



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation
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Global Action to Improve the Recruitment Framework of Labour Migration (REFRAME) – Midterm evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: *Global Project. Mexico, Guatemala, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal Malaysia, Kenya, Lebanon*

Mid-Term: *July 2019*

Evaluation Mode: *Independent*

Administrative Office: *MIGRANT*

Technical Office: *MIGRANT*

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Project Code: *GLO/15/41/EUR*

Donor(s) & Budget: *European Commission*

Keywords: *Migration, Fair Recruitment, Migrant workers, Corridor Approach*

Background & Context

Context Overview

In 2017, there were 258 million international migrants worldwide. The migration process is often difficult, and the lack of labour governance, legislation, and enforcement can put migrant workers in precarious situations. These situations include exploitation, abuse, threats, deception about job nature and conditions, passport retention, obligation to pay recruitment fees,

fear of expulsion from host countries, and physical and sexual violence. These situations can often arise from the uneven enforcement of inadequate recruitment regulations. Lack of labour governance with respect to recruitment often leads to forced labour or fundamental rights violations.

Project Objectives

The European Commission funds this EUR 8 million project. The Global Action to Improve the Recruitment Framework of Labour Migration (REFRAME) project's main goal is to "reduce abusive practices and violation of human and labour rights during the recruitment process and maximize the protection of migrant workers and their contribution to development."

The project uses the General Principles and Operational Guidelines for fair recruitment as a tool and guidance to support governments, partners, and other stakeholders in the establishment of Fair Recruitment initiatives.

REFRAME's objectives are threefold:

1. Key stakeholders take integrated and articulated action towards implementing Fair Recruitment (FR) approaches in the two countries of the selected corridors.
2. Social partners, business, and the media implement FR actions and initiatives.
3. Global/regional discussion on fair recruitment influenced by ILO generated knowledge on fair recruitment and on FR Principles and Guidelines.

At the country level, REFRAME improves labour recruitment governance through assessing recruitment legislation and needs, improving institutional capacities, and assisting tripartite partners in countries of migrant worker origin and destination to eliminate recruitment malpractice via holistic strategies. At the global level, REFRAME supports the development of a business case and a web-based system for evaluating labour recruiters, raising awareness, and disseminating knowledge to businesses, media, and tripartite constituents. REFRAME also provides reliable information and services to migrant workers and influences global and regional discussions related to FR.

REFRAME covers four different migration corridors: Guatemala–Mexico; Sri Lanka–Arab states; Madagascar–Lebanon; and Pakistan–Arab States

Purpose, Objectives, Users, and Scope of the Evaluation

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to assess the level of achievement of the outputs and the extent to which the project has met and/or is likely to meet its intended outcomes. Further, it identifies challenges faced, highlights lessons learned and good practices, and proposes recommendations for the improved design and delivery of future projects.

The objectives of the evaluation are to identify areas of success and/or challenges; provide recommendations for the continuation of the project; and provide lessons learned for future projects of a similar nature.

The principal users of the mid-term evaluation are the ILO project management team, responsible ILO country offices, the donor (i.e., European Commission), relevant project partners, external clients (e.g., civil society actors, media outlets), internal clients (e.g., field technical specialists, the ILO technical unit at Headquarters (HQ), the tripartite constituents, and other parties involved in project execution.

The mid-term evaluation covers the period from the start of the project in January 2017 until December 2018. In regard to the programmatic scope of the mid-term evaluation, the study covers the project's three Specific Objectives. The mid-term evaluation also covers all countries in which the project has planned activities.

Evaluation approach and methodology

The evaluation adopted utilization-focussed, participatory, gender equality, and mixed-methods approaches. The evaluation was conducted in three phases:

- 1) Inception:** The evaluation team drafted an inception report based on a preliminary document review and virtual consultations with project staff in Geneva. The inception report was validated by project staff and the evaluation manager.
- 2) Data collection:** The evaluation team conducted semi-structured interviews, both virtually and during in-country visits in Mexico and Guatemala, reviewed available documentation, and conducted a validation workshop in Geneva.
- 3) Data analysis and reporting:** Data validity was ensured through cross-referencing and triangulation from multiple data sources. The evaluation team produced the Mid-Term Evaluation Report based on feedback received on the first draft of the report from project staff.

The evaluation triangulated information from three sources of data:

Semi-structured interviews: The evaluation team conducted a series of virtual and in-person interviews between January and March 2019. In total, the team consulted 67 respondents.

Document review: The evaluation team conducted a preliminary document review during the inception phase, as well as an in-depth review to triangulate and complement data collected during in-country visits.

