-South and triangular cooperation**
- **ILO TC/SYMBOL:** **RAS/18/09/CHN**
- **Type of Evaluation :** **Internal Mid-Term**
- **Country(ies) :** **Cambodia and Lao PDR**
- **Date of the evaluation:** **May-August 2023**
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- **ILO Technical Backstopping Office:** **SKILLS**
- **Other agencies involved in joint evaluation:** **N/A**
- **Date project ends:** **31 Dec 2025**
- **Donor: country and budget US\$** **3,999,960 USD**
- **Evaluation Manager:** **Yutong Liu**
- **Key Words:** **Skills Development, PES, Youth Employment, Digitalization, Employment Policy**

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

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Introduction

This report presents the mid-term evaluation of the project, assessing the progress achieved from November 2018 to December 2022. The evaluation aims to provide actionable guidance on the relevance, effectiveness, and sustainability of the project, while promoting accountability and organizational learning within the International Labour Organization (ILO).

The evaluation follows the ILO evaluation policy and strategy, focusing on evaluating project outputs, suggesting adjustments to the implementation strategy, assessing activities, and analyzing management practices to maximize impact. The findings and recommendations will be publicly available, contributing to transparency and knowledge sharing.

The evaluation covers the project components in Lao PDR and Cambodia, involving various stakeholders. While the Myanmar Project component was not extensively examined, the relevance of its design was evaluated through document and information analysis.

The primary audiences of this evaluation are the ILO and the project's development partner, with secondary audiences including committee members, relevant stakeholders, ministries, and TVET institutions.

Key evaluation criteria and cross-cutting concerns such as gender equality were addressed. The evaluation methodology adhered to ILO norms and standards, employing qualitative and quantitative approaches, including document review, interviews, surveys, case studies, and data analysis. Data triangulation techniques were used to enhance validity.

Objectives

The objective of the evaluation was to assess, evaluate, and provide actionable guidance on the relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the project. This evaluation serves as a critical means to improve decision-making and generate knowledge, while at the same time promoting accountability in project management and implementation. By conducting a performance assessment of the project, the evaluation aimed to identify what worked, what did not work, and the underlying reasons, including lessons learned and good practices.

The evaluation adhered to the ILO evaluation policy 2017 and the ILO evaluation strategy 2018-21, which provided the organizational approach and results-based framework for evaluation within the ILO. The ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL) governs the evaluation function and ensures the proper implementation of the evaluation policy, while maintaining independence. As an accountability and organizational learning tool, evaluation in the ILO supports the promotion of decent work and social justice for ILO constituents and staff members.

Within this context, this evaluation informs the case for future work in the project area, including any possible project extension. By conducting a comprehensive assessment, the evaluation helps strengthen the organization's learning processes and supports informed decision-making for future endeavours in the same field.

The findings and recommendations of the evaluation will be publicly available, along with summaries, lessons learned, good practices, and management responses on i-eval Discovery.

The mid-term evaluation focused on two core objectives:

- To evaluate the project progress achieved to date, with a specific emphasis on project outputs.
- Suggest improvements to the project design and implementation including potential adjustments to strategy, activities, and management.

Evaluation Scope

Operational Scope:

The evaluation covers the period from November 2018 until December 31, 2022.

Geographical Scope:

All project activities that took place in Lao PDR with the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, Lao Federation of Trade Union, Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and other counterparts such as the Skills Development Centers and TVETs.

All project activities that took place in Cambodia with the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training, Ministry of Tourism, CAMFEBA, National Trade Union Council, and other counterparts such as Technical Training Institutes.

Regarding the Myanmar Project component, the ILO Governing Body had decided to establish a Commission of Inquiry in respect of the non-observance of International Labour Standards in Myanmar, following the military coup in February 2021. Based on the office guidance, the evaluation did not look in-depth at this project country component. However, it intended to assess the relevance of the project design for the country through document and information analysis.

Audience:

The primary intended audiences of the evaluation are:

- The International Labour Organization (ILO), including the direct project team, the ILO Offices in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar, and the Specialists for the project.
- The Project's development partner MOHRSS.
- Secondary audiences include:
 - Project Advisory Committee Members.
 - Relevant ILO workers and employers' representatives
 - Relevant Ministries
 - TVET institutions
 - ILO PARDEV
 - ILO ROAP

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation addressed key ILO evaluation criteria as outlined in the 4th edition of the ILO's "Policy Guidelines for Evaluation (2020)." These criteria included:

- Relevance and validity of design
- Coherence
- Progress and effectiveness
- Efficiency of resource use
- Effectiveness of management arrangements
- Sustainability
- Impact as defined in the project design.

The evaluation considered cross-cutting issues namely gender equality and non-discrimination. These issues were established as policy drivers in the ILO's Strategic Plan for 2018–21. Therefore, they were integrated throughout the methodology, deliverables, and final report of the evaluation.

Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation methodology complied with the International Labour Organization's (ILO) evaluation norms and standards and adhered to ethical safeguards specified in the ILO's evaluation procedures. The ILO aligned with the United Nations (UN) system of evaluation norms and standards, as well as the Evaluation Quality Standards of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development/Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC).

To gather data and information from project stakeholders, the evaluation employed qualitative and quantitative participatory approaches. The following techniques were utilized for data collection, with a focus on triangulating data to enhance the validity and rigor of evaluation findings:

1. Document Review: Relevant project documents, including project reports, implementation plans, and monitoring data, were reviewed to understand the project's context, activities, and progress.

Requested documents included:

- Baseline reports and related data
 - Skills Development and SSTC related policies, laws, and regulations
 - Monitoring data/documents and development cooperation reports
 - ILO Decent Work Country Programme Documents
 - National Development Frameworks
 - Project beneficiary documentation
 - Studies and research undertaken by the project
 - UN development frameworks
 - List of project stakeholders
2. On-line Interviews: Structured interviews were conducted with key stakeholders, such as project beneficiaries, government officials, project staff, and partner organizations. These discussions provided insights into stakeholders' perspectives, experiences, and perceptions related to the project.
 3. Survey Questionnaire: Additional quantitative data was collected through a survey administered online to gather information on project outcomes, impacts, and beneficiary feedback.
 4. Lessons learned and good practices: In-depth lessons learned, and good practices were compiled to examine specific aspects or components of the project in detail.
 5. Existing Data Analysis: Relevant quantitative data from project monitoring reports, databases, and secondary sources was analysed to provide insights into project progress, outputs, and outcomes.

All data collection was conducted online/virtually, with logistical, translation, and administrative support provided by the ILO project team as required. This approach ensured the evaluation could be conducted at low cost while maintaining efficiency and effectiveness.

To ensure the validity and rigor of the evaluation findings, data triangulation was employed. Triangulation involved the use of the multiple data sources and methods as mentioned above, to corroborate and cross-validate the findings. The following approaches were applied for data triangulation:

- Methodological Triangulation: Different data collection methods, such as interviews, surveys, and case studies, were used to capture a comprehensive understanding of the project's performance focusing on similar aspects, which later lead to a unique interpretation of the findings. Combining qualitative and quantitative data collection methods provided a holistic view of the project's effectiveness.
- Data Source Triangulation: Information was collected from various sources, including several project stakeholders, project documents, monitoring reports, and secondary data. By comparing data from

different sources, inconsistencies or patterns could be identified, enhancing the credibility of the evaluation findings.

By employing these triangulation techniques, the evaluation strengthened the reliability, validity, and robustness of the data and findings. It enabled a comprehensive assessment of the project's progress, outcomes, and impacts from multiple angles, mitigating the limitations of relying on a single data source or method.

Main findings: Analysis by evaluation criteria

Relevance and validity of design

Relevance vis-à-vis country development priorities

The project is highly relevant to the development priorities of Cambodia and Lao, aligning with their national plans and strategic frameworks. The project in Myanmar has been impacted due to changed priorities, following to UN and ILO guidance in the aftermath of military coup.

Cambodia

Upon document revision for Cambodia, the evaluation assesses the Project as highly relevant vis-à-vis country development priorities. The project's objectives are in line with national and international development frameworks.

Cambodia's National Strategic Development Plan (NSDP) 2019-2023 outlines policies and priority actions for the country and presents a workplan for implementation, which includes roles and responsibilities for different government actors. The plan refers to the 4th industrial revolution, climate change, changing economic balances and the influence of the positive performance of the Chinese economy in other Asian economies. Under this context, the plan sees an opportunity on the development of Cambodian human capital and skills. The plan's key priority and action No.3 is dedicated to Human Resources Development listing among others the following priorities: promoting policies in STEM education, enhancing teaching methods for 21st-century skills, expanding life skills education, and providing technical training opportunities. The aim is to prepare students for the job market, develop their technical skills in areas like science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, and foster creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

Although the Modernizing TVET: TVET Strategic action plan 2019-2023, does not make specific reference to the need for skills forecasting methodologies at the country level, it looks at matching skills supply and demand, through a stronger involvement of the private sector in TVET granted by strengthening PPP development. Similarly, the Lifelong Learning Policy, launched in 2019, affirms Cambodia's commitment to provide lifelong, inclusive, equitable learning opportunities to all, including literacy and technical and vocational skills.

The Decent Work Country Program for Cambodia lists the remaining challenges that Cambodia needs to address to achieve its aspiration to become an Upper-Middle Income Country by 2030. The first of these refers to the level of skills of its population, and to reducing mismatches between skills and jobs. Under this contexts skills development is highlighted as Priority 1 of the DWCP, under Strategic Goal 2 "Creating more jobs, both qualitatively and quantitatively, for citizens, especially youth through skills training, provision of job market information, improvement in working conditions and businesses and investment promotion inside and outside the country". The UNDWCP lists South-South Cooperation modalities as a key source of resources, knowledge, and skills as key resourcing priorities during implementation of the DWCP 2019-2023.

UNDAF in Cambodia Outcome 2 focuses on expanding economic opportunities (prosperity), intermediate outcome 1 of it directly relates to promoting labour market opportunities, by amongst others investing in skills training. The outcome intends to focus, amongst others, on supporting youth employment and promoting TVET and work-based accreditation. This last is linked to intermediate outcome 2 of the same framework, which promotes the involvement of private sector on issues including skills training. Furthermore, the framework holds regional integration at ASEAN level of high importance for Cambodia's development and moves ahead to mention that, considering the evolving economic development of Cambodia, UN interventions shall remain flexible and serve as a global collaboration-enabler facilitating ASEAN level and South-South cooperation.

Lao PDR

The evaluation report finds the project highly relevant to the development priorities outlined in Lao's 9th Five-year national socio-economic development plan (2021-2025) and the DWCP for Lao PDR.

