



# Evaluation Summary



International  
Labour  
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## *Support to a New Generation of Public Employment Programmes in Greece – Final Evaluation*

### Quick Facts

**Country:** Greece

**Final Evaluation:** January 2018

**Evaluation Mode:** Independent

**Administrative Office:** EMPINVEST

**Technical Office:** EMPINVEST

**Evaluator:** Katerina Stolyarenko

**Project Code:** GRC/16/01/EUR

**Donor & Budget:** Structural Reform Support Service (SRSS) of the European Commission (EC), EUR 631,021

**Keywords:** employment, labour intensive employment, promotion of employment, employment services, infrastructure

### Background & Context

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

The Project “Support to a new generation of Public Works Schemes (Kinofelis) in Greece” aimed to strengthen the capacity of the Greek government to achieve the objectives of the new generation of Kinofelis (a public benefit programme) through a public works scheme that enhances the employability of participants through the introduction of selected active labour market policies while maintaining community assets and delivering services that contribute to the public good.

The immediate objectives of the project were five-fold: (i) improve programme design of Kinofelis, including in relation to innovations and integration with ALMPS and the GMI; (ii) increase capacity in the Ministry of Labour,

Social Security and Social Solidarity and in municipalities to operationalize the new elements of Kinofelis; (iii) new planning systems and processes to enable effective implementation and quality assurance; (iv) improve reporting systems in Kinofelis to support effective monitoring of project activities and outputs; and (v) improve socio-economic evaluation of the programme informs policy and programme design choices.

The main direct beneficiary of the project was the Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Social Solidarity (MOL).

#### Present Situation of the Project

The project budget utilization rate constitutes 93%. The budget was a subject to one revision, which took place in February 2017 when the project budget was increased on EUR 110,000, i.e. from EUR 519,879 to EUR 631,021. The main reason for the budget increase was a need to develop a new more comprehensive Information System for better implementation of the current phase of the Kinofelis programme. The project was implemented within the initially set timeframe; however, there were delays with implementation of some activities within the period of project implementation (i.e. development of PIM, MIS and webinars, conduction of baseline study) due to either competing priorities of the project team and the need to prioritise the project activities, or time required to hire the service provider and having access to the data from the OAED system, or delays with roll-out of Kinofelis.

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

**Purpose:** The final evaluation aimed to assess whether the ILO support to a New Generation of Public Employment Programmes in Greece project has delivered the expected outcomes on time and within

budget and provide key insights on project achievements, challenges, impacts, sustainability, involvement of stakeholders, capacity building and areas for replication.

**Scope:** The final evaluation considers project activities and outcomes during the whole period of project implementation from September 1, 2016 to November 30, 2017.

**Clients:** The main stakeholders in the project, particularly the Ministry of Labour, the SRSS of the EC and also supporting learning processes within the ILO itself.

**Limitations:** The most important limitation of the evaluation field study was the short duration of the field mission in Greece, which in the end amounted to only five full weekdays for interviews and meetings. In addition, the field mission took place just one week before the end of the project when all project key deliverables were only at the final stage of finalization and have not been yet shared with main project stakeholders.

### **Methodology of evaluation**

The evaluation had a participatory character and was primarily qualitative in nature. Quantitative data were drawn from project documents and reports, to the extent available, and incorporated into the analysis. Data collection procedures included:

- (i) a desk review of literature,
- (ii) preparation of an evaluation matrix with related evaluation questions,
- (iii) semi-structured interviews with key informants and stakeholders, and
- (iv) skype de-briefing with the ILO after the field mission.

In total, more than 50 project documents have been reviewed and 26 interviews with key project informants (MOL, including the Alternative Minister and key project team members, ILO staff (Geneva and Athens) and relevant ILO consultants in relation to the main outputs (e.g. baseline study, platform, training strategy, PIM), MIS Developer, SRSS staff responsible for the project, World Bank, other selected stakeholders including selected municipalities and direct beneficiaries).

