



Evaluation Summary



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RBSA SUPPORT TO SELECTED COUNTRY PROGRAMME OUTCOMES (CPOs) CONCERNING PROMOTION OF EMPLOYMENT (2012 - 2013 BIENNIUM)

Quick Facts

Countries: **RAF 107** - *Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Libya, Somalia, South Sudan and Tunisia* - **ETH 127** - *covering Ethiopia, Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and South Sudan*

Final RBSA Evaluation: *June 2015*

Mode of Evaluation: *Independent*

Administrative Office: *RO-Africa*

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Project End: *December 2013*

Donor & Project Budget: *RBSA funds (US\$ 6 million)*

Keywords: *employment creation*

Background & Context

Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) is a category of voluntary resources set up by the ILO in 2008 to increase the funding of its Decent Work Agenda through flexible unearmarked voluntary contributions to the Technical Cooperation programme. In the ILO Strategic Framework for 2010-2015, Employment Promotion (Outcome 1) is one of key outcomes towards fostering Office's decent work agenda. During the 2012-2013 biennium, the ILO allocated a total of US\$ 5,947,921 for employment promotion in the African region distributed across 19 CPOs – one (1) regional outcome and one (1) sub-regional outcome.

While several of these CPOs were linked to specific projects and were to be evaluated within the framework of project evaluation, some CPOs were not linked to any specific project and have to be evaluated independently. In this regard, eleven (11) CPOs were selected for independent thematic evaluation of RBSA support. The CPOs selected for evaluation are grouped into two Regional Country Priority Outcomes (RPO¹) as follows:

RAF 107 - comprising the following CPOs: BDI 101 (Burundi), COD 102 (Democratic Republic of Congo), LBY 126 (Libya), SOM 101 (Somalia), SSD 101 and SSD 103 (South Sudan) and TUN 104 (Tunisia). RBSA resources linked to this outcome, which amounted to US\$ 285,337, were to cover the responsible ILO Crisis and Post-Conflict Senior Technical Expert position for work related to the achievement of social justice, peace and stability by addressing underlying causes of conflicts in these group of countries. The anticipated outcome of RAF 107, was “*Constituents in the Horn of Africa, in West Africa and in North Africa realize social justice, peace and stability by addressing underlying causes of conflicts*”. ILO work in this regard aimed at supporting Country Directors and Constituents in most conflict-affected countries in the African continent by applying the UN Policy for Employment in Post-Conflict environments at the national and sub-regional levels, to support

¹ While ETH 127 is country priority outcome and not a regional CPO as such, lumping other country priority outcomes under this CPO code was for administrative reasons to allow for processing of budgetary allocation against ETH 127 given that Regional EIIP Senior Technical Expert position under Addis CO was to provide support to these other CPOs as well.

prevention and recovery from conflicts through creation of decent work.

ETH 127 – comprising the following CPOs: ETH 127 (Ethiopia), GHA 101 (Ghana), LBR 101 (Liberia), SLE 103 (Sierra Leone) and SSD 101 (South Sudan). RBSA resources linked to this outcome, which amounted to US\$ 43,898, were to cover the ILO Regional EII Senior Technical Expert position for his work in this group of countries. The anticipated outcome of CPOs under ETH 127 was “Enhanced capacity of constituents to develop and implement policies and programmes of employment intensive programmes focusing on infrastructure development to promote rural and urban employment”. ILO support in this regard aimed at availing EII related services to the respective governments and other stakeholders through knowledge sharing and management in the planning, designing and implementing access roads projects.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

This independent thematic evaluation has been undertaken in accordance with ILO’s Evaluation Policy adopted by the Governing Body in November 2005, which requires systematic evaluation of all initiatives of the Office including RBSA-related work in order to improve quality, accountability and transparency of the ILO’s work, strengthen the decision-making process and support constituents in forwarding decent work and social justice. The evaluation is specifically concerned with the contribution of ILO’s technical support of the RBSA funds to ETH 127 and RAF 107. The primary clients of the evaluation include relevant ILO staff at the HQ in Geneva, ROAF in Addis Ababa, relevant country offices and the DWTs as well as the ILO tripartite constituents.