Lao's 9TH Five-year national socio-economic development plan (2021-2025) provides strategic direction for the socio-economic development of the country, including the development of human resources. The plan also sets up the ambition of Lao to become an upper middle-income country by 2030 and bases its overall directions on said objective. The third of three overall directions highlight the importance of developing quality human resources as an important factor in promoting socio-economic development. The development plan's Output 3, which focuses on improving workforce skills and productivity, closely matches the project's development objective. The plan's aims to develop the quality of the labour force and balance it with labour market demands and create stable and diversified jobs. The plan's priority activities, such as developing a labour market database, expanding the employment service network, and strengthening labour relations, align with the project's goals, especially strategic steps 1 research, 4 the establishment of a SSTC Skills Development Network and 5 research and context review to validate areas of strengthening public employment services.

The Decent Work Country Program for Lao Outcome 5 focuses on supporting a private sector and skills development, employment and digitalization. Output 5.3. refers to improved TVET and skills development systems, including through and 5.5. Improved capacity and tools to provide up-to-date gender-responsive labour market analysis to support the effectiveness of public employment services (PES) and to inform TVET planning, are directly linked to the project design.

Myanmar

The project aligns with Myanmar's development framework and laws focusing on human resource development and skills training. However, due to the changed priorities resulting from the security crisis, the relevance of the project has been impacted as development priorities have shifted to the humanitarian area.

Myanmar Sustainable Development Plan 2018-2030 provides a whole-of-government development framework that offers coherence among existing strategic documents. The Plan's Goal 4 target's the development of human resources and social development for a 21st Century Society. Among others, the plan targets greater access to and quality of the TVET system. In a similar fashion, Myanmar's Employment and Skill Development Law 2013, mandates employment and skills development issues through the country. The law, which is managed by the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Security, is in line with the project priorities and intends to support project implementation by coordinating with relevant ministries and departments, chambers, technical associations, employers, and employee federations. Furthermore, Myanmar's DWCP 2013 – 2022 focuses on skills assessment and certification, targeting of accreditation centres and skills recognition processes and the integration of more youth in the same.

Unfortunately, according to the online available data by the United Nations, the country priorities in Myanmar have shifted from development to humanitarian, after three years of security crisis, having an impact on the relevance of the project. As per reports of the UN special envoy, the current priority of the country stands on humanitarian aid, rather than system building. However, putting an emphasis on the importance of South-South cooperation and on the relevance of China as a regional development partner to surpass the crisis. The United Nations has not made available any assessment of future development needs for Myanmar.

Relevance vis-à-vis the needs and priorities of relevant stakeholders

The project is highly relevant to the needs and priorities of stakeholders in Laos and Cambodia. It addresses the demand for skills development, green and digital skills development, changing market needs, and economic growth. In Laos, it focuses on areas such as e-commerce, electric vehicle mechanics, and

agriculture mechanics. In Cambodia, it supports the digital skills, green skills, lifelong learning, as well as revival of the tourism industry through upskilling and reskilling. The project aligns well with stakeholder priorities, fosters collaboration with international partners, and enhances capacity building for TVET institutions.

Based on the information provided by project beneficiary TVET institutions participating in the TVET network established by the project, it can be assessed that the project is relevant and positive vis-a-vis the priorities of the TVET institutions in Lao and Cambodia. The project aligns with the needs for skills development, addressing changing market demands, enhancing economic growth, and ensuring access to employment opportunities. The collaboration with institutions in China and the support received by these partners contributes to capacity building for TVET institutions in both countries, allowing them to create and maintain relations that otherwise would have been difficult to establish.

The priorities of stakeholders in Lao PDR in the field of skills development and vocational education are centred around addressing the needs of a rapidly changing world, improving commerce and the economy, and aligning curricula with skills requirements at the enterprise levels. Partners recognized the importance of enhancing their capacity to provide training in innovative areas such as e-commerce, to meet the demands of today's society. Other technical areas mentioned by Lao's partners were electric vehicle mechanics, and agriculture mechanics, which are relevant to the needs of the market.

At the governance levels, Lao stakeholders listed as priorities to have a better understanding of the labour market skills' needs and to work on developing curricula and resources that integrate these needs. In a similar fashion, workers and employers prioritize understanding workers needs through surveys and data collection and providing training placements for graduates, while assisting businesses and enterprises in meeting training requirements. These priorities collectively aim to enhance skills development, bridge the gap between education and the labour market, and drive economic growth in Laos.

In Cambodia, the Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training and Ministry of Tourism has identified the need for human resources development and upskilling as a priority in the tourism industry in recovering from Covid-19. With the suspension of local and international tourism during the COVID-19 pandemic, which became a heavy blow to the country relying on tourism industry, the ministries have focused on resilience, recovery, and relaunch strategies. Thus, enhancing service quality, marketing promotion, and facilities are important, but the government recognizes that upskilling and reskilling are crucial for the industry's revival. Therefore, the collaboration with the Project is seen as instrumental, with training programs delivered to over 60 people representing 60 travel agencies, and the transfer of teaching methodologies to managers and supervisors. This example highlights that the project's was relevant at the design stage but remains relevant after the COVID-19 pandemic. Similarly, TVET institutions in Cambodia acknowledge the importance of digitalization and technology to support the country meet the needs of current markets.

Furthermore, on the one hand, the Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations (CAMFEBA) represents a wide range of enterprises and is actively engaged in skills and TVET development. The organization actively participates in the project's governance, while also seating in other national TVET governance bodies, providing strategic direction to training policy implementation. Therefore, the partnership with the Employer's Organization ensures that the project remains relevant vis-à-vis the decisions taken in higher-level decision-making bodies in the thematic area.

On the other hand, although the National Trade Union's Council actively engage in delivering training and information to workers on employment opportunities, their involvement on national skills development governance has been limited. The project has provided trade union leaders with Training in digital literacy to enable them to adapt to the changing landscape of professional organization sectors. They play a role in raising awareness among workers about the benefits of skills development and encourage continuous learning.

Overall, the priorities in Cambodia revolve around rebuilding the tourism industry by upskilling and reskilling the workforce, integrating technology and robotics education into curricula, and actively engaging in skills development initiatives through collaboration with international organizations. The aim is to enhance the quality of services, provide more opportunities for workers, and align skills development with the evolving needs of industries in Cambodia. The project aligns very well to these priorities.

Institutional arrangements, roles, capacity, and commitment of stakeholders

The impact evaluation findings indicate a strong alignment between the project and the institutional arrangements, roles, capacity, and commitment of tripartite constituents in Cambodia and Lao PDR. The project effectively addresses the technology gap, enhances teachers' capacity, supports the revision of employment laws, and promotes equitable opportunities for skills development. Stakeholder satisfaction and survey responses further confirm the project's relevance and effectiveness in meeting their needs, highlighting its positive impact on skills enhancement and active engagement.

Desk research shows that both Cambodia and Laos have in place strong institutional arrangements, which show the commitment of relevant stakeholders. For example, Cambodia's National Training Board, is mandated to co-ordinate a long-term development plan for TVET and orient the TVET system towards the socio-economic needs of the country, Lao's National Training Council has as a function to advise the development of skills plans and policies, while Myanmar's National Skills Standards Authority Board, supports labour market relevant skills development including relevance. Evaluation interviews show that, stakeholder within the project framework form part of that higher governance structure.

TVET institutions in Lao PDR, who participated in the Evaluation interviews, have agreed with the significance of the project in bridging the technology gap between Laos and other countries within the sub-region and China. As the project addresses the limited experience and knowledge of teachers, it aligns with the TVET institutions capacity-building objectives. Collaborations with institutions in China have also demonstrated its importance, by bringing together Lao to a guiding example of technology development. Stakeholders interviewed acknowledged the effectiveness of the TVET network on upgrading the capacity of TVET institutions, highlighting that the online trainings have increased their knowledge, especially on theoretical aspects of the subjects at hand. However, they stress the importance of practical, face-to-face training to enhance skill development in the post Covid-19 era. Furthermore, by eliminating financial barriers to access training and knowledge sharing among institutions, aligning to Lao's goal to promote equitable opportunities for skills development. Finally, the comprehensive curricula items developed in partnership with the project address the needs of the current society, underscoring the project's compatibility with current and future labour market perspectives in Lao.

At a governance level, the Employment Department of Lao PDR affirms the project's timeliness in supporting the revision and development of employment laws. The project's assistance in addressing the impact of COVID-19 on employment and the country's economic situation aligns with the department's commitment to creating favourable labour conditions. The revised laws reflect the department's institutional arrangements and demonstrates the project's responsiveness to their needs.

Stakeholders in Cambodia emphasized the relevance of the training provided by the project, adapting not only to the knowledge needs of TVET institutions staff, but also to the technological capabilities of each of the participating TVET institutions. Furthermore, stakeholders in Cambodia expressed great satisfaction with the training provided by the project. They consider the training highly useful and aligned with their expectations and skill levels. Trade Unions, who often lag behind the capacity of other tripartite constituents, were supported and equipped with new knowledge and skills, particularly in utilizing technologies like Google Meetings, Google Maps, and online meetings.

On an online survey carried out by the project with the participation of 17 stakeholders from both Lao and Cambodia, 53% of respondents strongly agreed that the project activities effectively addressed their capacity. While 26% agreed with the same statement and 1 participant 6.7% disagreed with this statement. Concerning the adequation of training and support by the project to enhance the skills and knowledge of stakeholders, 66.7% agreed with this statement while 26% strongly agreed and only 1 participant 6.7% disagreed. When asked if the project encouraged the active participation and engagement of stakeholders in capacity-building activities, 46.7% of respondents strongly agreed, 33.3% agreed and only 1 participant 6.7.% disagreed.

Extent to which the project has maintained relevance in response to Covid-19

The project's focus on skills development, south-south cooperation, and inclusive growth is highly relevant in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, addressing the need for resilience, and ensuring a sustainable recovery in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic the UN Cambodia Common Country Analysis highlights that Education and skills development – like other social and economic sectors – are not prepared for, or resilient to, shocks such as the pandemic, while stronger investments in social sectors and human development are vital to ensure the success of Cambodia's economy in the longer term.

Through analysing the latest data from the World Bank Household Welfare Monitoring in the Lao PDR. The project remains highly relevant in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The ongoing surveys have provided valuable insights into the impact on household living standards, including rising prices and inflation during and after the pandemic. The latest results highlight the need for continued support and intervention, particularly for employment, family farms, and businesses. The project's focus on skills development and cooperation is essential for addressing the challenges faced by the population and building resilience in these uncertain times¹.

