



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation
Office

Independent Mid-Term Evaluation (cluster) TRIANGLE in ASEAN: Safe and Fair Labour Migration

Quick Facts

Countries: ASEAN Region.

Final Evaluation: 24 March 2019

Mode of Evaluation Independent Mid-Term Evaluation

Administrative Office: ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP)

Technical Office: MIGRANT, ILO, Geneva

Evaluation Manager: Ms. Napaporn Udomchaiporn, ILO ROAP, Bangkok.

Evaluation Consultant: Theo van der Loop (International Consultant)

Programme End: DFAT: November 2025, and GAC: June 2020.

Programme Code: RAS/15/05/AUS and RAS/16/01/CAN.

Donor & Project Budget: Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT): AUD 20 million; and Global Affairs Canada (GAC): CAD 5.5 million.

Keywords: Labour Migration, Regional Tripartite Dialogue, ASEAN, National level support to migrant workers, Migrant Worker Resource Centres.

Background & Context

Background and project description

The present Evaluation Report is mandated by the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Independent Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the programme “TRIANGLE in ASEAN: Safe and Fair Labour Migration” called TRIANGLE (see Annex 1). It is a partnership between the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the Global Affairs Canada (GAC), and the International Labour Organization (ILO), with the overall goal of maximizing the contribution of labour migration to equitable, inclusive and stable growth in ASEAN. The Programme is active in six ASEAN countries (Cambodia, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam) and engages at the regional level with all ASEAN Member States (AMS), working in close

cooperation with governments and social partners. DFAT provides AUD 20 million for a ten-year period (November 2015 – November 2025), and GAC provides CAD 5.5 million for a 3.5 year period (December 2016 - June 2020).

Based on the successes of two predecessor projects funded separately by DFAT and GAC both entered into two new Grant Arrangements with the ILO, but since the objectives and priorities are complementary it was agreed in late 2016 to merge the two projects under one comprehensive programme TRIANGLE in ASEAN. The details of the merger are outlined in TRIANGLE’s Inception Report (approved in February 2018). An Evaluability Assessment (EA) was also done around the same time (November 2017). For a detailed timeline see Annex 4. A joint Theory of Change was developed (Annex 5) which identifies three Intermediate Outcomes:

- 1) **Protection:** Women and men migrant workers are better protected by labour migration governance frameworks.
- 2) **Development:** Policies and programmes enable women and men migrant workers to contribute to and benefit from economic and social development.
- 3) **Mobility:** Labour mobility systems are gender-responsive and increase the efficiency of labour markets.

The complete Performance Framework (PF) for the first five project years is included in the M&E Plan of November 2017. In addition, three cross-cutting strategies were defined: Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality Strategy (WEGES), Private Sector Engagement Strategy (PSES), and Communications for Advocacy and Visibility Strategy (CAVS).

TRIANGLE in ASEAN is implemented by a team of 21 staff, in part based in Bangkok at the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, ROAP (five international and three admin staff) and at the ILO Country Office in Jakarta (1 international staff). In addition, implementation is supported by in-country teams (a National Programme Manager and an administrative staff) in the six targeted ASEAN countries. Administrative supervision is done by the

ILO Deputy Regional Director and technical backstopping by the ILO Senior Migration Specialist in Bangkok. The ILO DWT team in Bangkok and ILO Geneva provide technical support where required. A two-tiered programme governance framework has been established to meet yearly to provide strategic and technical advice: the Regional Programme Advisory Committee (RPAC), and the National Programme Advisory Committees in each of the six countries (PACs).

Objective and Methodology of the Evaluation

The independent MTE provides an impartial assessment of the performance of TRIANGLE in ASEAN during its initial three years of implementation, and its objectives are: (1) To determine the progress to date in achieving the programme outcomes; (2) To provide recommendations for adjustments to the programme strategy that will improve results moving forward; and (3) To identify lessons learned and good practices that will support organizational learning and knowledge sharing for the ILO and other key stakeholders. The evaluation period covers the period from the beginning of the TRIANGLE in ASEAN in November 2015 to the present. Geographically, the evaluation covers both interventions at the regional level within ASEAN and country-level work, but the explicit focus will be on the regional level.

The primary end users of the evaluation's findings are the management team of TRIANGLE, the ILO units ROAP and MIGRANT as well as the donors GAC and DFAT. Secondary parties making use of the results include the regional organisations which have partnered with the project, such as the ASEAN Committee on the Implementation of the ASEAN Declaration on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers (ACMW), ASEAN Confederation of Employers (ACE), ASEAN Trade Union Council (ATUC), ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC), and Task Force on ASEAN Migrant Workers (TFAMW). At national level clients include the national tripartite constituents and civil society organizations who have partnered with the project. Considering the size of the programme with a regional component and six countries involved, the involvement of two donors, and a very large number of stakeholders involved and documents to be reviewed, the amount of work a one-person evaluation team can do is limited. Therefore, it was decided to focus in particular on the regional component.