## **Main Findings & Conclusions**

**Relevance and strategic fit:** Overall directions laid out in the project document were entirely consistent with the Greek government's new generation Kinofelis programme and priorities of the different group of stakeholders as the project focused on provision of a number of elements that meant to strengthen the public works programmes as a future policy option for job creation in Greece. The development of PIM was highly relevant as in spite of the fact that the first phase of Kinofelis started in 2011; there was no written consolidated document for government institutions, which contained an overview of the Kinofelis programme. The project's capacity building activities were highly relevant to the MOL, municipalities and other stakeholders implementing the programme aimed to institutionalize the capacities required for the programme to be efficiently and effectively rolled out as well as laying the basis for intended processes of scaling up in the future. The development of MIS and the website of Kinofelis programme were considered very relevant as aimed to support better implementation of the phase III of the programme. The development and piloting of the methodology for conduction of socio-economic evaluation of the Kinofelis programme was innovative and highly useful for the Greek Government as allowed to assess the labour market outcomes of the programme and find out for the first time the social and economic impacts of Kinofelis. The establishment of the GMI-Kinofelis Working Group maintained a high level of relevance as it was initiated to facilitate the alignment of the design of Kinofelis with other existing social protection programmes.

**Validity of design:** The ILO support programme development objectives and outcomes remained valid throughout the project lifespan despite of changes in the Kinofelis programme which it was designed to support; however, they define an ambitious scope of action and constitute a major organizational, logistic and technical challenge. The design acknowledged contextual realities and remained flexible to address emerging priorities and issues. However, the ILO was sometimes too ambitious in extending the scope of specific outputs or conducting additional activities, rather the limiting the scope and sticking more strictly to the defined deliverables. The ILO's gender mainstreamed strategy was adequately taking into account in the project design as a cross-

cutting aspiration, but there was a lack of gender sensitive indicators and targets in the project's Logframe.

**Effectiveness:** Despite the fact that the project's objectives were too grandiose, what the project delivered in an attempt to address them was commendable. The project has been responsive to the needs expressed by the recipient agencies and has been able to deliver all outputs in the end, in spite of delays and even undertake a number of unplanned activities. The quality of capacity building activities was assessed as good or very good and the work of the GMI-Kinofelis Working Group was perceived in a positive light, while the PIM and baseline study were assessed as of moderate quality. The project developed at the request of MOL a comprehensive MIS for Kinofelis; nevertheless, the process of development took longer than expected because of delays with alignment of MIS with the systems of other Greek agencies through building web services with the national contract registration IS of ERGANI and the IS of OAED. However, the project implemented a number of not foreseen activities either at the specific request of the Ministry or because the ILO team thought it would make an important improvement to Kinofelis programme. They include: (1) preparation of the technical and strategic recommendations; (2) development of discussion note on conditionalities for activating SSI beneficiaries; (3) development of 51 skill profiles of the local unemployed; (4) presentation of lessons of the ILO support programme at a seminar of the European Social Fund, and (5) development of website (reports.kinofelis.gr) for statistical description of the Kinofelis reports. In overall, important progress has been made towards the achievement of the development objective.

**Efficiency and effectiveness of management arrangements:** The project has been cost-efficient, although the planning for and implementation of activities took more time than initially envisaged due to political, management and administrative reasons. The project team has been highly qualified, but the project management set up was not effectively organized due to the scope and ambition of the project coupled with the budget constraints. In terms of project management, there was issues of communication and coordination; hence, the adaptive programming and the multi-layered approach to the tasks allowed the project to move ahead even if some components were delayed.

**Impact orientation:** The timeline of the project was too short to effect significant change or to achieve sustainable impacts. What was considered achievable within the original design timeline was to provide impetus and drive towards change by providing a large array of ideas and concepts to promote change. The developed PIM and Guidance notes will help the institutions involved in the Kinofelis programme to design, implement, monitor and report in more effective way. The ILO also proposed a number of recommendations for strengthening Kinofelis (both for current and future phases), which could be considered by the MOL in the short, medium or long term. The project improved the knowledge among municipal employees about the Kinofelis programme objectives and its intended impact, which could help municipal employees to prove to the local authorities about the value for the programme. The new MIS will give a chance to continuously report and give data on Kinofelis performance as well as can provide scientific data for evaluation, which was not possible in the past, while systematic conduction by the MOL of entry-exit assessments of programme participants will allow the MOL to identify impacts of the programme on activation and employability of individual beneficiaries and determine the broader impact on the households of unemployed and local communities.