Furthermore, the 12th ASEAN Plus Three Labour Ministers Meeting highlighted the importance of skills development and inclusive growth for a sustainable recovery. The project's focus directly aligns with the meeting's objectives of promoting human resources development, inclusive growth, and sustainable development. As economies and labour markets undergo rapid transformations due to the pandemic and technological advancements, the project's support in improving skills and providing employment opportunities is crucial for the affected (by the pandemic and other crisis) populations. Additionally, the project's emphasis on South-South and triangular cooperation demonstrates the collaborative approach necessary to address the challenges posed by the pandemic. Therefore, the project continues to be relevant and necessary in navigating the COVID-19 landscape and ensuring a resilient recovery for Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar.

In addition, interviews show that the project demonstrated a strong relevance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as evident from the various activities and initiatives undertaken during the lockdown period. The project team, in collaboration with ILO-ITC, organized several academies, working workshops, and programs specifically addressing the impact of COVID-19 and entirely on-line. These activities were conducted regularly, with a frequency of one every two weeks, allowing for continuous engagement and knowledge-sharing within the beneficiary countries. This level of engagement and collaboration highlights the project's commitment to remaining relevant and responsive in the face of the pandemic. By establishing strong relationships and engaging with key stakeholders, the project was able to learn from and contribute to global events, ensuring that the lessons and solutions shared were in line with the evolving circumstances and challenges faced due to COVID-19. This Project's clear focus on cooperation and capacity-building through South-South initiatives reflects the project's relevance in addressing the evolving needs and challenges brought about by COVID-19.

Project design

Contribution of outcomes and outputs to the achievement of the development objective

The activities of the project are valid and aligned with the project outcomes and outputs. There are some areas where improvements in implementation and linkages with country strategies could enhance the relevance and effectiveness of the project activities in achieving more.

¹ [Household Welfare Monitoring in the Lao PDR \(worldbank.org\)](https://www.worldbank.org/)

The project's development objective is to support Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar governments and social partners to promote Decent Work through improved skills development systems and strategies. The development objective is accompanied by 5 immediate objectives, which will be reviewed separately below:

Immediate Objective 1. Underpinning research is undertaken and informs the development of skills interventions

Overall, the objective is perceived as well designed. As it informs development interventions through research, leveraging on exist knowledge (Activity 1.1.2.) and through a participatory approach (Activity 1.1.3., 1.1.5, 1.1.6.) and promoting South-South Cooperation (Activity 1.1.7). The project benefited from identifying the Centre of International Exchanges and Cooperation of MOHRSS, which supported in the profiling of members of TVET institutions from China. The project document would benefit from further information regarding the partnership with a Chinese research institution or university.

Immediate Objective 2. Effective strategies for the identified skills priority per country are developed to provide better employment opportunities for women, men and vulnerable workers.

Overall, the objective is perceived by the evaluation as well designed. Foresight being a key element of skills development systems aligns with the priorities highlighted in key policy documents of the countries. The logical framework document, however, would benefit from further explanation on whether the experience moderators and national co-facilitators are part of the national stakeholders. If this is the case, it would allow for stronger contribution to sustainability.

Immediate Objective 3. In line with the identified priority, pilot implementation of one key skills response intervention in collaboration with national partners at the county level to provide better employment opportunities for women, men, and vulnerable works.

The objective is perceived by the evaluation as well designed. Although, the implementation plan for the selected skills response is based on analysis as per Objectives 1 and 2, the baselines would benefit from increased linkages with the country's development, employment, or skills strategies, which already identify country priorities. Increased linkages would avoid duplication of efforts at the country level and increase the relevance of the project vis-à-vis the on-going policy discussion on the subject matter.

Immediate Objective 4. Strengthening of public employment services' practices for women, men and vulnerable workers.

Although the objective is perceived by the evaluation as well designed. There is room for improvement in implementation. Namely, Activity 4.1.2. suggests that the pilot project in PES should follow the implementation of Objective 3, which reads as a priority identified through Objectives 2. However, all other activities suggests that an additional identification of good practices at the level of PES for the region and in China will be undertaken, and that based on this a regional workshop will be organized. On this bases Activity 4.1.2 should respond not only to the implementation of Objective 3, but shall rather aim to follow the conclusions and recommendations to be generated upon conclusion of Output 4.1. and become a separate Output 4.3.

Immediate Objective 5. Targeted governments and social partners have increased their knowledge sharing on the identification and implementation of skills priorities.

Objective 5 is very well designed. It includes all components of a meaningful knowledge sharing process and incorporates the South-South dimension of the project. The development of a SSTC Skills Development Network could be incorporated into the results of Activity 5.1.4.

Relevance vis-à-vis the development partner priorities

Based on the available information and interest on China to promote the South-South cooperation agenda, the evaluation finds that the project is relevant vis-à-vis the development partner priorities on:

- South-South Cooperation
- Employment and Skills Development: The project's focus on employment and skills development corresponds to China's emphasis on promoting social justice and decent work, as highlighted in its partnership with the ILO.
- Poverty Eradication: The project's contribution to the Global Development Initiative's objectives align with China's commitment to poverty reduction.

According to data from the OECD DAC, China's grant aid is distributed equally among approximately 120 partner countries, without specific priority sectors. However, a review of documents shows that China's partnership with the International Labour Organization (ILO) focuses on promoting social justice, decent work, and fair globalization. China provides financial contributions and technical support for projects centred around employment, skills development, and social protection. This aligns with the ILO's South-South and triangular cooperation priorities, emphasizing mutual support and common development. The Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security (MOHRSS) has established a consistent relationship to support the ILO's South-South Cooperation agenda. The current project is a continuation of previous agreements aimed at fostering South-South cooperation, including the 2001 Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation. The primary objective of MOHRSS in promoting South-South cooperation is to enhance the self-development capacity of developing countries. Past collaborations have focused on creating a platform for exchange and cooperation, sharing best practices, and discussing ways to strengthen collaboration. Thus, this project builds upon the previous partnership between China and the ILO.

Additionally, the project aligns with the objectives of the Global Development Initiative (GDI) and aims to achieve full employment and eradicate poverty, particularly for youth and women. It contributes to the GDI's core principle of increasing participation and fostering cooperation among various stakeholders.

Regarding Myanmar, media coverage reports a visit by the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General on Myanmar, Noeleen Heyzer, to Beijing. During the visit, regional countries discussed the multidimensional crisis in Myanmar. The Special Envoy highlighted China's important role in the United Nations, including its position as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and expressed appreciation for China's continued support for ASEAN's centrality in facilitating a peaceful resolution in Myanmar. Constructive dialogue among all parties and the provision of humanitarian assistance were also emphasized.

Nevertheless, a comprehensive assessment of relevance to China's priorities would require more detailed information about China's policy framework, objectives, and specific development priorities.

Crosscutting issues: Gender equality and non-discrimination

The project design demonstrates relevance and validity in promoting gender equality and non-discrimination. Efforts have been made to prioritize gender balance, address gender-dominant issues related to specific trades, and provide equal opportunities for women. Advisory efforts in promoting employment law and skills development law in Cambodia and Lao PDR, has laid a solid ground for gender and non-discrimination. Digital skills training and lifelong learning have enabled people with disabilities with equal access to the labour markets.

Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination:

- Vientiane Capital Skills Development Centre has incorporated gender equality into their training programs and recruitment processes, striving to balance gender representation. They are aware of gender imbalances in the trades they offer and make efforts to maintain gender balance in their courses.
- Lao-German Technical College prioritizes female applicants and provides them with free education. However, they have not focused on disability inclusion due to lack of facilities.
- Cambodia Ministry of Tourism ensures non-discrimination in their steering committee and project implementation, resulting in increased participation of women and minority groups. They conduct training programs and promote social dialogue to address gender equality issues.

- Polytechnic Institute of Cambodia does not impose barriers based on gender or disability and encourages their participation. However, they have limited involvement of people with disabilities.
- Skills Development Institute, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare in Lao has non-discrimination policies and promotes gender equality in their target groups for skills development, enhancing their capacities.
- Labour Market Information Division, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare conducts capacity building programs without specifying gender or education level, fostering an open platform for learning and development.
- Employers' organizations in Cambodia discuss and balance gender issues and also address climate change. They follow international standards that include gender in skills and employment services development programs. They support the inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace through quota regulations and are working on increasing visibility and implementation.
- Trade Union in Cambodia has actively engaged in discussions on discrimination issues, including those related to people with disabilities.
- Vocational Education Development Institute, Ministry of Education and Sports in Lao aims to attract more females to occupations where they are underrepresented through advocacy. They consider the needs of vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, in their career fair events.
- Lao Department of Employment ensures gender equality and social protection in their target groups and strives to develop policies that protect all disadvantaged groups.
- Lao Trade Union Development Institute welcomes the participation of people with disabilities in their teaching and learning activities. Although they do not have specific facilities yet, they advertise inclusivity and do not limit participation based on physical abilities.
- Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry prioritizes the inclusion of people with disabilities in their activities and employment expos to showcase their capacities to enterprises. They prioritize female participation through seminars, workshops, and online training programs.
- Ministry of Cambodia focuses on gender and disadvantaged groups in their TVET programs, aiming to make TVET attractive for women. They integrate the idea of gender equality across their sectors and use advocacy campaigns to highlight the importance of women's participation in employment.

Overall, while there have been efforts to promote gender equality and non-discrimination, the inclusion of people with disabilities has received attention. Further work is needed to enhance facilities, increase participation, and ensure equal opportunities for people with disabilities across the institutions and organizations involved in the project.

Progress and effectiveness

The evaluation of reporting documentation and data finds that the project has made notable progress in achieving its objectives, outcomes, and outputs. It established a strong partnership, identified priority areas for skills development, and formed the South-South Cooperation Skills Development Network. Strategies were developed and action plans created through stakeholder engagement. Pilot interventions were implemented, including skills surveys, capacity building, and training programs. Public employment services were strengthened through capacity development and job fairs. Knowledge sharing and collaboration were promoted through meetings, workshops, and participation in international events.

Overall project progress

Immediate Objective 1. Underpinning research is undertaken and informs the development of skills interventions

As per the document revision the evaluation of the project reveals notable progress in various aspects. A high-quality partnership was established with the Centre of International Exchanges of MOHRSS, which not only provided

valuable insights into skills development policies but also conducted a practical profiling of candidate TVETs in China. This formed a solid basis for the launch of the South-South Cooperation Skills Development Network. The project successfully engaged partners in Cambodia and Lao PDR, as well as social partners in Myanmar, to identify competent TVET partners for the network. Consequently, until the closing date for this evaluation, nine quality partnerships were formed between 18 TVETs from China and CLM countries. Through extensive studies and consultations, priority areas for skills development, including digital skills, green skills, and institutional capacity building, were identified. Tripartite meetings were conducted to improve skills and PES strategies, leading to the establishment of project priorities. Unfortunately, due to the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the planned capacity building workshops and training programs could not be carried out face-to-face. A total of 12 Training of Trainers courses were organized on line since the launch of the Network. These course were open to all member TVETs. Despite the negative impacts of Covid-19, the project has made substantial strides in fostering partnerships, selecting priority areas, and setting the stage for enhanced skills development in the region.

