



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
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Improving Fire and General Building Safety in Bangladesh - Independent final evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: *Bangladesh*

Final Evaluation: *September to November 2016*

Mode of Evaluation: *Independent*

Administrative Office: *ILO-Dhaka*

Technical Office: *LABADMIN/OSH Branch, Governance Department*

Evaluation Manager: *Pamornrat Pringsulaka*

Evaluation Consultant: *Jonathan Price*

Project End: *31-January-2017*

Project Code: *BGD/13/08/USA*

Donor & Project Budget: *USA, US Department of Labor (US\$1,500,000)*

Keywords: *Bangladesh, clothing and textile industries, labour inspection, occupational safety and health, industrial accident, fire, building safety, working conditions*

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure: The project is an integral part of the ILOs programme which aims to improve working conditions in the RMG sector, developed to support the Government of Bangladesh's (GOB) National Tripartite Plan of Action (NTPA)

which responded to the Tazreen factory fire and the Rana Plaza building collapse. The project objective is to enhance the GOBs enforcement of fire and general building safety laws and regulations in line with international standards. To achieve this, the project included five outputs as follows: 1. Upgrading the regulatory framework, 2. Upgrading labour inspection procedures, 3. Strengthening inspectors capacity, 4. Efficient and timely inspections and 5. Setting up a data tracking system.

The project targeted key regulating authorities under the Ministry of Labour and Employment (MOLE) and the Fire Service and was supported by a Fire Safety Expert and Financial and Administrative Assistant.

Present Situation of the Project: The project officially began on 8 November 2013, initially focussing on the completion of the Preliminary Assessments on the structural, fire and electrical situation in about 1,500 buildings that housed factories. Work on the 5 outputs has largely been completed with only the completion of the data tracking system remaining to be finished.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation: The objective of the evaluation was to assess the Fire and General Building Safety project, looking at the

issues of Design, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Relevance, Sustainability, Potential Impact as well as some special aspects including a previous USDOL evaluation and cross cutting issues. The evaluation clients are the tripartite constituents as the primary stakeholders of the project and ILO and USDOL.

Methodology of evaluation: Based on the criteria above evaluation questions were drafted for a field mission. Methods included desk research and key informant interviews. Interviewees included ILO staff, government representatives, regulating authorities, employers and workers organisations and other key stakeholders. Limitations in the evaluation delayed completion of a mission itinerary and sharing of documentation.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Design:

- The project successfully applied the strategies of coordination, harmonisation and capacity strengthening
- The timeframe of 3 years was sufficient to complete the objective of enhancement of GOB enforcement of fire and general building safety laws and regulations
- Other stakeholder initiatives were taken into consideration although there was some overlap with the RMGP which was managed during implementation
- Results based design was used although no actions were planned to enable workers to play a role in promoting OSH (as this was not within the scope of the project)
- Indicators and targets were not adequately designed once implementation began making

reporting and evaluation of progress difficult

- Assumptions made in the design proved to be true, although the assumption that training would be sufficient to build professional staff was over optimistic
- The project supported an IKM analysis, completed in Mar-2015. An RMGP supported needs analysis was not delivered early enough to be of much benefit to project implementation. It did not refer to gender issues.
- Sustainability strategies were not defined in any detail at the design stage. However the overall approach was a sustainable one.

Effectiveness:

- Output targets have largely been completed but assessment of this has been difficult because of changing targets and indicators. The database for FSCD is still pending.
- Preliminary Assessments were completed later than expected (because complexity). Capacity strengthening work was delayed resulting in a lost opportunity for follow up.
- The immediate objective of enhancing enforcement has been achieved but is not attributable to the project alone. A major achievement is the harmonising of standards.
- The main unplanned output is a communication strategy and the projects switch in emphasis from DIFE to FSCD because of overlap with the RMGP.
- External factors of a political, security and contractual nature were overcome with any major impact on the completion of outputs.

Efficiency:

- A high proportion of funds went towards staffing but the project could

not have functioned with fewer staff. Costs of outputs were considered cost efficient.

- Good support was received from the ILO RMGP, CO & Geneva. The lack of a project-dedicated local counterpart engineer is a lost opportunity to build institutional knowledge.
- The project is a fundamental part of the RMGP and has contributed technical guidance and expertise. Collaboration with the Solidarity Center has been limited.

Relevance:

- The project responded to the needs of the primary beneficiaries and the overall outcomes are relevant. Only RAJUK were not able to avail of the projects services, although they were given opportunities.
- The working environment in RMG factories has improved as immediate hazards have been identified. But lack of progress in remediation work puts at risk this achievement.
- Mainstreaming has raised awareness of safety among stakeholders. Strict enforcement and penalties are needed as owners do not yet see the business benefits of safety.

Sustainability:

- The project took a sustainable approach but years of work is needed in supporting the RCC and building capacity. The GOB is still dependent on ILO and other partners.
- Capacity of DIFE and FSCD has been strengthened but more support is needed to enable them to put into practice what they have learnt.
- Gender activities were limited to promoting the recruitment of women inspectors and their participation in training. Social inclusion of vulnerable groups was not addressed.

Impact:

- The No. of casualties due to fires has decreased – thanks to the effort of all stakeholders. The project has provided a foundation for inspections to improve.
- Regulatory bodies have been provided with tools, standards and processes that can be scaled up as well as replicated in other industries. The No. of inspectors has increased.

Special aspects:

- Recommendations made in the USDOL mid-term evaluation have been adequately addressed by the project.
- The project has not directly engaged with the unions, in social dialogue or promoting ILS (other projects have focussed on this). However the tripartite role of the project in bringing about consensus is appreciated.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

Recommendations:

1. The project needs to make a clear sustainability plan including future periodical reinforcement of training.
2. The ILO should continue to work with development partners and the GOB to address the contradictions between the Fire Act and the BNBC.
3. The project needs to gather basic data from DIFE and FSCD on the numbers and genders of the people trained by the TOT recipients.
4. The ILO should work with development partners to address the lacking engagement of RAJUK.
5. The RMGP should engage a Fire Safety Expert to advise the RCC.

Lessons learned:

1. Indicators and targets should be formulated either in project design or very early on during the project and should not be altered afterwards.
2. Earlier completion of training components would allow for follow up and reinforcement within the project timeframe.
3. The engagement of a project-dedicated counterpart technical staff member to the Fire Safety Expert would have built institutional knowledge.
4. Although Preliminary Assessments have been successfully completed, this is not sufficient to secure improvement in the safety of the working environment.

Emerging good practices:

1. The project, collaborating with RMGP, has demonstrated good practice in developing a system for carrying out preliminary assessments and subsequent steps.