



# Evaluation Summary



International  
Labour  
Office

Evaluation  
Office

## *Outcome Based Funding - Norway & Sweden: Workers have strong, independent and representative organizations (Final Evaluation)*

### Quick Facts

<b>Countries:</b>	<i>Norway-funded: Latin America, Armenia, India, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lebanon, Moldova, Nepal, Somalia, Swaziland Sida-funded: Bangladesh, Brazil, Costa Rica, Indonesia, Myanmar, Panama, Paraguay, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Uganda, Zimbabwe March-April 2016</i>
<b>Final Evaluation: Evaluation Mode: Administrative Office</b>	<i>Independent ACTRAV</i>
<b>Technical Office: Evaluation Manager Evaluation Consultant(s):</b>	<i>ACTRAV Peter E. Wichmand, EVAL Dave Spooner, Jessica Whelligan, Global Labour Institute</i>
<b>Project Code:</b>	<i>GLO/14/60/NOR; GLO/14/75/SID</i>
<b>Donor(s) &amp; Budget:</b>	<i>Royal Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, US\$ 1,698,920 Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), US\$ 386,165</i>
<b>Keywords:</b>	<i>Worker's Activities, Global Supply Chains</i>

### Background & Context

#### Project Background

This evaluation concerns two projects, respectively financed by the Royal Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and the Swedish Development Cooperation Agency (Sida). Both projects were in support of the ILO Programme & Budget's Outcome 10 - Workers have strong, independent and representative organisations - for 2014-15.

Building on lessons learned and achievements of a previous phase (2012 – 2013), the Norwegian-funded Trade Unions for Social Justice – Phase II project was to pay particular attention to capacity building, campaigns for ratification and implementation of ILO's Core Conventions, increasing trade union influence over national policy issues pertaining to labour and, linked to these aims, strengthen trade union platforms in countries in which trade union fragmentation is a challenge. The project aimed at contributing to the extension of labour rights and enhancing social dialogue through a stronger labour movement.

The Sida-funded project was concerned with Strengthening International Labour Standards (ILS) in Global Supply Chains (GSCs) and Export Processing Zones (EPZs) by promoting workers' rights and stronger, independent, representative labour organizations representing workers in GSCs and in the EPZs. The project was to develop knowledge and research capacity of workers' organizations in the area of cross border social dialogue, GSCs and EPZs; strengthen the ability of workers' organizations to promote freedom of association / collective bargaining and organize GSC and EPZ workers, and to develop and deliver advanced labour

education programmes and curricula for workers' reps in GSCs and EPZs.

### Evaluation Background

The purpose of the final independent evaluation is to examine the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, impact and sustainability of the project. The evaluation covered each component of the project, and its entire duration in 2014-15. The scope of the evaluation included the multiple geographical dimensions of the project, and included fieldwork in India, Indonesia, Kenya and Swaziland. The evaluators met workers' organisations, independent experts, and other stakeholders and partners.

The evaluation has a number of important limitations, stemming from

- many diverse elements of the two projects
- lack of synthesised project reports and patchy availability of reports from individual project components
- consequent late decision-making in determining sites for field visits, and short notice given to ILO field staff and prospective interviewees and focus group participants
- limited ability of the evaluators to review non-English language documentation
- The financial contribution of Sida/Norway to some project elements constituted a small proportion of an overall budget, therefore difficult to attribute specific outcomes to either budgets.

## Main Findings and Conclusions

### *Relevance and Design:*

The goals, Country Programme Outcomes (CPOs) and Global Products (GPs) funded by the projects were entirely relevant to the Outcome 10 Strategy. The project interventions were entirely consistent with workers' needs and concerns.

One of the main advantages of Outcome-Based Funding is the ability to be flexible and responsive to the needs of workers' organisations in developing strength, independence and representativeness in a wide variety of economic, political and historic contexts. Each intervention was internally logical and, at the time of being formulated, realistic.

The Programme & Budget (P&B) indicators for Outcome 10 were found to be not particularly useful in assessing

progress in this project, and the means of verification were not appropriate.

