



Egypt Youth Employment (EYE): Jobs and Private Sector Development in Rural Egypt (EYE-RAWABET)

QUICK FACTS

Countries: Egypt.

Evaluation date: 25 May 2023

Evaluation type: Project

Evaluation timing: Final

Administrative Office: ILO CO -Cairo

Technical Office: ILO Geneva, SECTOR in collaboration with ENTERPRISE

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DC Symbol: EGY/17/06/NOR

Donor(s) & budget: The Government of Norway; Budget: USD 3,787,400 (NOK 30,000,000)

Key Words: Decent Work, Private Sector Development, Global Supply and Value Chains, Dairy, White Goods and Ready-Made Garment Sectors, Entrepreneurship and Skills development, Small-scale producers, Industrial Relations, Youth Employment, Gender Equality, Environmental Sustainability, Rural Egypt.

Background & Context

Background and project description

The present evaluation report is mandated by the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Final Independent Evaluation of the project entitled: “*Egypt Youth Employment (EYE): Jobs and Private Sector Development in Rural Egypt (EYE-Rawabet)*” (see Annex 1). The project’s main objective was to leverage private sector investment in the rural economy of Egypt and to support entrepreneurship and skills development in rural communities particularly for youth, including small-scale producers and entrepreneurs. Originally designed as a 3-year Project from September 2017 to September 2020, it was extended (at no cost) for another 2.5 years until March 2023. It is implemented by the ILO Country Office in Cairo, Egypt with a financing from the Government of Norway with a budget of about USD 3,7 million. The Project is being implemented in rural Egypt with a focus on selected Governorates, in particular Al-Gharbiya, Ash-Sharkia and Al-Qalioubia.



Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The present evaluation's *purpose* is to promote accountability and to strengthen learning among the ILO and key stakeholders. The *scope* of the Evaluation covers the whole implementation of the project 2017-2023. The geographical scope covers all the governorates involved (as detailed in the above) as well as the targeted value chains. The evaluation also examines the Project's performance in relation to all relevant ILO's cross-cutting issues including gender equality and non-discrimination. The main *clients* include the Government of Egypt represented by the key line ministries including the Ministry of Investment and International Cooperation (MIIC), ILO's other tripartite constituents, the ILO management at country, regional and Headquarter levels, the project partners and the donor, the Government of Norway.

Methodology of evaluation

The methodology includes a desk study of the relevant documents and primary data collection through online and offline interviews with 38 Stakeholders (including 9 female). In addition, the national evaluator in Egypt made field visits to the Governorates mentioned above. The participatory methodology further includes a critical reflection process by the key stakeholders in particular through the online stakeholders' workshop and the inputs by stakeholders to the draft report. Key deliverables are the inception report, the preliminary presentation of findings at the online stakeholders' workshop, the draft report, and the final report taking into consideration the feedback on the draft report.

Main Findings & Conclusions

The conclusions of the present independent final evaluation are analysed in here according to the seven evaluation criteria used throughout this report. With respect to the first evaluation criteria, **Relevance**, the Evaluation found that the project, aiming at promoting decent private sector employment in rural Egypt, was very relevant for the people and the country, and that it is still as relevant as when the project was designed. The project has clearly aligned to national policies of the Government of Egypt and of the Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI). The project is also aligned with different international priorities (SDGs, UNPDF, ILO's P&B and the Government of Norway). The RAWABET project built upon the work accomplished under another ILO project. The government counterpart, the MoIC, has been closely involved just as the FEI.

The project shows clear **Coherence** and synergies with various other ongoing ILO, UN agencies and government programmes in Egypt. The project design was solidly backed by evidence from the labour market and crafted in response to the labour market challenges. However, it was a design in draft format with many activities to be decided later and it was ambitious with activities in three diverging sectors. The final Logframe includes 3 Outcomes, 7 Outputs and 24 Activities.

Effectiveness: The project has undertaken a great diversity of activities illustrated by Table 1 which shows many types of training and a total of almost 4,000 persons trained (36% female). The project



team deserves a lot of credit for the high rates of achievements of the activities undertaken. However, one does need to take into account that the project took longer to achieve these targets than originally planned. Following comprehensive Rapid Market Assessments (RMAs), the project selected three sectors: Dairy, White Goods manufacturing and Ready-Made Garments (RMG). The design of the intervention models was based on sectoral Market System Analyses (MSAs) and Value Chain analyses. The evaluation found evidence of the strengthening of the value chain linkages in the dairy sector, while this was more difficult to find in the White Goods sector and the RMG value chain.

