



Evaluation Summary



International
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Independent Final Evaluation of the ILO/Korea Partnership Programme 2015 – 2017 funded projects in Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam

Quick Facts

Countries: Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam, plus a Regional Component.

Final Evaluation: 11 July 2018

Mode of Evaluation: Independent Final Evaluation

Administrative Office: ROAP and DWT-Bangkok.

Technical Office: SKILLS, SOCPRO, LABAMIN, OSH and EMP/INVEST.

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Programme End: 31 July 2018

Programme Code: RAS/15/50/ROK; RAS/15/51/ROK and RAS/15/54/ROK.

Donor & Project Budget: Ministry of Employment and Labor of the Republic of Korea (MOEL/ROK): US\$ 2,000,000.

Keywords: Skills development – Mutual Recognition of Skills (MRS), Social Protection, Labour Law Reform, OSH and Public Employment Policy.

Background & Context

In 2003, the Ministry of Employment and Labour of the Republic of Korea (MoEL/ROK) signed a memorandum of understanding with the International Labour Organization (ILO) to formalize their partnership for development. In October 2013, the ILO commissioned an independent final evaluation and following its

recommendations the next phase for 2015 – 2017 was therefore revised with a view to enhance efficiency and achieve more profound impacts for the Programme, including a change from one-year budget cycles to a three-year cycle. The Programme framework for 2015 – 2017 focused on three major areas: employment and labour policy, social protection, and labour law reform in four selected countries: Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR), Myanmar and Vietnam with a total budget of US\$ 2 million, excluding the expenditures for the Korean experts on secondment from the Korean Government (the Project Manager) and on loan from Korean Partner Institutes (COMWEL and KOSHA).

The two main purposes of the independent final evaluation are promoting accountability, and enhancing learning within the ILO, the MoEL/ROK and other key stakeholders. Following the ToR (see Annex 1), the evaluation will address four Evaluation Criteria: (1) Intervention progress and effectiveness; (2) Effectiveness of management arrangements; (3) Efficiency of resource use; and (4) Impact orientation and Sustainability. For each of these four Evaluation Criteria a series of evaluation questions were already identified in the ToR, and this list of questions has been adjusted in the Inception Report (see Annex 6). The methodology is explained in Section 2.2, and the schedule of meetings during the field mission to Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand from 14 to 28 May 2018 is given in Annex 4.

Main Findings & Conclusions

1) Intervention progress and effectiveness

The three projects made solid progress towards their planned results as these are specified in the three different Results-Based Management (RBM) systems in the Project Documents (PRODOC). For an overview of the main achievements in each of the three projects reference is made to Section 3.1. The intervention progress went very much according to schedule and there are only a few cases in which progress diverged from the RBM's, (e.g. in the case of the Public Employment Programme, PEP, and the Single Window Service, SWS in social protection). An important challenge faced in the skills development area is the delay in Thailand for translating their standards into English. In Myanmar a specific challenge occurring in all projects is the relatively large number of donors that is operating in this country. Nevertheless, the large number of important achievements provided in Section 3.1 leads to the conclusion that the intervention progress has been very substantial, with the exception of progress made in Lao PDR where much less activities took place than in Cambodia and Myanmar.

Overall, gender mainstreaming has received clear attention in the ILO/Korea projects, but has not always been actively addressed, and it is sometimes underdeveloped in tripartite organisations. Regarding the other cross-cutting issues, the attention differed substantially, whereby tripartite processes and capacity development received the most attention.

The ILO/Korea project contributed substantially to policy formulation in Cambodia especially through its support to the National Employment Policy (NEP), but less so in Myanmar although the setting up of the National Tripartite Dialogue Forum (NTDF) by the ILO Liaison Office (LO) is an important step towards this goal. In all countries there are clear connections between the three projects and the respective Decent Work Country Programme's, DWCP (see Annex 7). The ILO/Korea project also contributed substantially to capacity building in Cambodia and to a lesser extent in Myanmar, while it was in particular appreciated by many stakeholders to learn-while-working together with experts, consultants, staff, etc. Policy

formulation and capacity building were much less explicit in Lao PDR and in Vietnam.

The Government Organisations (GO) interviewed in the different CLM countries plus Vietnam (CLMV) are generally very satisfied with the quality of the specific outputs in the projects and have clearly used the tools and practices developed, and this applies even to Vietnam where the project was terminated in late 2017. The ILO/Korea projects have generally more focussed on the GO than on Employers' Organisations (EO) or Workers' Organisations (WO), although they have clearly participated in selected activities, and sometimes even took the lead in certain activities under the ILO/Korea projects.

