



# Evaluation Summary



International  
Labour  
Office

Evaluation  
Office

## *Strengthening the Impact on Employment of Sector and Trade Policies (STRENGTHEN) - Final Independent Evaluation*

### Quick Facts

**Countries:** *Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Guatemala, Ghana, Honduras, Morocco, Myanmar, the Philippines and Rwanda*

**Final Evaluation:** *June 2020*

**Evaluation Mode:** *Independent*

**Administrative Office:** *DEVINVEST*

**Technical Office:** *DEVINVEST*

**Evaluation Manager:** *Angelica Munoz (EMP/SKILLS)*

**Evaluation Consultant:** *Dr. Achim Engelhardt, Lotus M&E Group*

**Project Code:** *GLO/14/37/EEC*

**Donor(s) & Budget:** *European Commission (EUR 6,500,000); ILO (EUR 1,100,00)*

**Keywords:** *Trade, Sectoral Approaches, Employment Creation*

### Background & Context

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

*The Project implemented in Cote d'Ivoire, Benin, Guatemala, Ghana, Honduras, Morocco, Myanmar, the Philippines and Rwanda, started in October 2014 and concluded in March 2020, with a budget of EUR 7,600,000, funded with EUR*

*6,500,000 by the European Commission (EC, 85,53%) and EURO 1,100,000 by the ILO (14.47%).*

*The Project aimed to strengthen the capabilities of country partners to analyse and design sector and trade policies and programmes that would enhance employment creation for more and better jobs. It consisted of two components:*

- Component A focused on Sector Policies and supports and builds capacity among partner countries and development practitioners to enhance the positive impact of sector policies and programmes on employment and is sometimes referred to as the Employment Impact Assessments (EMPIA) component.*
- Component B focused on Trade Policies and assists developing countries in harnessing international trade and trade-related foreign investment to provide more opportunities for decent work and increase the number of productively employed workers.*

*The specific objectives of the Project comprised:*

- To develop global knowledge on how to strengthen the positive impact on employment of sectoral and trade policies, including in the areas of agriculture and rural development, infrastructure and energy with a focus on private sector development in these sectors as well as on existing and relevant methods for*

*the employment impact assessment of those policies in selected sectors.*

- *To strengthen country-level knowledge on the impact of sectoral and trade policies on productive and decent employment and on measures to optimize the employment effects of selected sectoral and trade policies and related issues such as structural transformation, labour standards, and skills development.*
- *To build the capabilities of governments, social partners, development practitioners, and other relevant stakeholders in partner countries to identify, measure, and assess the employment effects of sectoral and trade policies.*
- *To provide guidance to development cooperation practitioners in partner countries as well as the European Union on how to address the employment opportunities and challenges resulting from sectoral and trade policies including through public policies, trade and investment programmes and operations in key sectors in developing countries”.*

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

*The Project which concluded in March 2020, benefitted from a mid-term evaluation in 2017.*

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

*The evaluation served the following primary purposes:*

- *To provide an independent assessment of progress on the achievement of the Project’s development objective, assessing performance as per the established indicators vis-à-vis the strategies and implementation modalities chosen and project management arrangements*
- *To provide strategic recommendations, highlights good practices and lessons learned.*

*Moreover it aimed to:*

- *Contribute to improving project performance and towards organizational learning*
- *Help those responsible for managing the resources and activities to enhance development results from the short term to a sustainable long term*
- *Assess the effectiveness of planning and management for future impacts*
- *Support accountability by incorporating lessons learned in the decision-making process of project stakeholders, including donors and national partners.*

*The evaluation covered all components of the Project and investigated the coherence and linkages among these vis-à-vis the Project's development objective. The evaluation integrated gender equality as a cross-cutting concern through its methodology and all deliverables, including the final report”.*

*The evaluation included stakeholders and beneficiaries from all countries benefiting from the project: Cote d’Ivoire, Benin, Guatemala, Ghana, Honduras, Morocco, Myanmar, Philippines and Rwanda, with a focus on Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana and Morocco.*

*The main clients for this evaluation are the ILO, including the Employment Policy Department, the donor (the European Commission) and project stakeholders in project countries such as tripartite constituents, academia and other line ministries .*

### **Methodology of evaluation**

*In line with the expression of interest for this final evaluation, the evaluator followed a theory-based evaluation approach. The suggested approach addresses the expected time-lag between the mainly knowledge-based and capacity building related results of the Project and the Project's overall objective: "to strengthen the capabilities*

*of country partners to analyse and design sectoral and trade policies that would enhance employment creation in terms of quantity and quality."*

*The final evaluation was based on a rigorous triangulation of data. The cancellation of initially foreseen field visits due to the global public health crisis related to the COVID-19 disease at the time of the final evaluation was actively mitigated through a broader country coverage.*

*For the rating of project results, the evaluator used ILO EVAL's 6-point scale. Where stakeholder perception ratings are used for the evaluation, those are aligned to the 6-point scale:*

- *6/6 = highly satisfactory (83,4% to 100% for stakeholder perception ratings)*
- *5/5 = satisfactory (66,8% to 83,3% for stakeholder perception ratings)*
- *4/6 = moderately satisfactory (50,1% to 66,7% for stakeholder perception ratings)*
- *3/6 = moderately unsatisfactory (33,4% to 50% for stakeholder perception ratings)*
- *2/6 unsatisfactory (16,8% to 33,3% for stakeholder perception ratings)*
- *1/6 = highly un satisfactory (0% to 16,7% for stakeholder perception ratings)*

*When calculating the stakeholder perception rates, the evaluator excluded the ratings, which the project team provided to prevent any bias.*