Immediate Objective 2. Effective strategies for the identified skills priority per country are developed to provide better employment opportunities for women, men and vulnerable workers.

The impact evaluation of the project highlights significant achievements in meeting the project target in relation to IO 2. Annual priority discussions and tripartite validation workshops have effectively engaged stakeholders, ensuring strong involvement from beneficiary countries, including high-level vice-ministerial participation. These interactions have facilitated the validation of skills strategies and the development of action plans during Project Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings, focusing on priority areas such as digital and manufacturing sector skills. The foresight study and workshop planned by the project are on track, however outside of the time scope of this evaluation.

Immediate Objective 3. In line with the identified priority, pilot implementation of one key skills response intervention in collaboration with national partners at the county level to provide better employment opportunities for women, men, and vulnerable works.

The project has made significant progress in implementing various interventions and activities, which serve as the basis for adjusting the national skills strategy. These interventions include:

- Skills Gap Sample Survey: A comprehensive sample survey was conducted in Lao PDR providing valuable data on skills gaps and requirements.
- Active Employment Capacity-Building on the linkages between skills and employment. After a given TVET skills training, a job fair is organized. Through 2022 – 20 000 job seekers participated in project organized job fairs. Currently these job fairs are organized in accessible and innovative venues, for example, one of them was hosted in mall to attract as many candidates as possible.
- Training for Social Partners: Training courses were conducted under the project, with 92 participants from workers' organizations and 50 participants from employers' organizations in Cambodia. These trainings were on the promotion of skills among trade unions and to raise awareness about international standards. Other discussion topics touched on TVET in economic processing zones where currently there are increasing job opportunities for TVET graduates.
- Training Assessors and Skills Certification leading to the resumption of skills testing and certification in Lao PDR.
- Training of Trainers (TOT) Courses: 12 TOT courses were organized under the SSC Skills Development Network, covering subjects such as mechatronics, cloud computing, Chinese cuisine, and e-commerce. Over 400 trainers and students were trained through these courses.
- Support to employment services to provide up-to-date information, career orientation and the organization of job fairs.

The project has also achieved several milestones and outcomes, contributing to the adjustment of the national skills strategies:

- Launching of the SSC Skills Development Network

- Strengthening institutional capacity of member institutes and creating peer-to-peer cooperation partnerships between member TVETs.
- Conducting bilateral workshops and working meetings to share experiences and discuss topics related to skills development.
- Preparation of qualifications and TOT programs, with over 400 trainers receiving quality training.
- Establishing partnerships with companies and promoting project visibility through various platforms.
- Inclusion of 21 vocational institutions in the network and facilitating staff exchanges among CLM member institutions.

Immediate Objective 4. Strengthening of public employment services' practices for women, men and vulnerable workers.

The project has made significant progress in compiling good practices for Public Employment Services (PES) and enhancing their implementation. Technical assistance was provided to 15 job centres, resulting in improved PES quality. Capacity building programs benefited staff from relevant agencies and social partners, enhancing their skills to support employment initiatives. National job fairs successfully connected jobseekers with job opportunities. Entrepreneurship training courses fostered entrepreneurial skills. The project's actions, including documentation of good practices and development of pre-employment training, have contributed to strengthening PES.

Immediate Objective 5. Targeted governments and social partners have increased their knowledge sharing on the identification and implementation of skills priorities.

The project has made significant progress in its efforts to strengthen knowledge sharing on the identification and implementation of skills priorities. Despite the cancellation of a planned workshop in China, the Annual Meeting of the South-South Cooperation Skills Development Network was successfully held with wide participation. Furthermore, the project showcased its good practices at the UN Expo and actively supported ASEAN-level initiatives. Country-specific meetings were conducted, and the project is exploring new areas of cooperation and partnership. Overall, the project has demonstrated its commitment to regional collaboration and the enhancement of skills development programs.

Project stakeholders

The evaluation finds that the project in Laos and Cambodia has made considerable use of available expertise from constituents and relevant stakeholders in the design and implementation process. In Laos, significant effort was dedicated to establishing the necessary agreements with the government and engaging with tripartite constituents. This involved conducting project surveys and research studies and holding meetings to discuss and decide on activities in collaboration with partners. The project actively sought input from stakeholders and allowed them to propose modifications or highlight any challenges in implementing certain activities.

Financial processes were also aligned with the involvement of stakeholders. For instance, money was transferred to the Ministry of Finance for some activities, while for others, the main counterpart was responsible for managing the funds. This demonstrates a cooperative approach that engages relevant stakeholders all aspects of the project, towards ownership development.

The establishment of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) in both Laos and Cambodia further emphasizes stakeholder involvement. In Laos, the PAC serves as a steering committee, ensuring the endorsement of activities before they commence and reviewing the results of these activities. Similarly, in Cambodia, the PAC is chaired by the Ministry of Labour and comprises representatives from various relevant departments, trade unions, and employers' federations. The PAC provides a platform for stakeholder consultation, review of work plans, and project activity endorsement.

Tripartite constituents play a crucial role in both countries, providing endorsement, review, and consultation on project work plans and activities. The involvement of trade unions, employers' federations, and relevant government departments reflects a collaborative approach that incorporates diverse perspectives and expertise.

Additionally, yearly meetings are conducted to review the project reports, allowing for continuous engagement and feedback from constituents and stakeholders. This annual review process ensures accountability and transparency while providing an opportunity for stakeholders to contribute their insights.

Finally, an online survey conducted by the evaluation (which retrieved 17 responses) shows that 53.3% of participants agreed and 29.7% strongly agreed that the project re-designed its activities after feedback provided by their organizations, with only 13.3% remaining neutral on this issue. Furthermore, 46.7% of respondents agreed and 20% strongly agreed with 26.7% remaining neutral and 1 respondent strongly disagreeing that the project organized new tailor-made activities upon request of their organization.

Based on the above, the project demonstrates a strong commitment to utilizing the expertise and involvement of constituents and relevant stakeholders. Through consultations, collaborations, and endorsement processes, the project has effectively integrated the knowledge and perspectives of key stakeholders into its design and implementation, ensuring a more inclusive and impactful approach.

Effectiveness to address key challenges

The project demonstrated effectiveness in addressing key challenges, despite facing huge obstacles posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, challenges related to staff turnover, limited resources, and capacity development remain ongoing, which may influence the project's overall effectiveness. Language barriers were effectively addressed through interpreter services, but there is a preference for face-to-face training for certain topics, which may be limited by budget constraints.

The project faced additional, to the initially envisaged, challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which necessitated a shift to online activities. Face-to-face meetings, study visits, and certain activities were not possible, impacting the implementation of the project. However, the project adapted by conducting online workshops and career fairs, focusing on digital methods. An example of this is the establishment of the Cambodia Employment Services System, which was launched online during the pandemic, proved helpful in overcoming some challenges. This adaptability and commitment to delivering on promises in the face of the pandemic is a positive indication of the project's effectiveness.

Staff turnover within the government posed another challenge for the project, as it required rebuilding capacity and providing ongoing support to counterparts who lacked expertise. The project recognized this limitation and made efforts to support and develop the capacities of the counterparts. However, it is important to note that this process takes time, and therefore, the effectiveness of the project in addressing this challenge may be influenced by the progress made in strengthening the expertise of the counterparts.

Additionally, there were challenges related to the capacity development and adapting to new technologies, along with limited resources and a small team to carry out digital trainings and to leverage technology for data analysis and surveying. The need for a system to report employment rates and recruit new staff also posed challenges. The capacity of some of the partners to support the delivery of results on technical outputs (i.e., the development of curricula for IT related trades) was also highlighted. While progress may have been slower in these areas, the project's commitment to providing support and driving the implementation process is a positive sign.

Institutions participating in the TVET network faced the following specific challenges:

- **Language Barrier:** The project effectively addressed the language challenge by providing interpreter services during the training sessions. This was considered very useful, as participants who were initially unfamiliar with interpretation gradually understood how the training worked.
- **Training Format:** The project implemented online training, which was perceived as timesaving. However, some participants expressed a preference for face-to-face training, particularly when it came to topics that required clear demonstrations and tool usage. Incorporating face-to-face training or practical experiences in China was discussed as a potential solution, but budget constraints might pose a challenge in implementing this.

The project's risk and assumptions matrix highlights risks that are relevant to the project, however not comprehensive of activity specific. Two risks list in the matrix have in fact occurred:

- Implementation of the project activities may be delayed due to political issues of the countries or the busy work schedule and competencies of local partners.
- The implementation of project activities is delayed due to the changes of government policies and strategies or the busy work schedule of the different local partners. As a result, the ILO project team does not have enough time to carry out the activity process.

Furthermore, the mitigation measures in place do not clearly stipulate guidelines to overcome these challenges. Therefore, the evaluation recommends the risks matrix to be reviewed based on the risks identified through this evaluation and to establish realistic mitigation measures to overcome any of the listed and additional challenges.

Coherence

Coherence with initiatives within the ILO

In Cambodia, the Project specifically addresses skills development and employment, aligning with the overall direction of the ILO work in the country and supporting the development efforts of other Projects.

Currently, the ILO has a partnership with SIDA project and a joint UN program on employment for youth in Cambodia which contribute to the same goals. Therefore, the project has been working at an office level, to create a coherent framework of activities and partnerships. Another example is the ILO-New Zealand project, which covers two areas: skills development and infrastructure development, supporting Cambodia in similar areas but different sectors and further enhancing the coherence of efforts. Other projects within the ILO project office in Cambodia, span across various areas, from policy development to implementation, ensuring a system building approach. At an office level, the project has collaborated to organize or co-finance activities such as curriculum development, development and launching of testing packages for recognition of prior learning, and the organization of career fairs, showcasing coordinated office-level efforts. Furthermore, the engagement with the national employment agency and collaboration with the ministry to finalize guidelines demonstrate the coherence between policy-level actions and implementation. This alignment of multiple projects and activities in Cambodia reflects a strong commitment to fostering coherent skills development and TVET initiatives in the country.

