



# Evaluation Summary



International  
Labour  
Office

Evaluation  
Office

## ***Improving Labour Law Compliance and Building Sound Labour Practices in the Export Oriented Shrimp Sector in Bangladesh Project – Final evaluation***

### Quick Facts

**Country:** *Bangladesh*

**Final Evaluation:** *July 2016*

**Evaluation Mode:** *Independent*

**Administrative Office:** *CO Dhaka*

**Technical Office:** *Governance/Declaration*

**Evaluation Manager:** *Pamornrat Pringsulaka*

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**Project Code:** *BGD/13/01/BGD*

**Donor & Budget:** *Government of Bangladesh  
(US\$1,028,424)*

**Keywords:** *Labour Rights, Bangladesh, Export  
Oriented Shrimp Sector, Workplace Cooperation,  
Collective Bargaining, Freedom of Association*

### Background & Context

#### **Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure**

The project “Improving Labour Law Compliance and Building Sound Labour Practices in the Export Oriented Shrimp Sector in Bangladesh” (ILO Shrimp project) seeks to support government, industry, and labour to improve labour practices and compliance with labour standards in the shrimp processing industry of Bangladesh.

The immediate objectives of the ILO Shrimp project are three-fold: (1) ‘Increase awareness and build cooperation among national and international stakeholders on labour compliance within the Bangladesh shrimp supply chain and its labour practices’, further aided through four outputs, (2) Employees and workers and their representatives in the shrimp processing industry will have a better knowledge and understanding of labour rights and responsibilities in law and in practices, further aided through four outputs and (3) MoLE of DoFL, CIFE and labour management factory level committees will have an improved capacity to perform their labour law compliance functions, supported by two outputs.

#### **Present Situation of the Project**

The ILO Shrimp project duration was revised 2 times, i.e. from 18 months to 35 months; however, the actual implementation took place only during 25 months (May 2014-June 2016). The project budget utilization rate constitutes 97.63 per cent as of June 30, 2016.

#### **Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation**

**Purpose:** The final project evaluation focused on relevance and validity of the project design, achievements related to the immediate objectives, emerging impact of the key activities implemented, assess the potential for the sustainability of project interventions and lessons learned.

**Scope:** The final evaluation covers the ILO Shrimp project implementation starting from August 2013 to June 2016.

**Clients:** The principle audiences for this evaluation are the project management, ILO (Dhaka Office, DWT-India, and ROAP-Bangkok, and Governance/Declaration department at HQ), the Government of Bangladesh and social partners in Bangladesh, and the development partner (USAID).

### Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation had a participatory character and was based on a mixed-method approach. Data collection procedures included:

- a) *desk review* of relevant documents related to the Project and other sources (more than 40 documents have been reviewed).
- b) *field visit to Bangladesh* (Dhaka, Khulna, Chittagong) during June 19-28, 2016.
- c) *interviews with key informants* from executing agency, Government representatives, employers and workers' organizations, national implementing partners and donor (in total, 41 interviews were conducted).
- d) *focus group discussions with master trainers/co-trainers and workers trained or assisted by the project* (in total, 5 focus groups were conducted with 45 master trainers/co-trainers and workers trained or assisted by the project).
- e) *beneficiary surveys* among workers, labour inspectors and mid-level managers from Khulna and Chittagong (in total, 59 respondents).
- f) *observations* (site visits to two factories in Khulna (Rupsha Food Khulna and Fresh Food Khulna).

### Main Findings & Conclusions

**Validity of project design:** The project design was generally valid, although quite ambitious in terms of scope and duration taking into consideration country context. Consultation during planning and design phase was not done with tripartite constituents to better inform the objectives and activities of the project.

**Relevance and strategic fit:** ILO Shrimp project enjoyed a high relevance which remained throughout the project's lifespan. The project fully corresponds with strategic documents of the Government of Bangladesh, the ILO, and the development partner (USAID/Bangladesh).

**Project progress and effectiveness:** In general, ILO Shrimp project demonstrated good achievements towards reaching the anticipated results despite a challenging environment. The Project achieved most of the set targets under Immediate Objectives 1 and 3, while expected results mostly exceeded the set targets under Immediate Objective 2.

**Efficiency of resource use:** The project is efficient overall and is accomplishing well with respect to resources used (inputs) as compared to qualitative and quantitative impact (outputs). ILO Shrimp project had delays in its implementation; however, in overall delivered under some components more than it was initially planned.

**Effectiveness of management arrangements:** The project management model was adequate for ensuring proper project implementation and reaching sustainable and meaningful results. ILO Shrimp project showed good adaptability to the changes in the country context in spite of the absence of the risk analysis. The project resources have been effectively leveraged with other ILO Bangladesh projects and programmes to maximize the project impact. The project received adequate political, technical and administrative support from almost all national partners and build up a strong collaboration with local social partners at the target areas. The project has a strong project governance structure and established a robust M&E system for proper assessment of achievement of project's objectives.

**Impact orientation:** The project enjoys a considerable impact. ILO Shrimp project has showed the positive signs of short-term and medium-term impacts at beneficiary and factory levels through raising awareness and understanding about the labour law and rules, OSH and workplace cooperation which in its turn contributed to the improvement in labour law enforcement and implementation in the shrimp sector. Nonetheless, further support is needed to

ensure long-term impact in improvement of the labour compliance in the whole shrimp supply chain.