*The evaluation reached a total of 116 people, including project stakeholders and beneficiaries.*

*The persons consulted included 82 out of 219 stakeholders (37,4% response rate) through an online survey in English, French and Spanish.*

*The evaluator undertook interviews with 15 stakeholders in ILO HQ, ILO country offices and National Project Coordinators, including 3 staff of the project team.*

*In the focus countries for this evaluation, eighth stakeholders were reached in Ghana, seven stakeholders in Cote d'Ivoire and four in Morocco.*

*The evaluator applied the standard evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and progress towards sustainability and impact of project outcomes.*

## **Main Findings & Conclusions**

*The main evaluation findings are listed by the evaluation criteria suggested in the Terms of Reference (ToR): relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, and the likelihood of sustainability and impact. Gender figured in the ToR as a cross cutting issue.*

- ***Relevance: The evaluation shows that the project's relevance was moderately satisfactory.***

*Global alignment: Contributions showed to SDG8, output 3.1 of the 2020-2021 P&B, and work areas of ILO's Employment Policy Department's Development and Investment branch DEVINVEST.*

*Alignment at country level: The project contributed to CPOs in all project countries.*

*Embedding the project in the DWCPs of ILO COs and linking it to other development partners' projects highly depended on the project team's engagement with ILO COs in project countries. In some countries, the project seemed to operate in isolation.*

*Mid-term evaluation: Project planning was strengthened following the mid-term evaluation while monitoring could have further enhanced as a result of the mid-term evaluation.*

- ***Efficiency: Overall, the project's efficiency showed a moderately unsatisfactory performance.***

*Project design:* The supply-led project design was overambitious and spread resources too thinly across too many countries.

*Management arrangements:* The project's governance structure proved rather complex and limited the project's efficiency.

*Project implementation:* During project implementation, the project team and its NPC's were cost-aware and opportunity-driven.

*Mid-term evaluation:* The mid-term evaluation added value to address shortcomings in the project design and initial implementation of STRENGTHEN but recommendations on results-oriented monitoring were insufficiently implemented.

- ***Effectiveness:*** *In the absence of results reporting beyond activity-based monitoring and based on the perceptions only of stakeholders in project countries, the evaluation finds that the effectiveness of the project cannot be assessed with sufficient methodological rigour.*

*The evaluation is inconclusive about the project's effectiveness due to missing data to triangulate project results. Based on stakeholder perceptions, STRENGTHEN was effective in achieving its expected results and broader objectives.*

- ***Impact:*** *it is too early to assess the long-term effects of the project*

*While stakeholders in project countries improved their capabilities in applying STRENGTHEN's research tools, it is too early to assess changes in programming, policy, and, ultimately, the impact of STRENGTHEN on employment and attracting international trade.*

- ***Sustainability:*** *the likelihood of sustainability depends on making financial resources available to replicate the research tool in other sectors and to systematically upscale their use through embedding project tools and processes in national systems.*

*Governments need to budget for the systematic integration of project tools into national systems or additional donors support is required to ensure the sustainability of project results.*

*The project's multi-stakeholder approach beyond the traditional tripartite engagement was a key success factor with room even systematically to reach out to civil society organizations.*

*A reduced country coverage allowing for more sectors to be researched per country would have been beneficial.*

*The project created a basis for academic partners and consultants to replicate the training in the project research tools in project countries and beyond.*

*Based on the project's theoretical reach, the benefits for women are significant in some project countries mainly due to the selection of sectors and value chains relevant to women.*

## Recommendations

### Main recommendations and follow-up

#### Relevance

**R1: DEVINVEST:** *Country-level projects should be consulted with the Director or Deputy Director of the respective ILO Country Office for discussions in the Country Office's programming team to ensure a close alignment to the DWCP.*

**R2: DEVINVEST:** *The project design of any new project should include a Theory of Change to strengthen project planning. Logframe indicators should be results rather than activity oriented, as a means to enable results-based management and to facilitate evaluation.*

#### Efficiency

**R3: DEVINVEST:** *In case policy level engagement is required in a project, investments in a national project coordinator and*



administrative support are required to ensure appropriate country-level implementation. For technical engagement, the use of consultants might be sufficient.

**R4: DEVINVEST:** When planning for a new project, the number of project countries should be established with realism to allow for efficient project management. The depth of engagement at the country level should be prioritised over the geographic breadth of the news phase. For STRENGTHEN, five to six project countries rather than the initial ten countries would have been more appropriate to allow for efficient project management and leaving a significant foot print in all project countries.

**R5: DEVINVEST:** For the selection of countries for any future phase of the project or a follow-up project, priority should be given to the countries engaged in STRENGTHEN. Any other countries should be selected based on a country needs assessment, an assessment of the project's relevance to the respective countries' development plans in the donor's priority region and following consultations with ILO country offices' senior staff and engagements with the concerned country stakeholders to gauge demand for the project.

**Effectiveness and sustainability:**

**R6: DEVINVEST:** When planning a project, a multi-stakeholder approach should be considered beyond the tripartite constituents, including line ministries complementing the Ministry of Labour in selected sectors, academia and civil society organizations.

**R7: DEVINVEST** could consider including a training of trainers' module for each capacity development tool implemented in a project to systematically enable the replication of trainings after the end of the project.

**R8: DEVINVEST** is encouraged find a balance when selecting sectors for any future phase of the project or a follow-up project which are relevant

for women and men, as in STRENGTHEN but also to promote gender equality and inclusion in sectors who have traditionally been dominated by a specific gender.