Seven Evaluation Criteria have been identified in the ToR which form the backbone of the Findings section below. The Data Collection Worksheet in Annex 7 identifies 22 Evaluation Questions which have been discussed in Chapter 3 and summarized

below. The Methodology for the MTE consist of a mix of qualitative and quantitative data collected, including interviews with key stakeholders and Focus Group Discussions at regional level and in Cambodia and Thailand representing the countries of origin and of destination respectively, as well as observations, critical reflection and triangulation of information acquired.

Main Findings & Conclusions

The findings of the present Final Independent Evaluation (FIE) are categorized according to the seven evaluation criteria distinguished throughout this report:

The **Relevance and Strategic Fit** was found by the MTE to be particularly high. The projects' objectives and interventions are closely aligned with national, regional and global (including e.g. the ACMW-WP and SDGs 8 and 10) strategic and policy frameworks on labour migration. All stakeholders interviewed for the MTE also stressed that the relevance of the programme is still as high as before. Significantly, the alignment with the ACMW Work Plan 2016-2020 (see Annex 9) and the working relationships with ASEC in Jakarta are very close, which will be important for the coming years since the ACMW WP will be merged with the Action Plan of the ASEAN Consensus. TRIANGLE in ASEAN has been able to leverage effectively both the ILO through its comparative advantages (tripartism, regional expertise and normative impact of ILS), and several complementary programmes and resources (e.g. Safe and Fair) and inter-agency collaboration (e.g. UN Women and IOM).

The **Validity of Intervention Design** has been found to be satisfactory although there are some concerns related to (over-)ambitious target setting given the time and resources available, and this applies in particular to the sheer number of activities (i.e. 50), the research programme and the M&E Plan itself including its Performance Framework (PF). The programme clearly addresses the major causes of vulnerability among migrant workers, and the program logic in TRIANGLE's Inception Report and ToC aligns with GAC, DFAT and ILO concepts of results-based management. Regarding the Immediate Outcomes, it was noted that there is a separate one for the employers' organizations but not for the workers' organizations. Satisfactory actions were undertaken by TRIANGLE on most of the recommendations by the EA (see further Annex 10). The solid Knowledge Base (including a regional survey of migrant workers) is a good practice serving to support the design of interventions and policies. The necessity of having both a Midline (2020) and an Endline survey (2025) needs to be re-assessed considering the timing, the manpower requirements and the substantial costs

involved. Overall, the large number of indicators in the PF (33) are clearly defined ('SMART') and describe the changes to be brought about. Although there is a mix of quantitative and qualitative data, it would benefit from more qualitative indicators (see Annex 11).

Regarding *Intervention Progress and Effectiveness*, it was concluded that the implementation of TRIANGLE in ASEAN is on the right track and is contributing to the majority of the 12 Immediate Outcomes. The programme has established its status as a trusted partner with ASEAN at the regional level, and with national tripartite constituents in the six countries of focus. The programme has also made a name for itself as a knowledge leader in the region on labour migration through its solid research output. Overall, the project has made impressive achievements and progress, and therefore, it can be predicted that the project is expected to deliver largely on its planned immediate and intermediate outcomes by the end of 2020. The stakeholders interviewed during the MTE were very satisfied with the outputs produced by the programme, and all are anticipating TRIANGLE to continue in the coming years. There is, however, a need to step up support in several areas, such as the financial support for the ACMW Work Plan 2016-2020, and the support to the national social partners, Employers' and Workers' Organizations. It was further found that many of the outputs are actually being used by stakeholders, and that partnerships have often led to effective cooperation. A few challenges have been faced by the programme, in particular the departure of the M&E officer in July 2018, and the long time it takes to replace him. Other challenges include the low capacity among some of the national implementing partners, and the fact that labour migration issues are not at the top of the agenda of employers' organisations.

Efficiency of Resource Use has in general been satisfactory although the programme's activities may be somewhat over-ambitious considering the time and resources available and the ratio of the staff cost to programme activities is relatively high (cf. Proposal for Restructuring) compared to projects of similar size implemented by the ILO. However, in particular through this proposal for restructuring the programme has clearly also demonstrated the flexibility required in such complicated multi-country initiatives. On the whole, the expenditure rate seems quite at par with the time elapsed for both donors. Although the number of activities in the ToC is quite high (50), the overall impression received from the analysis and from the stakeholders' interviews is that the allocation of resources has been sufficiently optimal for achieving the programme's outcomes. In addition, cost efficiency has also been enhanced by

collaboration and cost-sharing, by the fact that the GAC and DFAT investments leverage each other's resources to increase value for money, and by the use of the established ILO Country Offices to deliver added efficiencies. Budget management processes are also assessed as cost efficient, involving the responsible Technical Officers, the Senior Programme Manager and the internal ILO budget checks. The somewhat unbalanced ratio of the resources spent on staffing structures (47%) and activities (29%) can to a large extent be attributed to the structure of TRIANGLE in ASEAN aiming to target both regional cooperation as well as national level service delivery and policy changes/advice. The sequencing and prioritization of activities are logical and useful and are flexible enough to make adjustments to changing circumstances and country priorities. On the whole, the activities have been completed on-time and according to this logical phasing and sequencing, except the ERC and the Gender Action Plan (which is now expected to be completed soon).