Approach and methodology: The evaluation approach was participatory while the methodology comprised the following research instruments: (i) literature review of key relevant documents; and (ii) field interviews with a limited number of key stakeholders.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Notwithstanding limitations related to lack of requisite secondary data and information as well the limited number of respondents reached, the Mission was of the view that RBSA support to CPOs under review made notable achievements, which have the

potential for impact and sustainability. This is in particular with respect to capacity building of stakeholders in various forms including training and exposure tours; employment creation using EII methods; dis-armament and business start through seed capital support; and mainstreaming of strategic interventions in government strategies, policies and plans.

Relevance and Strategic Fit:

Interventions of CPOs under review were derived from DWCPs - where they were available especially in the case of CPOs under ETH 127 and also the ILO sub-regional Strategy for North Africa, 2011-2015- in the case of CPOs under RAF 107. Taking this into account, it can be reasonably inferred that the interventions were generally relevant to the stakeholders as the DWCPs as well as the sub-regional strategy were developed through consultative processes with key stakeholders. Additionally, while the Mission’s review of CPO interventions indicated significant relevance and strategic fit with key relevant national policies, strategies and plans; interviews with key ILO respondents (ROAF, DWT/Pretoria CO, and the regional technical expert for CPOs under RAF 107) also indicated high relevance not only to the ILO decent work agenda but also to development aspirations of the government of member states and primary beneficiaries.

Validity of Design: By and large, the Mission found the CPO design processes to have been generally logical and coherent based on a number of parameters including information base upon which the CPOs were formulated and the inherent stakeholder consultations (with DWCP having formed the main basis); efficacy of the development models applied (the ILO-based EII methods and UN framework for prevention and recovery from conflicts through decent work creation); and the systematic application of ILO criteria for CPO selection, planning and approval processes. The problem lies in the hurry in which the CPOs was prepared given the short notice on the available RBSA resources and consequently the amount of stakeholders’ consultations at that stage of the process.

Progress and Effectiveness: Albeit limitations encountered in terms of availability of M&E data and information pertaining to implementation and achievements of most of the CPOs, as well as the limited number of respondents interviewed, the Mission concludes that RBSA

support contributed significantly to the decent work agenda, through employment creation as well as prevention and recovery from conflict. In particular, the Mission noted the following interventions and/or achievements which are likely to have sustainable impact beyond the biennium 2012-2013 in the following areas:

- ✚ *Capacity building of stakeholders*
- ✚ *Creation of requisite socio-economic and political enabling environment*
- ✚ *Promotion of income generating opportunities and employment creation*
- ✚ *Information sharing, networking, and promotion of strategic partnership and collaboration and*
- ✚ *Mainstreaming interventions into government policies*

Effectiveness of Management Arrangements:

Implementation of CPOs was under the management of ROAF. The two Regional Senior Technical Experts were reporting to the ILO Regional Office for Africa in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia); and by extension to the relevant headquarter units of the ILO. While this arrangement was said to have worked well process-wise, it had three operational and/or structural weaknesses.

Effectiveness and Efficiency of Resource Use:

The total amount of RBSA allocated to the CPOs under review amounted to only US\$ 329,235. According to virtually all respondents met during field interviews, these resources are extremely important despite being quite small and inadequate given the huge problems associated with deficiency of decent work in the African region. The Mission is of the view that it is not so much the amount, but how strategically the resources are used and the ILO staff should try to focus on “high-impact”, “quick-results” and “sustainable” type of interventions given the small amounts and the short time line available for implementation (biennium).

Aside from the inadequacy of RBSA resource, other important issues identified by the Mission with regard to effectiveness and efficiency of resources included: (a) the short period provided between notification by PROGRAM and request for proposals – in some instances resulting in the implementing staff going for the “low-lying fruits” that may not necessarily have the greatest impact; (b) backsliding on the gains previously made in terms of the timeliness of release of funds with those of 2014-2015 coming nearly half a year late; and (c)

the continued presentation of ambitious workplans and budgets by the implementing staff against the well-known fact about the scarcity of RBSA resources.