In Laos, while there are around six to seven development cooperation projects, not all of them are focused on skills development. However, there are notable initiatives that demonstrate coherence in the area. One such project is the recently concluded ILO Japan project, which specifically targeted skill development. The results of that project are now being complemented by the ILO China project, which supports the development of IT curricula and conducted tests and assessments for students supported by the previous initiative. The collaboration between these two projects showcases a clear alignment in objectives and activities. Furthermore, an activity of the Project in Laos, which highlights cooperation among projects, is the employment expo, organized with contributions from various other projects.

In China, the ILO has a partnership with J.P Morgan, under the "Quality apprenticeships and lifelong learning in China" Project, which aims to contribute to the efforts of the Chinese government and social partners to promote decent work through quality apprenticeship and skill development programs. The project, which ended in December 2021, has approved a second phase for a period of 3-years in 2023. One of the project outputs for the second phase is "South-South knowledge exchanges on skills development and lifelong learning implemented", which is relevant to the project being evaluated and could enhance the results of both projects through strengthened collaboration.

Coherence with initiatives outside the ILO

The evaluation shows that the project is coherent with the development work of other international partners working in Cambodia and Lao and that the projects identified through interviews in each of these countries complement each other rather than overlapping activities. However, currently cooperation between

the project teams and the work of other organizations is limited. Mainly projects are carried out separately with complementary activities that need to be managed by each of the partners or in the case of policy level activities, by establish coordinating mechanism. Nevertheless, there is openness to cooperation and knowledge sharing.

In Cambodia, the UN Development Assistance Framework (UN DAF), includes components related to skills development. Therefore, the Project reports to and aligns with the objectives of the UN DAF, establishing a clear coherence between the two. Moreover, the project is a part of the UN joint program, which serves as a cornerstone for collaboration among different UN agencies such as UNESCO and UNICEF. This joint program highlights the harmonized efforts of multiple UN organizations in promoting skills development and ensures a coordinated approach.

From the ministry's perspective, there are several platforms and working groups in place to facilitate collaboration in TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training). One such platform is the joint-technical working group for TVET, led by the Ministry of Labour and co-chaired by development partners, including Swiss. This working group brings together various stakeholders, including the ILO, UN agencies, local organizations, and other ministries, fostering coherence and coordination in skills development initiatives.

In Cambodia, project stakeholders mentioned to have partnerships with bilateral and multilateral agencies, including Switzerland, Luxemburg, Japan, the Asian Development Bank, UNIDO and UNDP. The areas of cooperation in Cambodia centre around the establishment of skills councils and promoting capacity development for TVET education staff.

Some of the suggestions in terms of coherence among international organizations shared through interviews in Cambodia were:

- Developing a strategic action plan and providing capacity building to the SSC members can enhance their understanding of roles and responsibilities.
- Ensuring better coordination among organizations to avoid duplication and promote effective utilization of resources is essential.

In Lao, although there are no explicit activities with other development partners, there is a TVET network that serves as a platform for sharing information. However, it should be noted that the focus of this network is primarily in local areas, operating under the Ministry of Education. Additionally, UNICEF's activities in Laos predominantly concentrate on primary education.

Evaluation interviews showed that most of the Project partners have partnerships with other international organizations. In Lao TVET education centres mentioned a series of partnerships focusing on different thematic areas, at the bilateral level the partners mentioned by stakeholders in Lao were Japan, Korea, Thailand, Switzerland, Germany, and Luxemburg. Among the multilateral partners in Lao are UNDP, UNESCO, the World Bank and IOM. These partners mostly work on issues related to skills development, gender equality, migrant workers protection, social inclusion, and employment rather than on issues related to the development of South-South Partnerships. The projects currently working with partner organizations in Laos indicate to be open to cooperation and knowledge sharing.

Some of the suggestions in terms of coherence among international organizations shared through interviews in Lao were:

- Establishing a more systematic approach and regular communication channels with international partners can enhance the effectiveness of employment-related initiatives.
- To improve the consistency of involvement of international organizations. Organizations project's timeline is very short and therefore coherence and coordination mechanisms differ from year to year depending on the current projects and partners. Thus, establishing a more structured and consistent partnership framework for the country is necessary.

- Linkages could be established between the Project and projects that focus on specific target groups. For example, other projects could open opportunities for a more integrated gender approach, for the inclusion of people with disabilities or to reach other geographical areas.

Efficiency of resource use

Financial resources

The project has efficiently used its financial resources, with a coherent budget allocation and correct expenditure delivery. However, there is a need to increase budgetary support for full implementation of planned activities. Co-sponsorship arrangements have helped leverage additional resources, but further support is required. The allocation for Monitoring and Evaluation should be increased, and a comprehensive results framework should be developed.

Revision of the project budget shows that the budget allocations are coherent with these of other similar projects. A substantial amount of the project budget is allocated to operational costs, including UN and ILO related lobbies, operational costs, and support costs. While the rest is allocated to support the capacity development of constituents and stakeholders. Monitoring and Evaluation has its own budget allocation; however, this has not yet been used. A key proportion of the budget is directly allocated to capacity development activities for project partners, namely:

- Knowledge and capacity of constituents are developed
- The capacities of governments, social partners and other stakeholders to design a skills strategy for identified priority and to address those gaps are strengthened through learning by doing
- PES capacities of CLM countries are strengthened
- Knowledge of CLM constituents to design and implement priority skills development are strengthened

In case a next phase of the project is approved, it is recommended to increase the allocation to M&E and to use some of this to support the development of a comprehensive results framework for M&E, which would facilitate future project evaluations.

Up until the period covered by this evaluation the project has spent slightly more than 49% of its budget, which shows a correct allocation of funds and correct expenditure delivery.

Furthermore, some activities are co-sponsored with counterparts to leverage additional resources. Various events and initiatives, such as the Skills Development Law consultation workshop, job fairs, and employment expos, involve cost-sharing arrangements with provincial governments and co-sponsors. However, there is a need for increased budgetary support to fully implement planned activities.

Human resources

The assessment for efficiency of human resources use reveals both strengths and limitations in the allocation and utilization of human resources.

The project team is well constituted and the geographical arrangements for staffing are strategically positioned. The project being managed from the DWT in Bangkok provides the team with the available specialist resources to cover all activities. Given the focus of the project on cooperation among TVET institution, the knowledge of the project management of the Chinese TVET structure has resulted in tangible results and partnerships. Furthermore, project coordinators assigned to both Lao and Cambodia ensure that the project results remain coherent with national priorities, which is at the centre of South-South cooperation. Both, Lao, and Cambodia receive administrative support from the project office in Bangkok. Furthermore, technical backstopping on Skills Development area is received for the DWT team. Support from HQ level is also adequate. This includes support in strengthening South-South Cooperation and has enabled the sharing of the Project good practices with other South-South Cooperation-focused projects globally, such as UN Global South-South Expo. HQs and ITC of ILO co-organized BRICS academies for as many as 30 sessions.

The activities of the project often require in-depth knowledge and expertise in specific areas, which may not be readily available within the project team. The lack of specialists who possess detailed and specific knowledge in these areas is acknowledged. As a result, there is a need to either hire external specialists or seek support from China to fill these knowledge gaps. The project has well utilized the expertise from Chinese TVETs. Support from specialists based in Bangkok is also timely. The specialist is called upon for specific technical support or guidance, such as in the development of skills and employment laws or the preparation of presentations. Similarly, when conducting surveys or preparing reports, the specialist's consultation is sought to ensure accuracy and quality.

For the above-mentioned reasons, the assessment finds that it is important for project staff to acquire technical knowledge and skills to effectively support tripartite constituents, as well as to sustain their professional growth and personal career development pathways. The evaluation finds that enhancing the capacity of the national project coordinators in specific technical areas would be beneficial to the project. The availability of training opportunities, for instance the ITC-Turin Academy on Skills Development, is recognized as valuable for staff development. However resource constraints are noted.

Use of human and knowledge resources from partner organizations

Based on the information provided, the impact evaluation suggests that the project has utilized human resources from partner organizations efficiently in the following manner.

Tripartite Partners: The project has actively involved tripartite partners, particularly Employers' Organizations and Government representatives from the Ministry of Labour. These partners are part of the project's Steering Committees in Lao and Cambodia, providing inputs, feedback, and guidance on project implementation. The involvement of tripartite constituents indicates a high level of participation and use of their expertise.

Complementation of Partner Organizations' Work: The evaluation notes that the project has utilized the available resources and complemented the work of its partner organizations. Specifically, the project has focused on employment transitions, working with employment services, and related agencies. By aligning its activities with the plans of partner organizations, the project has expanded participation opportunities and targeted beneficiaries with a forward-looking perspective.

TVET Institutions from Beneficiary Countries: The evaluation indicates that the use of available resources by TVET institutions from beneficiary countries has been limited, meaning that they have played a passive role as recipients of knowledge, capacity, and resources. However, these institutions have expressed interest in more actively participating in knowledge exchange with Chinese TVET institutions. While their capacity was self-assessed as limited when compared to that of Chinese TVET institutions, their willingness to engage suggests a positive outlook for future strengthened collaboration.

Stakeholder Engagement: The evaluation findings indicate that the project has encouraged active participation and engagement of stakeholders in capacity-building activities. A significant portion (46.7%) of the survey respondents agreed with this statement, while another 33.3% also expressed strong agreement. Only a small percentage (13.3%) remained neutral, and one participant disagreed. Overall, the majority of respondents recognized the project's efforts to foster stakeholder engagement.

Impact

The evaluation reveals that the project has made a tangible impact on stakeholders and the skills development landscape in the region. While further support and time are needed to assess the full impact on TVET institutions and students, as well as policy changes and employment outcomes, the project has successfully established partnerships, developed effective strategies, implemented interventions, strengthened public employment services, and promoted knowledge sharing.