The *Effectiveness of Management Arrangements* is overall found to be satisfactory, although there is not sufficient funding to maintain the current staffing model (Annex 6), unless GAC would decide to fund another phase and/or if another donor would decide to join TRIANGLE. The Proposal for Restructuring includes the option of the phasing out of one of the international positions and this should take into account the revised division of tasks proposed by the present MTE (Table 4). The assignment of international focal points for the six countries from within the Project Team in Bangkok has generally worked effectively. In addition, the link between the national and the regional level activities has worked out well in a number of areas, such as the AFML national preparatory meetings and the follow-up after the AFML at national levels. The program further has an effective governance framework through the RPAC, and the PAC's although it was found that the RPAC should meet more often than once a year considering the current crucial phase of TRIANGLE. The move into a joint management structure of the GAC and DFAT investments is ensuring a harmonised approach to support safe and fair labour migration and is enabling efficiency in several ways. The implementation of the three cross-cutting strategies (WEGES, CAVS and PSES) has benefitted from the fact that a different international staff member has been responsible for each of these strategies. By having such separate cross-cutting strategies additional attention is dedicated to the three topics, and thereby they have contributed partially to achieving the desired outcomes. The M&E system has supported adaptive management of the programme as, significantly, this system formed the basis to substantiate the Proposal for Restructuring

of the DFAT investment for the coming years. The M&E system has further supported the decision making related to gender and vulnerable groups in a number of ways, but it needs to include how the M&E system is tracking, learning and reporting on the work with these groups. The MTE found further that the risk management strategy is properly and regularly (quarterly) assessed and updated.

The sixth criteria deals with several elements of *Impact Orientation and Key Stakeholder Populations*. A number of policies and legislations have been adopted or amended with ILO support including one regional policy, i.e. the landmark ASEAN Consensus, and 15 different national policies and legislations spread over five ASEAN countries. All these are necessary steps towards the enhancement of the rights of and/or opportunities for migrant workers, and thus the programme had a positive influence on the development of policies and practices at national and regional levels. TRIANGLE also influenced the development of policies and practices in several ways, i.e. through the knowledge base, through direct support of law and policy review processes and through ILO's tripartism and the normative character of ILO's work. The MTE found further that the "Sustainability and impact strategy" needs to be updated and streamlined latest at the program mid-point in 2020. Several achievements towards sustainability were already identified, such as the expanded MRC network and an increased number of MRCs receiving funding from national governments. Also, the longevity of the investment from the DFAT and GAC partners has proven the value of longer-term programs. Furthermore, ownership was enhanced through the RPAC/PAC meetings, and sustainable capacity building and training is central to TRIANGLE's approach. The partners of TRIANGLE in ASEAN have institutionalized various programme-supported tools, and this includes the ACMW Work Plan, strengthened capacities of the other regional partners (ACE, ATUC and TFAMW), and the partner MRCs. A few TRIANGLE-supported tools are being replicated by external organizations (e.g. the Migration Outcomes Index, the MRC Operations Manual, the ILMS and the pre-departure curriculum). The knowledge base has clearly contributed to the three intermediate outcomes, and the influence of research reports is being tracked by the programme (e.g. by measuring the number of views and downloads and by keeping track of media coverage).

The key achievements of the programme on *Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination* have been very substantial and a number of targets have been achieved, e.g. the gender training, the part of the budget spent on activities explicitly benefiting

women (i.e. 25%) while a large part of the remaining budget promoted gender equality, the part of women among the beneficiaries of MRC services (i.e. 41%), organisers of meetings are encouraged to invite women participants, and, lastly, in TRIANGLE's publications 70% of the photos contain women. The Project Team itself consists currently of five international staff members and all are women, including the Gender Focal Point. In addition, a few more specific activities are potentially very important for gender equality, such as the recognition of domestic work as work at the 10th AFML and the adoption of the ATUC Youth and Women Committees Work Plan in 2018. It was found further that the use of resources on women's empowerment activities has been sufficient in 2017; more specifically, as we saw in the above, the gender budgeting target of 25% has been reached in 2017 and in 2018 a similar percentage is expected. In research and policy advice activities a sectoral focus has been effective in addressing the needs of migrants in particular sectors of work characterised by vulnerable working characteristics, such as construction, domestic work and agriculture.