2) Effectiveness of management arrangement

In view of the substantial number of achievements made by the three projects, it is not surprising that the main project counterparts are generally very satisfied with the support received by ILO and the Republic of Korea (ROK). The long-standing partnership contributes to this feeling of satisfaction as does the continuity in the activities undertaken over several partnership periods. For the CLMV countries and/or the region of the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) the support provided through this partnership is quite important, not only for the countries involved and for the region, but also for the progress made in the different areas supported. The Government Organisations in all four countries are generally satisfied with the Management Arrangements. A major challenge, however, was that the donor did not allow for staff costs, and ILO tried various strategies to deal with this condition, such as leveraged its own resources (Regular Budget Supplementary Account, RBSA, and Vision Zero Fund, VZF), cost sharing with other projects, and even to succeed in getting exceptional approval by MOEL/ROK to fund two national staff in Myanmar and Cambodia for the work on social protection. However, combined with the lack of funding for administrative/financial support staff this remained an important bottleneck.

The Programme Framework was revised following the 2013 evaluation of the partnership and this led

to a more efficient allocation of resources in the current phase by changing from an annual to a three-year budget cycle, and by a more focussed approach (i.e. less geographically scattered and more thematically focused) which was appreciated by most stakeholders. Compared to the previous phase of the partnership, the Results-Based Management (RBM) of the three ILO-Korea projects has clearly improved, but still requires substantial further improvements in the areas of coordination between the three RBMs, of an officially verifiable Log Frame for each project, and of the formulation of proper assumptions and Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVI). The three Log Frames should be more systematically developed along similar and comparable lines.

The workers' and employers' organizations (WO/EO) in the three CLM countries face many challenges, such as limited resources, a low level of public-private partnership and a general lack of information (Ruttiya Bhula-or 2018). Regarding WO specifically, their focus is on strengthening labour unions by increasing union membership and by regularly campaigning for workers' fundamental rights at work, and as a result, concerns about e.g. skills development are found to be often secondary and limited. The involvement of the EO and WO in the activities of the ILO/Korea partnership has differed between the three projects, but generally they have been involved in the implementation of projects through tripartite fora, for example the Regional Skills Technical Working Group (RSTWG), based in Bangkok, the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) in Cambodia, the National Skills Standards Authority (NSSA), the Social Security Board (SSB) and the National Tripartite Dialogue Forum (NTDF) all in Myanmar, as well as the Lao National Advisory Chamber for TVET and Skill Development; and sometimes they have been involved also more directly, such as their participation in Myanmar in developing the Law on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) from the beginning, the cooperation between the Myanmar Engineering Society and the Asian Welding Federation (AWF), and the involvement of WO in the OSH awareness campaign of the Factories and General Labour Laws Inspection Department (FGLLID) in Myanmar.

In skills development, EO are usually more involved than WO, but the participation of employers is considered to be crucial and needs to be further enhanced. A challenge is that sometimes only selected unions are being invited while sharing among unions has been limited. On the whole, ensuring tripartite participation across all the intervention fields is an area for improvement, while one WO (the Myanmar Industries, Craft and Services, MICS), as an emerging union, felt sometimes somewhat neglected and left out from activities of the ILO Myanmar, although the Liaison Office makes sure that it always treats all WO's equally.

Generally, the delivery of core services and the communication with ILO were considered effective by the main stakeholders. The contributions of the lead specialists and the experts of the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team (DWT) were considered of good quality. In the MRS project national stakeholders had more contact with the lead specialists in Bangkok than with the LO in Yangon. The two Korean experts on loan from the Korean Partner Institutions, COMWEL and KOSHA, were involved in particular in different capacity building activities which have been appreciated very much by the stakeholders. There is no sharing of information between the ILO/Korea Partnership Programme and the KOICA Country Offices.

3) Efficiency of resource use

All stakeholders interviewed agreed that the ILO/Korea projects clearly delivered value for money, and that the resources have been allocated strategically and efficiently to achieve the intended results. The resource use has been judged as quite efficient especially also compared to a relatively limited budget per project per country. In addition, cost-sharing with other projects has been considered as positive. On the whole, therefore, the key stakeholders are positive on the delivery of value for money, and they indicated that more resources are indeed needed, and specific proposals have been made by the respective counterparts in the three projects (see Section 3.3).

The total budget for the three projects was US\$ 2 million for three years 2015-2017. The MOEL/ROK has agreed to a no-cost extension until 31 May 2018, with final reporting due by 15 August 2018. Tables 3.1 provide the financial data for the three projects. Regarding actual expenditure categories, activities such as seminars, subcontracts, training and grants, accounted together for 38.5%, followed by international and national consultants (24.6 %) and National Professional Staff and Local Support Staff (20.6 %), whereby the latter concerns in large majority the staff costs of the ILO/Korea Management Team in Bangkok. The differences between the three projects are, in fact, quite moderate.

The allocation of resources requires important modifications in particular in the area of the management arrangements since there were no provisions made for national professional and for support staff. It has been shown to be imperative to have a full-time national professional staff in the ILO local office who can coordinate the activities in the three projects in the country in question. In addition, allocations need to be made for part-time support for the administrative and financial tasks in each country. As a result of such allocations, project implementation would become much more effective.