According to document review, survey results and interviews with a diverse range of stakeholders. The evaluation finds that the project has had a tangible impact on various stakeholders and the overall skills development landscape in the region. Here is an assessment

- **Underpinning research and skills interventions:** The project's research and profiling of TVETs in China provided valuable insights into skills development policies in Cambodia, Lao and Myanmar. This informed the launch of the South-South Cooperation Skills Development Network and facilitated the formation of partnerships between TVET institutions from China and CLM countries. The project's focus on priority areas like digital skills and capacity building has set the stage for enhanced skills development in the region.
- **Effective strategies for skills priorities:** The project's engagement with stakeholders, including high-level vice-ministerial participation, led to the validation of skills strategies and the development of action plans. Priority areas such as digital and manufacturing sector skills were identified, enabling the project to develop effective strategies to provide better employment opportunities for women, men, and vulnerable workers.
- **Pilot implementation of skills response interventions:** The project implemented various interventions, including skills gap surveys, employment capacity-building programs, training for social partners, skills certification, and Training of Trainers (TOT) courses. These activities contributed to adjusting the national skills strategy and equipped participants with the necessary skills for employment. The project's milestones, such as launching the SSC Skills Development Network and strengthening institutional capacity, further supported the adjustment of skills strategies and fostered cooperation among TVET institutions.
- **Strengthening public employment services (PES) practices:** The project provided technical assistance to improve the quality of job centres and enhance PES implementation. Capacity building programs equipped relevant staff with the skills to support employment initiatives, and national job fairs connected jobseekers with opportunities. The project's efforts in documenting good practices and developing pre-employment training contributed to the overall strengthening of PES practices.
- **Increased knowledge sharing on skills priorities:** The project successfully held the Annual Meeting of the South-South Cooperation Skills Development Network and actively supported ASEAN-level initiatives. Country-specific meetings and collaborations with companies (i.e. Through the cooperation with a TVET in Wuhan institution, Siemens engineers became trainers for some project components) facilitated knowledge sharing on skills identification and implementation. Furthermore, the establishment of the TVET network has been very successful and a tangible innovative impact of the project, this network has proven to provide TVET institutions with the opportunity to learn from other institutions, who have recently undergone similar digital transitions. Furthermore, this partnership with Chinese institutions, transcends to knowledge about Chinese markets, which hence supports the beneficiary countries' competitiveness vis-à-vis neighbouring countries.

Overall, the project's impact has been significant in terms of establishing partnerships, developing strategies, implementing interventions, strengthening PES, and promoting knowledge sharing. The project has positively impacted TVET institutions, workers' organizations, employers' organizations, jobseekers, and relevant agencies in Cambodia, Lao PDR, and Myanmar.

However, interviews with TVET institutions show that the tangible impact on TVET students is not yet fledged, as the partnerships are still at a very early stage. Thus, further support both financial and time are required to be able to assess the impact of the South-South partnerships established by the project. Impact at a policy level was also showcased as on track, however not yet achieved, as policy changes may need more time to be fully implemented. Concerning the impact on trainees and job seekers, employment service agencies are currently not doing a full assessment of the results of job-fairs organized with the project support. A full post-evaluation of the results of these fairs, which could provide more information on the successful transition of graduates into employment, employment rotation, employment ratios by gender and the appropriateness of graduate's skills with the needs of their employers. This information would serve to evaluate the impact of the project on employment of end-beneficiaries for the final evaluation.

The evaluation survey (with 17 respondents) showed the following results related to the direct impact of the Project in its stakeholders:

- 40% of respondents strongly agree and 33.3% agree that the project provided resources and tools that were helpful in building their capacity, while 20% remained neutral and 1 participant disagreed.

- 46% of respondents agree and 40% strongly agree that the project facilitated knowledge sharing and collaboration among stakeholders to enhance their capacity, while 1 respondent remained neutral, and 1 respondent disagreed.
- 46.7% of respondents agreed and 33.3% strongly agreed that the project offered opportunities for stakeholders to apply their newly acquired skills and knowledge in practical settings.
- At the same time, 46.7% of stakeholders agree and 26.7% strongly agree to have felt that their capacity was strengthened through the learning-by-doing approach of the project, while 20% remained neutral and 1 respondent disagreed.
- 46.7% of respondents agreed and 40% strongly agreed to believe that their enhanced capacity will contribute to achieve the project objectives, while only 1 person remained neutral, and 1 person disagreed.
- 40% of respondents agreed and 26.7% strongly agreed that thanks to the project the capacity of their institutions on analysing skills system and identifying good practices from their respective country and other countries was strengthened, while 26.7% remained neutral.
- 40% of respondents agreed and 33.3% strongly agreed that thanks to the project the capacity of their institution to design a skills strategy based on identified priorities and to address gaps in implementation has been strengthened.
- 40% of respondents agreed and 33.3% strongly agreed that thanks to the project their institution has piloted innovative skills interventions to address specific gaps, while 40% remained neutral to this statement and 1 respondent disagreed.
- 60% strongly agreed, 20% agreed and 13.3% remained neutral regarding their learnings to established South-South Cooperation partnerships with other countries within the region.

Sustainability

Overall Sustainability and potential for replicability of project results

The project demonstrates overall sustainability and replicability through its institutionalized network and strong partnerships with TVET institutions. The network's Annual Meeting serves as a platform for sharing innovations, while partnerships enable knowledge exchange, curricula development, and workforce support. Additionally, the Ministry of Tourism in Cambodia and the Ministry of Labour in both Cambodia and Laos have established structures and strategies to ensure the project's long-term sustainability.

The Annual Meeting of the South-South Cooperation Skills Development Network is actively supported at the ASEAN-level. This meeting is the organ of institutionalization for the TVET network established by the project, with increasing enthusiasm and participation from its members. Currently the meetings are being carried out online. The future for the meeting is to become a forum for sharing of innovations, including curricula developed through the network.

Concerning overall partnership and collaboration across the TVET network, TVET institutions have expressed their desire to maintain and continue the relationship with the Chinese TVET institutions even after the project ends. All of the TVET institutions represented during the evaluation interviews, showed strong interest to continue sharing knowledge with partner institutions in China. As referred by the partners, the partnerships allow for the exchange of programs, curricula upgrades, and workforce development in Cambodia and Lao PDR. At the same time these partnerships are seen as opportunities to support the employment of graduates in increasingly demanded markets. For example, these related to the increasing truism from China in both countries (mainly Cambodia), the increasing demand of electric vehicles and employment of graduates in special economic zones.

Through the partnerships supported by the project, curricula were developed and innovative ways of disseminating it were found such as through the preparation of videos of training modules. The partners see potential value, even

in monetary terms, for the network, in terms of sharing the existent curricula with members or potentially paying members. This would require increased support by the development partner or potentially by the private sector.

The Ministry of Tourism in Cambodia has established a strong institutional structure that can continue the project's work after its completion. The ministry seeks support from other organizations and aims to recruit trainers from the department of tourism to ensure the sustainability of training programs. Additionally, the Skills Development Fund provides a financial resource for institutions and TVET training programs to access funds for skills development projects. This model can be replicated and scaled up in other sectors and industries to ensure long-term sustainability. Similarly, the Ministry of Labour in Cambodia emphasizes the alignment of project activities with ministry strategies and the government's program budget. Seeking support from partners and organizing events like the National TVET Day and National Career Fair ensures ongoing collaboration and sustainability of project interventions.

The Labour Market Information Division in the Ministry of Labour in Lao highlights the importance of providing training of trainers (TOT) to enhance sustainability. TOT programs can equip firms, companies, and enterprises with facilitation skills and data collection techniques. By training the trainers, the division can expand its reach and ensure that companies are equipped to train their own staff and collect valuable data. TOT programs can be replicated and scaled up in other divisions and ministries to enhance capacity building efforts.

Ownership of the project results

Based on the information provided by stakeholders during the evaluation interviews, it can be concluded that there is a generally high level of ownership demonstrated by the involved organizations and institutions. They actively engage, seek support, align project activities with their strategies, and express a desire for ongoing collaboration and communication. These factors suggest a commitment to the project and a willingness to take ownership of the results. Here are some examples:

- The Ministry of Tourism in Cambodia has demonstrated high ownership by institutionalizing sustainability measures, seeking support from other organizations, and involving the private sector in training and curriculum development. The ministry expressed that they consider the project as their own, working closely with the Project team as friends. Regular meetings and a structured approach are in place, with ownership resting with the HoKa Steering Committee. The committee serves as stakeholders and ensures alignment and review of project activities.
- The Ministry of Labour in Cambodia aligns project activities with their strategies and seeks funding support to organize national events, indicating their commitment to the interventions.
- The Labour Market Information Division in the Ministry of Labour in Lao has actively engaged with firms, companies, and enterprises to provide training and collect data. The division seeks to enhance their role and improve communication with other organizations to better express their needs.
- TVET institutions recognize the importance of maintaining relationships with the Chinese institute and continuing collaboration to upgrade curricula and ensure a sufficient workforce in Cambodia.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the impact evaluation findings highlight the project's high relevance to the development priorities of Cambodia and Laos, aligning well with their national plans and strategic frameworks. The project effectively addresses the needs and priorities of stakeholders in these countries, focusing on skills development, market demands, and economic growth. The institutional arrangements, roles, capacity, and commitment of stakeholders are strongly aligned with the project's objectives, and stakeholder satisfaction further confirms its relevance and effectiveness.

The project has maintained its relevance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic by addressing the need for resilience and supporting sustainable recovery in Cambodia, Laos, and Myanmar. It contributes to the achievement

of development objectives through valid activities, although improvements in implementation and linkages with country strategies could enhance its effectiveness.

Gender equality and non-discrimination are given importance, with efforts made to promote gender balance and equal opportunities for women. However, inclusion of people with disabilities requires improvement to enhance accessibility and equal opportunities.

The project has effectively engaged relevant stakeholders in the design and implementation process, utilizing available expertise and seeking input from constituents. It has demonstrated effectiveness in addressing key challenges, although ongoing issues related to staff turnover at the Ministries level, limited resources, and capacity development need to be addressed.

The project demonstrates coherence with initiatives within the International Labour Organization (ILO) and aligns with the development work of other international partners. However, further cooperation and knowledge sharing with other organizations are needed.

Financial resources have been efficiently used, but increased budgetary support is required for full implementation of planned activities, especially for monitoring and evaluation. Human resource utilization has strengths and limitations, and the project has effectively utilized human and knowledge resources from partner organizations.

The project has made a tangible impact on stakeholders and the skills development landscape, establishing partnerships, implementing interventions, and promoting knowledge sharing. Overall sustainability and replicability are demonstrated through institutionalized networks and strong partnerships with TVET institutions, supported by the commitment of relevant ministries.

There is a high level of ownership demonstrated by the involved organizations and institutions, indicating a strong sense of responsibility and commitment to the project's results.

In conclusion, the impact evaluation findings indicate that the project is highly relevant, effective, and impactful in addressing the development priorities and stakeholder needs in Cambodia and Laos. Despite some challenges, the project demonstrates overall sustainability, replicability, and strong ownership of its results. Recommendations to address some of the challenges found through this evaluation exercise are summarized below.