### *Effectiveness:*

The large number of diverse project elements, and the difficulties in obtaining documentation, make it difficult to assess the extent to which the CPOs and GPs have been achieved in each and every component.

In most cases reports available were not sufficiently detailed or did not attempt to describe outputs or indicators, and therefore did not provide sufficient evidence to make a meaningful assessment.

The extent to which Norwegian and Swedish funding were major factors in achieving the Outcome 10 indicators is highly variable between the many project components.

The extent to which gender equality was mainstreamed in programme interventions was highly variable between the many project components.

### *Efficiency and management arrangements:*

It is impossible to assess the extent to which outputs were produced and delivered as per work plans and/or milestones, as there were very few work plans or milestones made available, if there were any work plans produced at all.

The overall planning framework of both projects was reflected in IRIS and it was connected to Outcome 10, CPOs and the DWCPs.

For Norwegian-funded operations, the delivery rate of this project was excellent until July 2015. It subsequently declined, due to the structural changes that affected the project (its closure and the need to re-allocate staff).

There were long delays in commencing any Sida-funded activities, due to an extensive process of internal appraisal, notably discussions with PARDEV on the global-national dimension of activities and outputs, and with external stakeholders and partner organisations.

Project activities were carefully aligned and coordinated with the regular activities of ACTRAV.

### *Impact and Sustainability:*

The achievement of the project regional, CPO and GP outcomes are fundamental and essential for long-term sustainable development changes.

The core mission of the ILO depends on strong, independent and representative workers' (and employers')

organisations, able to play a full role in achieving a strong tripartite system.

As several project beneficiaries argued, this requires constant support through capacity-building, training and other forms of assistance. Industrial peace and civil society cannot be achieved through tripartism alone, but has to be supported through activities specifically for workers' organisations.

The extent to which the goals, CPOs and GPs produced durable interventions that can be maintained, scaled-up or replicated is highly variable between the many project components.

The Sida-funded project's Global Products had an important impact on the preparation of the GSCs debate that took place in the 2016 ILC.

The broader sustainability of Global Products as a global approach or policy depends to a large extent on the ability and capacity of ACTRAV to disseminate and communicate the results of the work throughout the international trade union movement.

For some national initiatives, financial sustainability will be assisted by agencies delivering support to other projects with closely related objectives.

Without the continued long-term support from Norway and Sweden, or the identification of other sources of funding, some of the ACTRAV initiatives supported under the project are not sustainable. Nevertheless, ACTRAV hopes that it will be in a position to provide further support in two key broad areas of work: EPZs and GSCs, and increasing the role of labour in cross-border negotiations.

*Conclusions:*

- Overall, the Norwegian and Swedish-funded projects have delivered an extraordinary diverse programme of activities and outputs across many countries, in many different contexts, and addressing a wide range of issues. In totality, they represent a substantial contribution to the development of strong, independent and representative organisations.
- While the flexibility and light-earmarking of funding enabled ACTRAV to be responsive to changing circumstances and local/regional needs and demands, the diversity of activities posed a significant challenge for overall programme management. In particular, there was little or no documentation of original work plans and their subsequent amendment, and no sufficiently comprehensive or detailed consolidated reporting

able to demonstrate the overall impact of Sida/Norway funded activity.

- In general, if not urgently addressed, the absence of overall robust systematic planning, monitoring and reporting may jeopardise the ability of ACTRAV to attract flexible and strategic additional funding in the future. This may have serious consequences for ACTRAV's ability to support the development of strong, independent and representative workers' organisations.
- The quality of detailed reports was very inconsistent. Some individual reporting was of excellent quality, but most were of little value when attempting to make an assessment of outcomes against indicators. There is little or no evidence of monitoring and evaluation plans, or evaluation by the activity participants themselves, which would normally be the starting point for a broader assessment of outcome.
- It was impossible to assess variance between original budgets and actual expenditures. The budget figures had been adjusted during the final stages of the project to reflect actual expenditure, and to avoid a major underspend in some project components. If a realistic assessment of budget delivery is to be made, it requires careful monitoring and record-keeping of budget adjustments throughout the project's delivery, especially in the context of projects with light earmarking.
- The evaluation was undertaken several months after ACTRAV had already been informed that neither the Norwegian government nor Sida were intending to continue funding the programme. In addition, the ILO had taken the decision to establish a new Outcome 10, which combined capacity-building and support for both employers' and workers' organisations.
- The most obvious underlying causes of the loss of funding were the changes in policy by the Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Sida, but there were a number of factors that may have contributed to the loss of funding which, in the highly competitive international funding climate, generally require very careful attention.

