



Evaluation Summaries

Decent Work Country Programmes and Results-Based Management: Strengthening ILO Capacity

Quick Facts

Countries: Global

Final Evaluation: October 2009

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Technical Area: Decent Work Country Programmes

Evaluation Management: PARDEV, EVAL, PROGRAM

Evaluation Team: Robert Lahey

Project Start: December 2006

Project End: December 2009

Project Code: GLO/08/54/UKM

Donor: UK (DFID); Netherlands (\$5,678,789)

Keywords: Results-based management

\$5.6 million over a three-year period (November 2006 through December 2009).

The project is in fact one component of a broader DFID-ILO Partnership Framework Agreement (PFA), linked to broader-level objectives related to RBM and DWCP in the ILO.

In effect then, this is a project within a broader project/programme that also deals with the essential elements of results based management, Decent Work Country Programming and UN Reform.

Background documentation though describes much of the Project's interventions being aimed at the development of guidance materials and the provision of training, targeted at both ILO staff and constituents in countries, all aimed at strengthening their capacity to participate in, support and implement results-based DWCP. Another key component has involved strengthening the capacity and practice of evaluation in the ILO so that findings and recommendations from regular and periodic evaluations of DWCP support their further development.

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The Decent Work Country Programme-Results Based Management Project (hereafter the DWCP-RBM Project) is described as “a capacity development programme to accelerate application of results-based management (RBM) in the ILO” putting emphasis on “country programming in the framework of UN reform” and targeting “the ILO's staff and constituents – governments and representatives of employers' and workers' organizations”.

Initiated in late 2006 through funding contributions from the United Kingdom (DFID) and the government of the Netherlands, the overall resources for the project were set at

Present situation of project

While the DWCP-RBM Project has operated since November 2006, start-up problems required the Project to be 're-phased' in 2008-2009. This 'Phase II' represented a new, more

focused approach to management and coordination of Project efforts. This, plus the creation of a dedicated Project Team, has resulted in improved coordination of training/capacity building efforts across the three ILO Units that have been implicated in the DWCP-RBM Project (PROGRAM, EVAL, PARDEV). As part of this, new language pertaining to expectations for the Project was introduced in 2008, where some six ILO Outcomes associated with the broader PFA were identified.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The evaluation has addressed issues related to the results achieved by the DWCP-RBM Project, progress made against Project objectives, management of the Project and examines the logic and appropriateness of the Project in light of ILO's broader context in moving towards a results-oriented organization.

Recommendations are offered that provide ILO senior officials in general, and management of the three ILO Units implicated in the Project in particular, with the way forward in terms of achieving the necessary aspects associated with results-oriented DWCPs.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation has relied on multiple lines of evidence to gather information and analyze the various issues of this study. Information was drawn from five sources:

1. A desk review
2. In-person interviews with 24 ILO staff at headquarters (HQ)
3. Telephone interviews with 39 field senior management & technical programme staff supporting DWCP and UN reform in the field
4. An e-mail survey of 170 ILO staff participants in training and technical support missions
5. International comparisons of organizations and countries that have worked to introduce and build capacity for results-based management (RBM) and monitoring and evaluation (M&E)

It should be noted that a survey of ILO constituents, originally planned for the evaluation study, was not carried out, largely because to date, there has been too little direct exposure of project activities to constituents. In its place, the study relied on three sources to gain insight into the condition of ILO constituents: feedback from ILO Regional officials interviewed by telephone; the perceptions of ILO Field staff in responding to the e-mail questionnaire; and in-person interviews with ILO staff in HQ representing employer (ACT/EMP) and worker organizations (ACTRAV).

Main Findings & Conclusions

Good results have been achieved by the Project, particularly considering the short period of time that it has been operating (less than two years for Phase II and less than a year for half of the dedicated Project Team members). That said, there is still some way to go in order to achieve the objectives that were originally set out for the Project.

The training and capacity building efforts aimed at ILO field staff have raised a level of understanding of the concepts of RBM as they apply to DWCP as well as linking this to the broader change initiatives of UN Reform. By the end of 2009, all Regions will have been exposed to the Joint Capacity Building training program on UN Reform, RBM, DWCPs, M&E and CEB Toolkit. This is a necessary but not sufficient step though to bring ILO field staff to a level needed to be developing and advising on results-oriented DWCP.

Significant progress has also been made in terms of the Project objectives set out for the ILO's Evaluation function. Project funds represent a significant proportion of the budget of the ILO Evaluation Unit and have been used to help establish full-time M&E Officer positions in each Region. Over a relatively short period of time (since 2005), EVAL has built a solid Evaluation infrastructure (policy, procedures, directives) and created a presence and profile within the ILO, all of this with a

relatively small team of professionals. The Evaluation function plays a critical role in a results-based organization, both as a lead in conducting a program of systematic evaluation studies (that provide management with insight into performance of projects, programmes and policies), but also as a key mechanism for help in building M&E capacity across the organization. Beyond the current funding period then, the ILO will need to address how best to regularize funding for EVAL, given the important role the function plays.

The greatest gap in terms of unmet Project objectives rests with the ILO constituents. To date, there have been few capacity building efforts targeted at constituents.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

ILO field staff have been clear in expressing a need for follow-up support to help the capacity building efforts. In this regard, it is recommended that a 'next phase' strategy and work program be developed, focusing on how best to meet those operational needs of ILO field staff. Development of this strategy and program needs to be a coordinated and cooperative effort between the three ILO Units (PARDEV, EVAL and PROGRAM), the Project and the Regions.

Feedback from the Regions suggests that a different approach to training/capacity building is needed for constituents, and one that should not be 'one size fits all'. In many respects, this will be considerably more complicated than the training being offered to ILO field staff. It is recommended that deliberation on an appropriate strategy and program for constituents needs to form the starting point for the 'next phase' work program. Further, development of the strategy and the program needs to be a collaborative and cooperative exercise involving not only the three ILO Units, the Project and the Regions, but also ACT/EMP and ACTRAV.

Beyond the current funding period for the DWCP-RBM Project, the level of funding for the ILO's Evaluation function needs to at least

be maintained and, depending on the funding requirements for the 'next phase' work program, potentially even increased.

Important lessons learned

Standing back from the details of the Project, it is important for ILO officials to recognize that moving the business to a results-orientation is a long-term exercise that generally involves special efforts over a much longer time period than offered by the DWCP-RBM Project. The experience of other organizations, other countries and other UN agencies would verify that this is a process that involves *years* of efforts. That said, the ILO would be well advised to continue its special efforts launched with the DWCP-RBM Project, so as to continue to make progress on the broad goal of results-oriented DWCPs and avoid slipping back on the progress made to date.

This Project represents one of several change initiatives that the ILO has launched or is planning that, collectively, is slowly building the basis for a 'results culture' within the ILO. Several factors work both for and against a change in the culture of an organization. The ILO should reflect on the experience of other organizations where a 'results' architecture was put in place, but, for a variety of reasons, still failed to yield a well functioning RBM approach. A continued and concerted effort is required well beyond the putting in place of systems.

In many respects, the work and efforts achieved to date by the Project represent the easy part of the journey towards a culture of results measurement. Considerably more capacity building initiatives, directed at targeted ILO field staff and constituents, are still needed. ILO management will however need to be cognizant of the fact that the wide range of changes in administrative and planning systems currently ongoing or anticipated for the ILO may have the effect of creating a 'fatigue' for change, particularly in field offices. This could impact the future

success in meeting the broad goals set out for the Project.