Country visits: The evaluation team conducted country visits to Mexico City and Tijuana, Mexico, between January 28–February 1, and Guatemala City, Guatemala, between February 4–8, 2019. During these visits, the evaluation team met with key stakeholders in Guatemala at the national level and in Mexico at the national and sub-national levels.

Validation workshop: The evaluation team conducted a two-day validation workshop with relevant stakeholders in Geneva on February 21–22, 2019. The workshop allowed the evaluation team to validate preliminary findings and recommendations, and identify potential good practices and lessons learned.

The evaluation team did not encounter any significant limitations during the implementation of the evaluation.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Relevance and Strategic Fit

The evaluation team found that REFRAME is strongly aligned to international commitments made on labour migration, ILO's strategic priorities, and the European Union's development agenda.

In regard to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), REFRAME is fully aligned to SDG 8 on Decent Work and Economic Growth and to some of its specific targets and indicators. More specifically, the project is in full alignment to SDG 8.7, 8.8, and 10.7.

The REFRAME project is contributing to at least 3 of the 23 objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration. Additionally, the REFRAME project is aligned with ILO's strategic priorities. Specifically, it is aligned with outcomes 6 and 9 of the ILO's Programme & Budget Outcomes 2016-17 and 2018-19. REFRAME is also fully aligned with at least five of the eight fundamental rights conventions.

In regard to Gender equality and non-discrimination, the project document (PRODOC) calls for gender-sensitive policy solutions and improvements to policy dialogue regarding the migration of women in specific sectors of the economy. Finally, REFRAME is clearly aligned to the European Agenda on Migration from May 2015.

At the country level, while governments from origin countries participating in the REFRAME project do not always perceive migrant worker FR as a top priority, the evaluation team noted increased governmental attention to issues related to FR as a result of project implementation.

The lack of government buy-in in destination countries, particularly in Arab and Gulf States, poses a significant challenge to the implementation of FR approaches within REFRAME. The project acknowledged this challenge since the design of the project. As a result, the project focuses most of its efforts in countries of origin.

REFRAME is highly relevant for employers' organizations (EOs) and workers' organization (WOs) at the global level, particularly the World Employment Conference, the International Organization for Employers, and the International Trade Union Confederation. At the country level, FR is an important and relevant issues for EOs and WOs. However, for some EOs and WOs, FR and labour migration were new topics, and their engagement with REFRAME was sometimes curtailed by misperceptions, lack of a common understanding on the role of WOs and EOs on labour migration, and prioritization.

The REFRAME project complements other projects on themes closely related to FR and migration. REFRAME integrated lessons learned from other projects and built upon other projects' work, notably FAIR (Integrated Program on Fair Recruitment) and BRIDGE (A Bridge to Global Action on Forced Labour), leading to improved project design and results.

Validity of Design

The corridor approach is a solid framework, allowing REFRAME to focus its interventions on specific country and corridor level challenges. This approach allows interventions at both ends of the corridor to be specific and focused on the needs of migrant workers and the context of the corridor.

REFRAME project outputs and outcomes are generally well identified in the logframe. However, the causal linkages between outputs and outcomes, as described in the PRODOC, is not entirely reflected in the theory of change (ToC) and logframe. Indicators are also well defined. Yet, some indicators lack specificity, which may hinder their measurement.

Project Effectiveness

Overall, significant progress has been made toward the achievement of targets at the output level for Specific Objectives 2 and 3. The project was able to accomplish much in a very short period of time, such as developing a Migrant Recruitment Advisor platform in two countries, raising awareness on FR related issues with businesses and the media, and developing a methodology for measuring the SDG indicator 10.7.1.

REFRAME contributed to three high-level global discussions on FR. Most notably, REFRAME contributed to the Tripartite Meeting of Experts on

Defining Recruitment Fees and Related Costs, held in November 2018. REFRAME's contribution to the meeting expanded the thematic coverage, helped reach a critical mass of participants to the meeting, and provided a field-level point of view.

Regarding the project's work at the country level, the project has conducted, or is in the process of conducting, comprehensive assessments of recruitment laws and practices in Guatemala, Mexico, Sri Lanka, Madagascar, and Pakistan. In these same countries, REFRAME drafted integrated strategies and work plans jointly with constituents to address unfair recruitment. However, as a result of significant delays, an important proportion of the implementation of these work plans is expected to be done in 2019.

At the outcome level, the evaluation team found supporting evidence that the production of outputs contributes to progress towards REFRAME's three objectives. For example, REFRAME played an essential role in collaboratively convening FR constituents and increasing the issue's importance in their agendas.