Lessons learned

Importance of Language Support and Communication for the establishment of South-South partnerships

Project Title: Strengthening Skills Development in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar through South-South and triangular cooperation

Project TC/SYMBOL: RAS1809CHN

Name of Evaluator: Angelica Munoz Marmolejo
2023

Date: July

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

LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	<p>The importance of language support and effective communication for the establishment of South-South partnerships has been a significant lesson learned from the project. While the project successfully created a network of collaboration among TVET institutions, it became evident that language barriers hindered effective communication and understanding among participating countries.</p> <p>Partners within the TVET network expressed their satisfaction in joining the collaboration but highlighted the specific communication needs that arose. The predominant use of Chinese or English as the primary languages posed challenges for beneficiary countries, limiting their ability to fully engage in the discussions and activities.</p> <p>This experience emphasized the critical role of language and communication in fostering successful South-South partnerships. Moving forward, it is essential to prioritize language support as an integral part of establishing such collaborations. This can be achieved through targeted capacity development initiatives that equip participants with the necessary language tools and skills. Additionally, the establishment of communication protocols, such as using different languages for different sessions, can enhance inclusivity and ensure that all participating countries can actively contribute and understand each other.</p> <p>By recognizing and addressing the importance of language support and communication, future projects and initiatives can strengthen South-South partnerships, facilitating more effective knowledge sharing, cooperation, and development outcomes among participating countries.</p>

Context and any related preconditions	<p>The project partnership with China to establish South-South collaboration with Cambodia, Laos PDR, and Myanmar TVET institutions.</p> <p>Often staff from TVET institutions within these countries and in the Global South, do not have access to language capacity development from their employer.</p> <p>The work of TVET institution staff is usually localized, very few institutions have regular exchanges with institutions in other countries, therefore staff may not be used to use translation equipment.</p>
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	TVET Institutions Teachers and Students
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	<p>Providing language support and effective communication for the establishment of South-South partnerships can yield several positive aspects and benefits:</p> <p>Enhanced understanding and inclusivity: It promotes inclusivity by enabling diverse perspectives and experiences to be shared and understood.</p> <p>Strengthened collaboration and cooperation: Effective communication builds trust and fosters stronger collaboration among participating countries. When language barriers are addressed, partners can engage more meaningfully. Besides, it minimizes misunderstandings and enhances project implementation, leading to more successful outcomes.</p> <p>Empowered local institutions: Language support empowers local institutions by providing them with the necessary tools and resources to actively participate and contribute to South-South partnerships. Besides skills such as the use of online technology for interpretation are transferable to other areas empowering partners sustainably.</p> <p>Sustainable development impact: By addressing language barriers and ensuring effective communication, South-South partnerships can have a more significant and sustainable development impact. Clear communication facilitates the alignment of efforts, resources, and expertise towards shared development objectives, resulting in meaningful and long-lasting outcomes.</p>
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Language supports towards the establishment of partnerships may be time and resource consuming. However, thanks to artificial intelligence tools, interpretation methods could be automated especially for online trainings, the project could explore some automatic translation tools and evaluate the impact these may have in the project results.

Adaptation to Online Training and Digital Technologies

Project Title: Strengthening Skills Development in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar through South-South and triangular cooperation

Project TC/SYMBOL: RAS1809CHN

Name of Evaluator: Angelica Munoz Marmolejo
2023

Date: July

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

LL Element	Text
Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)	<p>The lesson learned emphasizes the significance of adapting to online training and digital technologies, which is often overlooked. Projects should thoroughly assess the specific capacity of their members to address the challenges associated with online training.</p> <p>The challenges related to online training, such as time constraints, monitoring difficulties, and technology limitations, underscore the importance of adapting to online platforms and digital technologies. It is crucial to optimize online training schedules, provide technical support, and ensure smooth access to internet resources for effective implementation. Developing contingency plans, ensuring adequate support for online training, and embracing digital tools can help overcome challenges related to online training and maximize its benefits.</p> <p>The project successfully adapted several trainings and interventions, including job fairs and the annual meeting of the South-South Cooperation Skills Development network, to an online format. Initially, most of the project activities were planned for face-to-face interactions. However, the impact of the pandemic necessitated a swift transition to online methods. While the transition was relatively smooth, it revealed various challenges, such as the lack of widespread high-speed networks, limited digital skills among partners (e.g., workers), and shortages of digital equipment.</p> <p>The lesson learned from this experience is that projects must proactively assess and address the specific challenges associated with online training and digital technologies. This includes bridging the digital divide by expanding access to reliable internet connectivity, providing training and support for digital skills development, and ensuring the availability of necessary digital equipment. By adapting and embracing online platforms and digital technologies effectively, projects can overcome challenges and continue delivering their objectives in a changing landscape.</p>

Context and any related preconditions	The project works with partners in diverse geographical areas of Cambodia and Lao PDR, and with diverse partners. Unfortunately, not all partners were ready to a “forced” and rapid digital transition brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic. Workers, especially, shared that their capacity to work with digital technologies was very limited prior to the project, thus they were in need to first understand digital technologies to then be enabled to participate in the online meetings organized by the project.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	All project stakeholders, especially members of workers organizations and TVET institutions.
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	<p>The digital divide often leaves behind the most vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Furthermore, in projects related to skills development or TVET development. There are persistent challenges related to the lack of practical experience and the predominance of theoretical content in online platforms. Practical training, whether through face-to-face sessions or practical experiences in relevant industries, can enhance participants' understanding and skill development. Practical training opportunities should be considered to supplement theoretical knowledge effectively.</p>
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	<p>Adapting to online training and digital technologies supports projects on:</p> <p>Increased accessibility and participation: Online training and digital technologies eliminate geographical barriers and allow participants to access training and resources remotely. This accessibility empowers individuals who may have faced limitations in attending face-to-face activities, such as travel constraints or distance.</p> <p>Flexibility in scheduling and cost-effectiveness: Online training offers greater flexibility in scheduling, accommodating diverse time zones and individual availability. This flexibility allows participants to engage in training and activities at their convenience, enhancing their ability to participate effectively.</p> <p>Increased collaboration and networking: Participants can connect with each other, share experiences, and build relationships, fostering a strong community of practice more easily.</p> <p>Rapid dissemination of information: Online platforms enable quick and efficient dissemination of information, updates, and resources to a wide audience.</p> <p>Adaptability to unforeseen circumstances: The pandemic highlighted the importance of adapting to unforeseen circumstances. By embracing online training and digital technologies, projects can quickly transition to alternative formats and continue their activities even in challenging situations.</p> <p>Skill development and digital literacy: The use of digital tools promotes skill development and enhances digital literacy among project stakeholders. Participants gain proficiency in using various online platforms and technologies, which can be transferred to other areas of their personal and professional lives.</p>

ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	Resources at the initial stages of the project could be allocated to prepare stakeholders for an active participation. A digital capacity assessment or self-evaluation could be undertaken by projects intending to use online technologies to implement their activities.
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Good practices

The creation of a South-South Cooperation Skills Development network

Project Title: Strengthening Skills Development in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar through South-South and triangular cooperation

Project TC/SYMBOL: RAS1809CHN

Name of Evaluator: Angelica Munoz Marmolejo

Date: July

2023

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

GP Element	Text
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	<p>The project has established a South-South Cooperation Skills Development Network to facilitate knowledge sharing on skills development among skills centers and TVET institutions. This network was launched on 10 November 2021 and has witnessed significant accomplishments and good practices.</p> <p>A total of 18 member TVET institutes have signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) to foster long-term peer-to-peer collaboration, specifically targeting knowledge sharing on curriculum and training materials development. This commitment reflects the dedication to sustainable cooperation among the member institutions.</p> <p>The member TVETs within the network have successfully conducted over 20 bilateral workshops, covering a wide range of topics such as expanding TVET enrolment, curriculum development, digitalization of skills training, enterprise and TVET cooperation, and more. These workshops serve as platforms for exchanging best practices, insights, and innovative approaches in skills development.</p> <p>Furthermore, the network has organized 14 Training of Trainers (ToT) programs, ranging from one-week courses to 10-week courses. These capacity-building initiatives have benefited 500 trainers, equipping them with valuable skills in various areas such as website design, machining, mechatronics, carpentry and furniture, hospitality, bricklaying and plastering, air-conditioning, cooking and cuisine, clothing and sewing, cloud computing, mobile robotics, elevator installation and maintenance, e-commerce, electric cars, and more. This extensive training reflects the commitment to enhancing the expertise and capabilities of the trainers within the network.</p> <p>The establishment of this TVET network marks a ground-breaking and innovative approach to collaboration in skills development. It serves as a pioneering example of how South-South cooperation can facilitate knowledge sharing, promote best practices, and foster sustainable development in the TVET sector.</p> <p>Overall, the successful implementation of the South-South Cooperation Skills Development Network showcases good practices in creating a collaborative platform for knowledge sharing among TVET institutions. The network's achievements in workshops, Training of Trainers programs, and capacity building demonstrate the commitment to improving skills development and advancing the field of TVET.</p>

<p>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</p>	<p>The effectiveness of the knowledge sharing network may vary depending on the resources, expertise, and capabilities of the participating TVET institutions. It is crucial to assess the readiness and capacity of each institution joining the network to ensure meaningful contributions.</p> <p>The success of the bilateral workshops and ToT programs depends on the relevance and quality of the topics covered. It is recommended to continuously assess the needs and priorities of the participating institutions to tailor the training programs accordingly.</p> <p>Sustainability should be a key focus. It is essential to develop mechanisms to ensure the continued operation and growth of the Skills Development Network beyond the initial launch phase. This may involve securing long-term funding, establishing governance structures, and fostering a sense of ownership among the member institutions.</p> <p>Regular monitoring and evaluation of the project's outcomes and impact are important to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement. This feedback loop will enable the refinement of the network's activities and contribute to its long-term success.</p>
<p>Establish a clear cause-effect relationship</p>	<p>The promotion of knowledge sharing through the South-South Cooperation Skills Development Network has led to the launch of the network, signing of MOUs for collaboration, conducting workshops and ToT programs, and benefiting 500 trainers in various skills areas.</p>
<p>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</p>	<p>Measurable Impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased knowledge sharing and collaboration among TVET institutions through the Skills Development Network. • Number of signed MOUs for long-term peer-to-peer collaboration. • Number of bilateral workshops conducted on various TVET topics. • Number and areas of Training of Trainers (ToT) programs conducted. • Number of trainers who benefited from the capacity building programs. • Improved skills and capabilities of trainers in specific domains, such as website design, machining, mechatronics, carpentry and furniture, hospitality, bricklaying and plastering, air-conditioning, cooking and cuisine, clothing and sewing, cloud computing, mobile robotics, elevator installation and maintenance, e-commerce, and electric cars. <p>Targeted Beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TVET institutions participating in the Skills Development Network. • Trainers and instructors from the member TVET institutions. • Students and learners enrolled in the TVET programs offered by the member institutions, who will indirectly benefit from the enhanced skills and knowledge of their trainers. • Industries and employers seeking skilled workers in the domains covered by the capacity building programs. • Local communities and economies, as the improved skills and collaboration within the TVET sector contribute to workforce development and economic growth.

