



Evaluation Summaries

Building capacity for coordination of social security for migrant workers in the Republic of Moldova

Quick Facts

Countries: *Moldova*

Final Evaluation: *December 2011*

Mode of Evaluation: *independent*

Technical Area: *Social Security*

Evaluation Management: *ILO DWT/CO
Budapest*

Evaluation Team: *Pluriconsult Ltd. (R.
Milahache)*

Project Start: *September 2009*

Project End: *December 2011*

Project Code: *MOL/08/02/ROM*

Donor: *Romania (EUR 100,000)*

Keywords: *migrant worker, workers' rights,
social security, labour migration*

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The overall project context indicates that globalization and regional integration have added impetus to the growing mobility of workers across borders in search of employment. The greater flow of people across national boundaries and more diverse forms of migration are creating new challenges as migrant workers face multiple disadvantages in working conditions, including limited legal rights, discrimination, social exclusion, and lack of social security.

The dimension of the migration phenomenon strongly affects the economic and social development of the Republic of Moldova. According to World Bank, remittances amount to more than US\$ 1 billion per year and continue to grow. Work remittances increased from 13.8 per cent of GDP in 2000 to 36.2 per cent in 2007. Unattractive working conditions and low wages are the main push factors that determine Moldovans to migrate for employment.

In these circumstances, ensuring the right of social security for migrant workers is important from the point of view of securing equality of treatment in social security for migrant workers, and of extending the social security coverage for currently unprotected population. In order to protect the rights of Moldovan migrant workers, the authorities of the Republic of Moldova are keen in concluding bilateral agreements on social security with the main destination states of Moldovan citizens working abroad, and in implementing these agreements. However, there is a need to develop the capacity in concluding and implementing such agreements and to strengthen the administrative mechanism to implement the agreements efficiently.

The project "Republic of Moldova: Building capacity for coordination of social security for migrant workers" aimed to improve the social security benefits for Moldovan migrant workers by enhancing the capacity of the

Moldovan government in negotiating, adopting, and implementing the bilateral social security agreements with destination countries of Moldovan migrant workers. The project contributed to improve the impact of migration on development and on poverty reduction by ensuring the right of social security for the Moldovan migrant workers and their families. The project was technically and administratively backstopped by the ILO DWT/CO-Budapest. The Senior Specialist for Social Security of ILO DWT/CO-Budapest acted as the Project Coordinator.

The major outputs of the project were the following: a project planning meeting, a study visit to Bucharest, two training courses and a final meeting in Chisinau. Apart from these events, four publications were produced.

During the project timeframe, Moldova signed four social security agreements and two administrative arrangements. In addition, negotiations were completed with five countries, while preliminary steps were made with two countries

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The evaluation was carried in accordance with the Article 13 of Agreement between Romania represented by the Government of Romania in its Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the International Labour Organization represented by the International Labour Office. The final evaluation was requested to address the key issues of performance of the project in accordance with the ILO policy in the field of technical cooperation.

The purpose of the final evaluation was to ensure accountability to the Donor, to strengthen organizational knowledge base and to improve future programming and decision-making. Therefore, the main audience of the evaluation is represented by the ILO DWT/CO-Budapest, the ILO team in Chisinau, the Donor (Government of Romania) and the ILO constituents in the Republic of Moldova.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation examined project performance against the following key *evaluation criteria*:

- Relevance of the project and strategic fit
- Validity of the project design (including strategy, objectives and assumptions)
- Implementation status, project progress and effectiveness
- Efficiency of resource use
- Effectiveness of management arrangements
- Impact orientation and sustainability

The evaluation combined a desk review of ILO documents and other relevant documents with interviews addressing project stakeholders, as well as ILO staff. Also, the evaluator attended the Project Closing Conference in Chisinau, Republic of Moldova, 22 November 2011.

The evaluation report recognises two sources of limitations in the evaluation process. The first one refers to the limited capacity of the evaluation to measure the ultimate effects of the projects in relation to the benefits for the migrant workers. The project will impact on the migrant workers only after their retirement and return to the country, which is not yet the case, therefore this aspect can be only estimated for the time being, but not accurately measured. The second limitation comes from a certain staff turnover, both at the level of the partner (Romanian Government) and of the beneficiary (Government of the Republic of Moldova) staff. Some of the people who participated in the project or who monitored the project changed their jobs. To a limited extent, that reduced the variety of data collection sources.

Main Findings & Conclusions

The project has a high relevance given its contribution to the achievement of two outcomes of the Decent Work Country

Programme for Moldova (2008-2011) focused on increasing effectiveness of social security schemes through technical assistance and capacity building of the tripartite constituents and on improvement of policy and regulatory framework in place and the institutions capacity to effectively manage labour migration and prevent labour exploitation of migrant workers.