**Sustainability:** The sustainability of the ILO support programme results depends entirely on the sustainability of Kinofelis itself. The ownership of the project's results varies depending on the deliverable. In terms of institutional capacity, the MOL has improved, but it has not yet fully consolidated institutional capacities that results in a fully- functioning and high-standard implementation of Kinofelis programme. In terms of the economic and financial conditions, currently the MOL does not have all required financial resources for implementing of Kinofelis on its own and external financial support is needed for programme's further roll-out and continuation. The biggest threat to the sustainability of the Kinofelis is reduced donor funding in the short term. In terms of institutional ownership and appropriation, it varies depending on the project's deliverable (from high (PIM and MIS), medium (baseline study) to low (trainings for municipalities), while its appropriation (being the full driver of the process) is still weak because of the limited resource capacity of the Ministry.

## Conclusions

The ILO Support Programme is a demand driven project which was initiated by the MOL. In overall, it contributed to strengthening the capacity of the Greek government to achieve the objectives of Kinofelis in spite of navigating in the complex and not always explicit politics of the context. The pace of implementation and the level of effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the project's results have been influenced by three major factors: (1) its full dependence on the larger Kinofelis programme and in particular its timeframes, (2) provision of technical support to the ongoing public work programme which entail the possibility of changing needs of the main beneficiary during the implementation process, and (3) the late start of the technical support due to the lengthy negotiation and approval process of the project with the donor. However, the reform process needs to continue as the long-term unemployment in Greece is still to be overcome. The ILO Support Programme has moved the process forward but follow up is needed to see it through.

## Recommendations

The main recommendations are summarized as follows:

In future TA projects which are involving institutional development (particularly improving capacities and operating procedures of national counterpart institutions) and implemented in a complex environment, the "process" approach should be applied for project design as it offers more flexibility in its choice of objectives, means, and priorities.

In future, TA programme objectives and outcomes should be more realistic, attainable and measurable. It is recommended to have one objective and focus on not more than two expected results if the project duration is 15 months.

Future TA projects design must de-risk project implementation. It is recommended to develop as a part of the project proposal a risk mitigation plan which would contain a plan for the unplannable risks. This could be: (i) contingency funds, (ii) float in the plan, (iii) additional resources on standby, and (iv) options to break the project into segments and/or reduce scope.

Future TA projects should adopt a more "active" approach towards the communication with the donor in order to keep it in the loop of all project's developments and milestones and make it more involved in the

project's implementation. For that reason, it is recommended to hold bi-weekly donor's briefing sessions and prepare monthly calendar of activities.

## Important lessons learned

Care should be taken to ensure that the project design is as clear and simple as possible. The design should avoid unnecessary complexity resulting in multiple overlapping outputs/key result areas and specific objectives.

The more unsettled a country's institutional environment, the greater the need for a flexible, process-oriented TA project design. Multi-dimensional TA projects require strong country level leadership. This is to ensure that the vision is maintained and reinforced throughout the life of the project.

More investment in building a shared understanding of the management arrangements and levels of involvement that would be best for the project and all stakeholders.

Even in the short-term projects, do not engage in activities without first assessing the institutional capacity of relevant entities to sustain them. The activities must be designed from the outset with a view to their sustainability.

## Emerging good practices

The ILO support project aimed to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders to implement the programme through training. The methodology combined the presentation of learning materials with a strong emphasis on participatory processes aimed at enabling peer-to-peer learning and open discussion that encouraged municipalities to seek advice and exchange experiences on ongoing implementation issues and to share and develop locally-generated solutions.

*See the full report for all recommendations, lessons learned and good practices.*