Impact Orientation and Sustainability: While it was not possible to establish the full extent of impact and sustainability of interventions of the CPOs under review, the Mission observed the following interventions that have real potential to contribute to impact and sustainability:

- ✚ Initial stakeholder consultations which were in-built in the design of - not so much the CPOs, but the DWCP from which the CPOs were derived, as well as during the formulation of the ILO Regional Strategy for North Africa (2011-2015);
- ✚ Capacity building of local stakeholder and relevant institutions through training and exposure tours among other things;
- ✚ Creation of requisite enabling environment in terms of promoting peace, security and development of infrastructural facilities – particularly rural access roads;
- ✚ Promotion of income generating opportunities and employment creation;
- ✚ Information sharing, networking, and promotion of strategic partnership and collaboration;
- ✚ Mainstreaming interventions into government policies, strategies and plans.

However, the problem is that sustainability and impact of these interventions were likely to have been undermined by the following challenges which characterized the environment in which most CPO - especially under RAF 107, were being implemented:

- (a) The low capacity of many partner government institutions;
- (b) The high turnover of personnel especially among the ILO Tripartite Constituents;
- (c) The apparent insufficient political will and commitment by some governments especially under RAF 107;
- (d) The short-term duration nature of bienniums;
- (e) Lack of effective follow-up and timely consolidation of results of nearly all CPOs under review for lesson learning and action on the part of the ILO; and
- (f) Continued fragility and conflict in some of the countries (especially those under RAF 107).

Recommendations

Main recommendations and follow-up

1. *Performance Monitoring and Reporting Framework:* M&E framework for data and information collection as well as reporting systems and functions should form part and parcel of the ILO official requirements for CPO proposals. This is important to avoid a situation like the one experienced during this particular Evaluation Mission where such data totally unavailable or very scanty for nearly all CPOs under review.
2. *Regional Strategy:* For coherence and effective implementation of interventions towards addressing issues that are regional in nature e.g. migration and cross-border conflict, the ILO should in future first have in place a Regional Strategy rather than operating disjointed country-level strategies and outcomes was essential not just to ensure coherence of ILO work in this regard, but also because some of the issues that were being addressed e.g. cross border conflict and migration under RAF 107 were regional in nature and therefore required a regional approach.
3. *Appropriate CPO Management and Implementation Arrangements:* Lumping CPOs under a CO-based CPO should be avoided in future to avoid management problems as experienced under ETH 127 during the 2012-2013 biennium.
4. *Building of Strategic Partnership:* Building strategic partnership, fostering networks and collaboration should in future form part and parcel of Office requirements with respect to CPO proposal. This is essential not only from the point of view of scarcity of RBSA resources, but also for derivation of synergy with activities of other players as well as enhancing prospects for sustainability.
5. *Flexibility in CPO Implementation and Management:* Where the beneficiary Member State is faced with fragile and unstable socio-economic and political environment, the ILO should allow for some degree of flexibility of procedures and autonomy for ground-level decision making to facilitate quicker and more empathized response.
6. *Timely Release of RBSA funds:* The complex resource allocation processes of RBSA and associated transaction cost stand in contrast to the small amounts at stake. While the ILO has made commendable improvements in terms of timeliness of release of funds in recent years, it is crucial to ensure that there is no backsliding on the gains so far made.
7. *Strategic Selection of Outcomes and Realism of Planning:* Given the well-known fact regarding the ever lingering scarcity of RBSA resources and the short-period which is limited to implementation over a two-year period (biennium), the relevant ILO staff should endeavour to give priority to “high-impact”, “quick-results” and “sustainable” type of interventions.
8. *Timely Evaluations:* ILO should conduct evaluations on a timely basis to ensure meaningful analysis and therefore to effectively inform the Office for timely decision-making and undertaking of requisite remedial measures.

Lessons learned can be accessed in the full report.