By combining direct support to specific countries along migration corridors with global initiatives of knowledge generation and sharing, capacity building, and awareness raising, REFRAME contributes to exchanges of knowledge and experience across regions and between country and global levels initiatives. Finally, some of the project interventions addressed FR by specifically targeting, or taking into account, the specific needs of women.

Efficiency of Resource Use

The evaluation team noted delays in the implementation of some activities, mainly due to country selection, project staffing, and political circumstances. As a result of the implementation delays, some project components will not be achieved without a no-cost extension. The project management team is considering asking the European Commission for a no-cost extension to allow them to be completed. The evaluation team noted that a no-cost extension would not only allow the project to ensure the achievement of results, but also enhance the sustainability of results.

Effectiveness of Management Arrangements

While MIGRANT manages REFRAME, MIGRANT and FUNDAMENTALS collaborate in implementing the project. This collaboration increases efficiency, as both human and financial resources are shared and staff works towards common goals. The collaboration between MIGRANT and FUNDAMENTALS contributed to the project's implementation. For example, FUNDAMENTALS' involvement strengthens the rights-based approach to labour migration issues and fosters the topical expertise of staff members from both departments.

The collaboration between the two ILO departments was, however, time-consuming and required extra project management to ensure results delivery. The evaluation team noted that there is some room for improvement in terms of establishing clear and agreed upon management lines, an accountability structure, and resource-sharing mechanisms between the two departments.

Impact Orientation and Sustainability

The project seeks to ensure the sustainability of its results by bringing about changes in national policies and legislative frameworks, creating tools and guidelines to be used by constituents beyond the project's implementation period, and by obtaining the commitment and buy-in of implementation partners and constituents to sustain the project's results.

Regarding changes in policies and legislative frameworks, REFRAME is providing technical assistance in drafting the regulation for the registration, authorization, and operation of recruiters and recruitment agencies in Guatemala. In Madagascar, the project is supporting the ratification of three ILO conventions, and the drafting of a model for a bilateral agreement on labour migration. In Pakistan, REFRAME contributed to refining the draft National Emigration and Welfare Policy through technical review.

To ensure the future use of the developed tools and outputs, the project involves key stakeholders in their production, thereby creating output ownership. For example, at the country level, the project made an explicit effort to have constituents' draft tools and guidelines. Finally, on generating commitment and buy-in from constituents and partners, REFRAME contributed to raising the importance of FR in the constituents' agendas, thus increasing the likelihood

that they will continue working on the issue once the project implementation period ends.

Conclusions

Overall, REFRAME is an innovative project that was well designed. In little time, the project is on track to achieving sustainable results at global and country level that will have a lasting impact beyond the implementation period of the project. However, the project currently faces a considerable challenge: implementing an important proportion of its activities during the last year of the implementation period, particularly at the country level.

Different ILO projects on FR and labour migration have interacted quite organically with each other under the Fair Recruitment Initiative. These interactions created synergies, increased the quality of outputs produced, and allowed for the development of ILO staff expertise.

The corridor approach used by REFRAME is an adequate and useful framework to implement the FR Principles and Guidelines. While the project faced several constraints in working in countries of destination of the selected corridor, the project was flexible enough to adapt to emerging constraints and opportunities during its implementation.

The project suffered from the fact that there was no dedicated time for an inception phase and in the end, this will likely leave insufficient time to implement all activities or reach planned results. At mid-point, REFRAME still has more than half of its budget to implement. The REFRAME project team must, therefore, think strategically for the remainder of the project, and select activities and interventions that will be the most probable drivers of success to achieve outcomes.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: The REFRAME Chief Technical Officer (CTA) should request a no-cost extension of 6 to 12 months to DEVCO to finalize work initiated at country level, and to operationalize tools developed at the global level.

Recommendation 2: REFRAME should reduce the scope of its interventions in countries and corridors where little progress has been made and focus on less

ambitious objectives such as creating partnerships and raising awareness on FR among constituents and other stakeholders (civil society organizations, recruitment agencies, suppliers, etc.).

Recommendation 3: REFRAME should open the Nepal-Malaysia corridor to other sectors, or reduce the number of specific suppliers/factories to be reached, given the ban lifting is beyond ILO's control.

Recommendation 4: REFRAME CTA should consider hiring a communication and knowledge management specialist in Geneva to support the preparation of different internal and external communication outputs, including synthesis/research on good practices and lessons learned that would feed into a final global conference.

Recommendation 5: REFRAME team should conduct more frequent meetings involving the CTA, National Project Coordinators (NPCs), and other interested constituents to improve knowledge sharing across corridors and across global and country level initiatives.

Recommendation 6: REFRAME should consider revising some of the indicators in its logframe, further defining the Specific Objectives statements and, if possible, reformulate the overall ToC of the project.