Potential for replication and by whom	Replicating this project in different contexts or regions may require adapting the content and approach to suit the specific needs and characteristics of the target institutions. Consideration should be given to the local context, available resources, and cultural factors.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	The work of the network aligns with the ILO's GB paper ILO South-South and triangular cooperation and decent work: Recent developments and future steps, the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, the New Directions Strategy for South-South cooperation, the Nairobi outcome document of the High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation and the Buenos Aires outcome document of the second High-level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40).

Training of workers' representatives on digital literacy

Project Title: Strengthening Skills Development in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Myanmar through South-South and triangular cooperation

Project TC/SYMBOL: RAS1809CHN

Name of Evaluator: Angelica Munoz Marmolejo
2023

Date: July

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

GP Element	Text
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	<p>In today's increasingly digital post-pandemic world, digital literacy has become an essential skill for individuals across various disciplines and roles. Recognizing that the capacity of trade union staff and members to take full advantage of the services offered by the project might be lower than that of other project stakeholders, due to a lower level of competencies to navigate the digital landscape effectively, the Project has initiated a comprehensive training program on digital literacy in Cambodia. This good practice delves into the background and details of this transformative initiative, aimed at empowering trade union members with essential digital skills. Seeking support from the ILO, trade unions proposed a digital literacy training program to enhance the digital skills of union members and facilitate their access not only to the project capacity development activities, but also to employment opportunities in the evolving job market.</p> <p>The training program, delivered by Impact Hub, encompassed various modules that covered essential aspects of digital literacy. The Digital Literacy Module provided participants with an introduction to the significance of digital literacy in today's society, fostering an understanding of its different elements and forms. The Professional Communication Module focused on enhancing communication skills, specifically through email, teaching participants how to navigate email software and compose professional messages effectively. The Online Outreach Module equipped participants with skills to leverage social media platforms, including creating and managing Facebook groups and pages, analyzing data, and utilizing platforms like YouTube, TikTok, and Telegram. The Communication Channels for Work Module introduced participants to digital collaboration tools such as Google Spaces, Google Workspaces, Zoom, and Microsoft Teams, enabling seamless communication and effective teamwork. Additionally, the Fundamental Cybersecurity Module emphasized the importance of online protection, equipping participants with knowledge on identifying scams, phishing attempts, and fake news, while emphasizing the safeguarding of personal data and privacy.</p> <p>This good practice presented the training program on digital literacy for trade unions, which is a transformative initiative that empowers workers with essential digital skills. By enhancing their digital literacy, trade union members become well-equipped to navigate the digital age, communicate effectively, access employment opportunities, and contribute to the overall well-being of their union communities. This good practice lays the foundation for a digitally inclusive trade union movement in Cambodia and Lao PDR.</p>

<p>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</p>	<p>Conditions and context:</p> <p>Willingness to learn and adapt to new technologies and environments. Importance to recognize limitation and take steps towards overcoming these shortages.</p> <p>In terms of applicability and replicability the evaluation finds that:</p> <p>Each trade union context may have specific requirements and needs. It is advisable to tailor the training program to the unique circumstances and preferences of the trade unions. This could involve adapting the modules and sessions to address specific challenges and incorporating relevant local examples and case studies.</p> <p>The training program should be viewed as a starting point rather than a one-time event. Providing ongoing support, follow-up sessions, and access to additional resources will help reinforce the learned skills and ensure their practical application in the participants' daily work.</p> <p>Consider integrating digital literacy as an ongoing component of trade union training programs, enabling continuous skill development and adaptation to emerging technologies.</p> <p>Finally, regularly collect feedback from participants and stakeholders to identify areas for improvement and measure the long-term benefits of the digital literacy training.</p>
<p>Establish a clear cause-effect relationship</p>	<p>The training program on digital literacy for trade unions leads to increased participation of trade unions in project activities, increased digital literacy skills, improved professional communication, enhanced online outreach, effective utilization of communication channels for work, and strengthened cybersecurity practices. These outcomes contribute to empowering trade union members and fostering digitally inclusive project results.</p>
<p>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</p>	<p>Measurable Impact:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased active participation of trade unions in on-line meetings and activities organized by the project. • Increased Digital Literacy: Pre- and post-training assessments can evaluate the participants' knowledge and competence in utilizing digital tools, navigating online platforms, and practicing online safety measures. • Enhanced Online Outreach: Assessments can focus on participants' understanding of engagement metrics, ability to analyse data, and successful implementation of online outreach strategies. • Effective Utilization of Communication Channels <p>Targeted Beneficiaries:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade Union Members • Trade Union Staff

<p>Potential for replication and by whom</p>	<p>Potential for Replication:</p> <p>The training program on digital literacy for trade unions in Cambodia and Lao PDR holds significant potential for replication in similar contexts and beyond. Here are some factors that contribute to its replicability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transferable Modules: The modular structure of the training program allows for easy adaptation and replication in different settings. • Customization: The training program can be customized to meet the specific needs and challenges of different trade unions. By tailoring the content and examples to align with the local context, the program can be effectively replicated in other countries or regions. • Collaboration with Partners: The partnership between the International Labour Organization (ILO), Impact Hub, and trade unions in Cambodia and Lao PDR establishes a collaborative framework that can be replicated with local stakeholders in other countries. <p>By Whom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Trade Union Federations and Associations: Local trade union federations and associations can play a crucial role in replicating the training program within their respective countries. They can adapt the modules and sessions to meet the specific needs of their union members and leverage their existing networks to facilitate the implementation of the program. • Other ILO projects in any area of work can contribute to the replication of the training program. As ILO staff collaborates with trade unions in a regular basis, they can provide technical expertise, and secure funding to adapt and implement the program in different countries or regions.
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Recommendations

Recommendation	Actor/s	Target date
Relevance and validity of design		
Develop an M&E framework with specific indicators	Project management	October 2023
<p>An M&E framework serves as a systematic and structured approach to monitor and assess the progress, effectiveness, and impact of the project. By developing such a framework, the project stakeholders can ensure that they have a clear understanding of the project's performance and its alignment with the intended development priorities.</p> <p>The M&E framework should include a set of specific indicators that can measure the project's progress and outcomes. These indicators should be carefully selected to capture the key aspects of the project's objectives and their relevance to the country's development priorities. For example, indicators could include the number of students enrolled in STEM education programs, the percentage of graduates who find employment in relevant fields, or the number of partnerships established.</p> <p>In addition to indicators, the M&E framework should outline the data collection methods, frequency of monitoring and evaluation activities, responsible stakeholders, and reporting mechanisms.</p>		
Coherence		
Seek collaboration with the Quality Apprenticeship and Lifelong Learning in China – Phase 2 on its objective related to “South-South knowledge exchanges on skills development and lifelong learning implemented”	Project management, ILO technical team	December 2023
<p>In China, the ILO has a partnership with J.P Morgan, under the “Quality apprenticeships and lifelong learning in China” Project, which aims to contribute to the efforts of the Chinese government and social partners to promote decent work through quality apprenticeship and skill development programs. The project, which ended in December 2021, has approved a second phase for a period of 3-years in 2023. One of the project outputs for the second phase is “South-South knowledge exchanges on skills development and lifelong learning implemented”, which is relevant to the project being evaluated and could enhance the results of both projects through strengthened collaboration.</p>		
Progress and effectiveness		
Review the risks and assumptions matrix to establish relevant and project specific risks and guiding mitigation measures.	Project management	December 2023

<p>The project's risk and assumptions matrix highlights risks that are relevant to the project, however not comprehensive of activity specific. The current mitigation measures do not clearly stipulate guidelines to overcome these challenges. Therefore, the evaluation recommends the risks matrix to be reviewed based on the risks identified through this evaluation and to establish realistic mitigation measures to overcome any of the listed and additional challenges.</p>		
Efficiency of resource use		
Support the capacity development of project staff	Project management, Project Staff	End of the project
<p>Project staff are the first contact of the ILO with constituents in each of the project countries. Therefore, their own capacity to provide technical advice to constituents at the country level should be updated and maintained. The evaluation recommends that, if budget allows, project staff should be supported to participate in the Academy on Skills Development organized by the ITCILO, which will enable them to not only participated in debates around the future of education and training systems, but also to network with skills specialists and practitioners from around the global ILO operations.</p> <p>By strengthening the internal expertise and knowledge base, the project can streamline its operations, reduce dependence on external specialists, and improve overall efficiency in the implementation of activities.</p>		
Impact		
Promote self-evaluation exercise for job fairs to through specific gender disaggregated indicators.	Implementing partners (PES)	October 2023
<p>Evaluating job fairs is essential for assessing the impact of the project in employability. It helps organizers understand whether the job fair achieved its objectives, identifies areas for improvement, and provides valuable insights for future planning. Some recommended areas of attention are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance: Measure the total number of male and female attendees separately to assess the level of participation and engagement of each group. • Job Placements: Determine the number and percentage of male and female job seekers who secured employment as a result of the job fair. • Employer Engagement: Assess the number of employers who interacted with male and female job seekers during the fair. • Networking Opportunities: Assess the number and quality of networking opportunities provided. • Participant Satisfaction: Gather feedback through surveys or interviews to assess the satisfaction levels of male and female job seekers. • Long-Term Outcomes: Monitor the long-term outcomes, such as job retention rates, salary progression, and career advancement, for male and female job seekers who secured employment through the fair. This indicator helps assess the activity impact on long term employability. 		
Sustainability		

Consider a cost extension or a next phase of the project, which would enable a stronger sustainability of the project.	Development Partner	End of the project
<p>Interviewed participants consider that an increased financing and more time to carry out the project activities would allow them to support the sustainability of the project results. By extending the project or initiating a subsequent phase, it becomes possible to build upon the achievements and further solidify its benefits.</p> <p>An extension or next phase would allow for the consolidation of the project's achievements. It takes time to fully realize the impact of any initiative, and often, initial gains can be enhanced and expanded upon with additional resources and effort. By extending the project, it becomes possible to continue and strengthen the positive outcomes already observed.</p> <p>Partnerships and collaboration were a key component of the project. Extending the project or initiating a subsequent phase allows for the continuation and strengthening of these partnerships. This foster sustained engagement, knowledge sharing, and collective action towards achieving the project's objectives.</p> <p>Finally, Sustainability is a crucial consideration for any project. By extending the project, it becomes possible to implement measures that promote its long-term sustainability. This may involve capacity-building initiatives, creating local ownership, or developing frameworks for continued monitoring and evaluation. A cost extension or next phase provides the necessary resources and time to embed the project's outcomes within the existing systems and ensure its lasting impact.</p>		