**Sustainability:** The project does not have a strong phase out strategy developed in participatory way with social partners. The main practices and behaviours promoted by ILO Shrimp project that may be sustainable include trained manpower at factory level and developed publications and tools (Training manuals on Labour Law and workplace cooperation, Employers Handbook and Voluntary Self-Assessment Checklist, Green Book leaflet, mapping study on shrimp sector).

**Gender:** ILO Shrimp project promoted and took into account gender mainstreaming aspects wherever applicable; however, the involvement of women into project's capacity building activities were unequal due to the existed gender imbalance in the shrimp sector between permanent and casual workers.

### Conclusions

ILO Shrimp project achieved its development objective and was successful in providing support to the Government, industry, and labour to improve labour practices and compliance with BLL & ILS in the shrimp processing industry of Bangladesh. The Project has a number of accomplishments including (1) creation of an enabling environment and platform for improving social dialogue among Government, employers and workers on BLL in the shrimp processing industry, (2) substantially increasing the knowledge of key social partners on the labour law compliance in the shrimp processing sector, (3) strengthening cooperation among national and international stakeholders on labour compliance, (4) deepening the employer and worker engagement with the brands and buyers on issues related to compliance and (5) increasing trust between employers and NGOs. This project is the first step to strengthen the labour law compliance in the shrimp sector and continuation is required to cover the whole supply chain and bring up the lasting impact. ILO Shrimp project could serve as good practice, which was small in scale but was able to be very functional and produce a number of important results within a short timeframe; therefore, it would be valuable to replicate best practices and lessons learned from the

ILO Shrimp project to future or on-going projects of ILO.

### Recommendations

The main recommendations are summarized as follows:

Recommendation 1: Due to the importance of the shrimp sector for Bangladesh consider extension of the Project for at least 2 more years for ensuring sustainable impact of the results achieved under ILO Shrimp project.

Recommendation 2: To support better the industry competitiveness, the design of any subsequent Phase of the Project in the shrimp sector should focus more on:

- (a) adding one more target group of supply chain (depot owners and workers);
- (b) put more focus on casual workers;
- (c) involvement of other actors of food production industry to increase export and compliance with non-tariff trade rules;
- (d) institutionalization of capacity building programmes through establishing of the Center of Excellence at BFFEA;
- (e) introducing specific skills trainings for workers aiming on increasing productivity and improving products quality;
- (f) continuing trainings on workplace cooperation and OSH with involvement of workers and factory owners/management;
- (g) establishment of factory based cultural teams for awareness raising on BLL.

Recommendation 3: To integrate the learning from the ILO Shrimp Project during development of the next Decent Country Programme (2018-2022) and expand the programme coverage to food processing industry and agriculture.

Recommendation 4: In design of the future projects to involve all tripartite constituents in the project design and do it before the finalization of PRODOC with the development partner.

Recommendation 5: In future interventions, project development should proceed from the Logframe. For a better understanding of the success, it is recommended that for each outcome, targets be set.

Recommendation 6: In future interventions, establish effective collaboration with both national and local authorities through involvement in project implementation in order to ensure better ownership and replicability of practices piloted/created by the project.

Recommendation 7: In future projects, to ensure allocation of sufficient time for conduction of proper lessons learned exercises, i.e. 3 months prior to project end.

Recommendation 8: In future projects, to identify strategies at the planning phase that will lead to sustainability of core project outputs and outcomes within the project timeframe.

Recommendation 9: To make a follow up with Inspector General of DIFE of the developed Sector Specific Labor Inspection Checklist to ensure its approval for further usage as additional tool by labor inspectors

Recommendation 10: To ensure allocation of funding for publication of the Industry Mapping and Labour Compliance Analysis study

Recommendation 11: The design of any future Project should pay further attention to articulating an outcome-based strategy towards gender mainstreaming in order to strengthen the gender orientation of activities undertaken by its partners, as well as impact of the Project.

### **Important lessons learned**

An important lesson learned of the ILO Shrimp project is the need to enhance capacities of regulatory bodies to better enforce labour laws and up-gradate and reorganization of the Government institutions (DoL, MoLE departments) to meet the contemporary demand of the industry. Therefore, technical assistance offered in the field of social development requires long-term interventions and need to be embedded in the vision of change for the industry.

### **Good Practices**

The project organized educational and outreach campaign on labour rights and responsibilities at factory level using one of the folk cultural media tools, i.e. 'Pot song'. The 'Pot' refers to a painted banner that is used during a performance featuring songs, dance and acting in order to engage with the audience and convey message to them.

Capacity building activities of the ILO Shrimp project have included ToT programmes for mid-level managers and factory level training programme for workers/factory management to build capacity of participants on the amended labour laws with a special focus on enterprise level application of labour law, OSH and workplace cooperation. In delivering these capacity building interventions, ILO outsourced either external collaborators who are consultants with relevant expertise in their area of endeavor or social partners (government and workers' organization).

*See the full report for all recommendations, lessons learned and good practices.*