Concerning costs involved to enhance gender equality, this does not seem a major issue, as most of the efforts involved persuading women to join in project activities which they mainly seem to have done without hesitation. In addition, an important gender issue was the composition of the membership of the NSSF in Cambodia and the SSB in Myanmar; in both cases, the majority of the 1.4 million and 1.15 million respectively were women, which is the more important since international research studies have indicated that women spend much of their income on the immediate needs of the entire family than men tend to do.

4) Impact orientation and Sustainability

Various strategies have been put in place in Cambodia and Myanmar to ensure the continuation of mechanisms/tools/practices provided by the projects once the support from the project ends ('exit strategy'). These include, among various

others, the embedding of MRS activities in the ASEAN Senior Labour Officials Meeting (ASEAN-SLOM) process and in the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC), the established national tripartite mechanisms, the capacity building efforts in particular the trained master trainers and assessors and the trainings in Korea by the Korean Partner Institutes, the lasting impression left by the OSH awareness raising campaign, and the contribution to the increase in the number of beneficiaries of the NSSF an SSB. While in Lao much less activities were implemented systematically, it contrasts with Vietnam which can be considered as a case in point of sustainability as the government is in the process of integrating the products of the partnership after the ILO exited. These strategies are generally expected to be effective for the purpose for which they were intended, not specifically for a broader form of sustainability. On the whole, the ILO/Korea projects do concern a real Partnership Approach in the sense that the multi-country approach enhances working together and learning together, with a focus on knowledge sharing.

The three projects are considered by many stakeholders as relevant and very timely in the current state of development of their respective countries. The overall impression acquired during the interviews is that the Government Organisations, in particular but not exclusively the ministries of labour, have taken clear ownership of the activities implemented under the ILO/Korea partnership. With respect to the employers' and workers' organisations, this is generally much less the case, although especially the EO have shown ownership in selected activities as discussed in the above. In conclusion, therefore, the three projects have been very effective in establishing and fostering national ownership among GO, but much less so among EO and in particular among WO.

The findings and recommendations of the 2013 Evaluation of the ILO/Korea Partnership 2009-2013 have been analysed against the findings of the present evaluation study in Section 5.3 and for a summary of this analysis reference is made to Table 3.3.

Recommendations

Intervention progress and effectiveness

- 1) **Design more activities in the next phase that can (also) be implemented in Lao PDR** as it has the greatest need for support and was left out in several cases in the current phase; in addition, make sure that the next evaluation mission also includes a visit to Lao PDR.
- 2) **Enhance visibility of the donor organisation** by making sure that logos and acknowledgements are properly used and by having more activities such as workshops and training courses in Korea itself.
- 3) **Maintain a high level of attention for Gender Mainstreaming in the country interventions.**

Effectiveness of management arrangement

- 4) **Reach out more to the employers' and especially also to workers' organisations and make in the new phase substantial allocations for capacity building** of these organisations and enhance the role of the private sector through the employers' organisations.
- 5) **Make provisions for costs of national professional staff as well as for (part-time) financial and administrative support staff.**
- 6) **Design three coordinated and comprehensive M&E systems with complete Log Frames** with clear assumptions, OVIs and milestones, and an appropriate Theory of Change and a solid Risk Analysis.

Efficiency of resource use

- 7) **Make sure that the new phase of the ILO-Korea Partnership is even further focused by leaving out the PEP programme and focusing on three topics only.**
- 8) **Enhance the efficiency of the involvement of the Korean Partner Institutes and of the Korean experts on loan from these institutes.**

Impact orientation and Sustainability

- 9) In the area of MRS: **Move from the preparation of MRS in the current phase to completing the process for the six occupations**

with certification and assessment, and then to the actual implementation and piloting of MRS in the next phase. Maintain thereby close relations with the ASEAN Secretariat (ASEC) on the workplan of the ASEAN Labour Ministers including the ASEAN Qualifications Reference Framework (AQRF)-TVET and maintain/expand the training programme in Korea of HRD Korea.

10) In the area of Social Protection: **Continue the support for the different priorities in different countries:** in Myanmar SSB's first priority is the MIS/IT reform; in Cambodia support is needed for the NSSF and the new National Social Protection Policy Framework (NSPPF 2016-2025), while also the training courses of COMWEL and KEIS are mentioned as priority.

11) In the area of OSH in Myanmar: **Continue the work as soon as the OSH Law has been enacted (expected within several months) with the following priorities of different organizations:** Improve the accident-reporting system of the FGLLID including another study tour (only for FGLLID staff) and continue to conduct the KOSHA training courses and the OSH awareness raising campaigns in all regions and states.

12) **Develop a proper exit strategy at the outset for all the three projects.**

Lessons Learned and Good Practices

Finally, from the experience gained by evaluating the ILO-SIDA Partnership in the present report three Lessons Learned and three Good Practices have been compiled in Chapter 4.