The *overarching conclusion* of the MTE is that the project has made many important and good quality achievements and thus very good progress, that it provides value for money at the general project level, and that it certainly remains a highly relevant project for the countries involved as well as for the donors. Concerning the gender dimension, it must be underlined that the project has made very substantial achievements and, in particular, that most of the gender targets are reached or even surpassed.

Recommendations

- 1) Continue to leverage cost-sharing with other (labour) migration projects and selected international organisations by maintaining a high level of pro-active collaboration.
- 2) Prioritize the different components of the originally highly ambitious Research Agenda; although it has already been reduced by the programme management it will need further reduction (to be coordinated by the Senior Programme Manager); one example to be considered and discussed with the donors concerns the Baseline Survey of migrant workers which is scheduled to be repeated as Mid-line survey in 2020 as well as End-line survey in 2025.
- 3) Streamline and Prioritize two design elements in the Theory of Change (ToC) and the M&E Plan which have proven to be rather ambitious: streamline and prioritize the 50 activities identified in the ToC and streamline the 33

indicators of the M&E Plan and Performance Framework (PF).

- 4) Involve more pro-actively the employers' and workers' organisations (EO/WO). This applies in particular to those EO/WO at the national level who sometimes have the impression that TRIANGLE is more about Governments and NGOs.
- 5) Continue the organization of the flagship AFML which is a Good Practice to be replicated in specific circumstances and continue to track the progress in the implementation of the by now 149 Recommendations that have been formulated by the 11 AFML's so far.
- 6) Implement the Proposal for Restructuring of the DFAT investment and monitor closely the interests of donors (DFAT, GAC and others) to support the TRIANGLE in ASEAN programme from 2020.
- 7) Maintain as far as possible the current staff set-up at regional and national level but re-arrange the division of tasks as detailed in Table 4 and employ the M&E Technical Officer as soon as possible. In case the support of GAC or another donor is not forthcoming from 2020, DFAT's priorities will be at the regional level!
- 8) Maintain close relations with ACMW and ASEC and increase the frequency of the RPAC meetings considering that 2019 will be a crucial year whereby decisions on funding investments have to be made, proposals for restructuring implemented and alignment to the new ASEAN Consensus Action Plan (2018-2025) needs to be guaranteed. Therefore, it is also recommended to have another separate RPAC meeting in June 2019 and a follow-up one at the time of the 12th AFML in late 2019, as well as more frequent visits from the SPM and others to Jakarta to meet with ASEC.
- 9) Streamline and update the cross-cutting strategies which are useful means to enhance attention for the topics involved:
 - a. Streamline and update several important visibility and procedural issues of the CAVS strategy, which in itself has clearly been shown to be effective in raising the profile of the programme within the ASEAN region. In particular, design communication materials in straightforward language for the general public in donor countries to communicate what the donor countries are doing to help poor women and men migrant workers and enhance the distribution of QBNs and/or other programme updates especially to the national partners.
 - b. Organize a workshop with the donors and other relevant stakeholders on how to arrive at a common understanding on taking the PSES forward.

- 10) Revise the Sustainability and Impact Strategy, in particular streamline and update the 'sustainability factors' and reduce the long and repetitive list of action points in mid-2020 as by then the M&E Expert has been engaged in TRIANGLE for some time.
- 11) Explore the design of ways forward for the MRC Network in terms of sustainability including cooperating closely with the Safe and Fair programme, whereby particular attention is needed for the way the government funding is being used, and in how far that can also be an option for those MRCs currently organized by either NGOs or Trade Unions.
- 12) Discuss urgently the new WEGES Action Plan (attached to the 2018 Progress Report) with GAC and DFAT in a joint meeting and assess the degree of common understanding. If this is sufficient, start implementing the action plan without delay, otherwise consider involving an external gender consultant to review the Action Plan according to the different viewpoints.

Lessons Learned and Good Practices

Finally, from the experience gained by evaluating the LM Project in Sri Lanka in the present report three Lessons Learned (LL) and four Good Practices (GP) have been compiled:

LL1: The move into a joint management structure under the programme approach of TRIANGLE in ASEAN took quite some time but resulted in different types of efficiencies.

LL2: Providing intensive and tailored gender training to implementing partners during inception has proven to result in a shared understanding of gender equality and women's empowerment.

GP1: The development of a solid Knowledge Base in the initial period of the programme has benefited the design of interventions and policies.

GP2: The organisation of the annual ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour (AFML), including the preparatory meetings for tripartite-plus partners, is a model of ASEAN cooperation to be replicated.

GP3: The work of Migrant Workers Resource Centres (MRC) providing support services to women and men migrants and their family members across the region is another Good Practice.