The project strategy was valid as the project strategy responded to an overall national strategic approach described by the EU/Moldova Action Plan and by the EU/Moldova Mobility Partnership stipulating the need for concluding agreements on social security between Moldova and EU member states of destination for migrant workers from Moldova. This aspect was also an outcome included in the National Development Strategy 2008-2011.

The social partners (employers' organizations and trade unions), although not directly involved in the practical negotiations of agreements, are informed by the government on the matters related to the agreements (destination countries with which agreements were signed or with which negotiations are in process, objectives of the agreements etc.).

The project made a major contribution in developing the capacity of the Moldovan experts in the line ministry and national social insurance institution responsible for social security agreements to better plan, negotiate and implement bilateral and multilateral social security agreements.

The project reached effectively the direct beneficiaries (the employees of the MLSPF, NOSI RMD, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the indirect beneficiaries (National Confederation of Employers of Republic of Moldova and National Confederation of Trade Unions of Moldova). For the ultimate beneficiaries (migrant workers and their families) only very recently the project has started to show its effects. As for the types of benefits, the agreements refer to the followings: age pension, disability pension, survivor pension,

unemployment benefit, sickness benefit, maternity benefit and death insurance.

The project was implemented based on six activities: a planning meeting, a study visit, two trainings, a series of publications and a project closing conference. The activities were discussed and agreed among the project stakeholders with the occasion of the preliminary needs assessment visit (planning meeting) and there were no changes in implementation.

The activities were timely delivered in a period when the Moldovan experts were involved quite intensively in the preparation of negotiations of the social security agreements. The project was very much demand driven by the need for Moldovan Government to develop its capacity to conclude social security agreements in the context of a high number of migrant workers among Moldovan citizens.

The project has drawn on various tools and guidelines developed by ILO units with experience in the domain and is also connected with other ILO projects and initiatives in the region.

The project has a "cascade effect" in the sense that once the first agreements are concluded this is strengthening the credibility of the beneficiary (Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family of the Republic of Moldova) and, in some cases, the process of negotiation is smoother, although difficulties are encountered in starting negotiations with the major destination countries.

The project has satisfactory sustainability perspectives for reasons of good collaboration among project partners, as well as for reasons of good integration of the project outputs in the work of the entities involved in the project implementation (especially ILO and National Office of Social Insurance of the Republic of Moldova).

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

1. The ILO DWT/CO-Budapest should improve the quality of the project

design, especially concerning the design of the project performance indicators for those projects expected to have longer term effects and more difficult to control in the implementation period. Investing some basic efforts in collecting baseline indicators in the design phase would contribute to a better measure of progress at the end of the project.

2. ILO should collect ex-post evidence for those projects not having an immediate impact which would increase its credibility in relation to the donors.
3. National Office of Social Insurance of the Republic of Moldova (NOSI ROM) should improve the capacity of its staff, both at the central and at the local levels (i.e. in Chisinau and outside of the capital city) in order to apply the administrative arrangements of the agreements. The Government of the Republic of Moldova should support NOSI in that sense by identifying sources of (i) technical assistance for institutional capacity development and of (ii) dissemination of relevant information among ultimate beneficiaries (migrant workers and their families).
4. The Moldovan authorities should intensify their efforts of concluding agreements with major destination countries for Moldovan migrant workers by identifying and focusing more on the mutual benefits shared with the authorities in the destination countries. Better documenting on these mutual benefits might be required.

Important lessons learned

1. Projects showing effects predominantly on longer term and very little under the control of the implementing agency or beneficiary partner will need special attention in the design phase, especially

on the design of performance indicators.

2. Donors are more interested in the impact of projects on ultimate beneficiaries. Perspectives of getting access to funding will be positive for those proposals able to document this aspect.
3. Actions of negotiation of social security agreements of a country have a better impact if they are combined with efforts for developing the institutional capacity of implementing the agreements as well as with activities of dissemination of information about the agreements among ultimate beneficiaries (migrant workers and their families).
4. Efforts of launching negotiations with major destination countries, although taking longer, will have a higher impact on ensuring social security of workers and on national social security budget on the long run.

Good practices

The mutual willingness and commitment both from beneficiary's side (Moldovan Government) and the partner's side (Romanian Government) to collaborate in this project was a solid foundation for a successful project.

Sharing recent experience and a common cultural background strengthens both the credibility of the partner and enhances the ownership of the results on behalf of the beneficiary.