**Lessons Learned and Emerging Good Practices**

*Lessons Learned:*

- The variable quality of reports from activities reveals the lack of common guidelines and

principles of monitoring and evaluation for partner organisations, external collaborators and ILO staff to ensure a minimum quality, or failure to adhere to guidelines if they do exit.

- In circumstances where trade unions face major challenges in gaining respect for fundamental labour rights, project activity supported by the ILO plays a very important symbolic role, in addition to its inherent practical value – even when the level of funding is relatively modest. The presence of the ILO in project activity helps to demonstrate the legitimacy of independent trade unions, inclusion in tripartite processes, and the right to collective bargaining.
- Further steps are needed to improve women’s participation in project activities. Few project activity reports contained data on project participation disaggregated by gender. The small amount of data available showed that on average that there were twice as many men as women participants.

#### *Emerging Good Practices:*

- The potential for partnerships with Global Union Federations. Although very small by financial criteria, the Sida-supported activities undertaken in partnership with the GUFs were very successful and, most importantly, were likely to be sustainable beyond the ILO project’s support.
- Training activity in Indonesia and Kenya both benefited enormously from short (e.g. two weeks, one month) breaks in the programme, when participants were able to return to their workplaces or organisations to undertake practical assignments, followed by review and discussion back in the training venue.

### **Recommendations**

#### *Summary of Recommendations:*

1. Undertake a thorough review of the financing and management of ACTRAV’s support towards union capacity-building activity – both within ACTRAV and with PARDEV, EVAL and other relevant departments. The review to consider how ACTRAV can resource essential capacity-building activity for strong, independent and representative workers’ organisations as an essential precondition for the ILO’s core mission; the potential for partnerships with external organisations and institutions; the implications for project design and management; consequent training and support needs for ACTRAV staff

2. ACTRAV to give higher priority to communications and advocacy in defence of the ILO’s basic mandate, and the consequent need for strong, independent and representative workers’ organisations, both within the ILO itself, and among governments, inter-governmental institutions and donor agencies. This to include a greater emphasis on the positive outcomes and impact of ACTRAV programmes, with practical examples of successful activities.
3. Give higher priority to regular consultation with workers representatives on the tripartite bodies in countries whose governments which have the capacity and potential to provide greater support to strengthening workers’ organisations through the agency of the ILO.
4. Give greater attention to the design of outputs and indicators in project design to ensure effective monitoring and evaluation, while recognising the difficulties of finding measurable and meaningful indicators of successful interventions through training and education activities.
5. Provide simple but clear monitoring and evaluation guidelines and, where necessary, training to partner organisations undertaking activities under ILO funding. Given the prevalence of training and education activity as the main means of obtaining the outputs, this should include guidelines and training on active learning evaluation methodology.
6. Ensure that planning and consultation processes, both within the ILO and with external stakeholders and partners, are completed within a limited time, and without causing undue delay to the implementation of project activities.
7. Recognise the difficulties when the financial scale of projects are not deemed sufficient to justify a full-time CTA in post to coordinate projects, and consider more robust alternative management arrangements; and to improve human resources procedures to ensure that mid-project replacements for CTAs are identified and appointed without delay to ensure continuity of management.
8. Ensure that ACTRAV maintains a strong visible and high-profile presence in those countries where unions face major challenges in gaining respect for fundamental labour rights, even when project funding is not available.
9. Introduce contractual obligations to external partner organisations delivering project activity to provide data on project participation disaggregated by gender, and ensure women’s participation in project events.