The achievement of the Activities contributed to that of the Outputs and the Outcomes. Most indicators were at least partly achieved but it differed substantially among the three sectors, and there were only few actual national partners identified who can take it forward. During the implementation the project worked with various partners at the national, sectoral level and local levels, to the extent that partnerships were a bit fragmented. A few positive unexpected results developed as a consequence of the project intervention, such as the support to FORSA and Haya Karima, the new project called EYE-FORSA, as well as a new SME set up by trainees as a service provider to the community of beneficiaries.

The project encountered a number of pertinent challenges in particular the time it took for the approval of the project by the GoE, the COVID Lockdown, the engagement with the private sector and the fact that the indirect facilitation role did not sufficiently result in the active involvement of national organisations. Still the project arrived at a large number of achievements thanks to several success factors: the high relevance of the project, the overall support of MoIC, the commitment of the Government of Norway, the continuous involvement of the ILO Country Office in Cairo, the continuity in projects funded by the Government of Norway, and the high commitment and experience of the project team. Backstopping by ILO DWT-Cairo was continuous and effective in several areas, while ILO Geneva was involved in particular in the early phases of project design and inception. The Mid-term Evaluation (MTE February 2020) arrived at 11 Recommendations and most were followed-up.

In terms of *management arrangements*, the Project is well embedded in the structure of the Cairo ILO-Country Office, and the Project Team consisted of seven staff led by the CTA. Communication by the Project Team has been assessed by the stakeholders interviewed as very good and a series of communication materials contributed to this. Reporting by the project team has been on time and comprehensive following the requirements of the Norwegian Embassy.

Efficiency of resource use: The resources have generally been strategically allocated and efficiently used to achieve the project objectives although there were substantial delays. In early March 2023, the expenditures totalled US\$ 3.45 million, which amounted to a solid 94.2 % of the budget. The biggest category of expenditures is for staff costs of the project team (41.2%) followed by “actual activities” (Seminars/Training and Sub-Contracts for training and capacity building) and National Consultants; it accounts for 37.2%. Such a ratio between staff costs and actual activities is quite a balanced level of expenditures for ILO projects of a similar type and size. In general, the results achieved justified the costs in so far as many project activities were designed and tested to a limited audience in targeted



locations and could not yet be scaled-up to larger groups of beneficiaries. The Lessons Learned from piloted activities, however, are quite valuable and could well be used as important inputs into the design of follow-up interventions targeting larger geographical areas.

Impact orientation: In order to ensure that the project would have an impact on the rural economy, it has aligned and partnered with the strategically important national initiatives of FORSA and Hayah Karima. Overall, almost 4,000 people have been reached by the project through training and other capacity building efforts which are in itself durable. The project made a substantial contribution to gender related concerns (GetAhead and Jobs Search Clubs). The project has further contributed to a change in practices in the dairy sector through the more important role of MCCs and their certification. Combined with the trainings delivered, this change has impacted on perceptions and awareness of the importance of private sector led development and job creation. The technical capacity at local levels was enhanced by the project, including the improvement of the MCCs.

Sustainability: The PRODOC's Exit Strategy was in itself realistic except that the FEI and its Chambers have participated but have not (yet) taken it forward; they indicated during the interviews that for scaling-up of the outputs and outcomes a follow-up intervention will be required. In addition, not many other national organisations have been deeply enough involved to institutionalize the use and the scaling-up of the ILO training tools and to actively transfer the knowledge gained. An important exception here is the Chamber of Food Industries (CFI) which has a strategy and a committee and are planning to replicate the RAWABET intervention through workshops (financed by the CBE) in the coming months. The relatively limited involvement of national organisations in training in combination with the fact that all interventions were funded through the project (without any own contributions from companies) resulted in the finding that the benefits to the target groups will only be continued beyond the project's lifespan if a follow-up intervention will support such activities. Ownership has developed very selectively in particular at the MoIC, the FEI and gradually also at the CFI. All stakeholders interviewed indicated that they would very much value if the cooperation with ILO in this area can be continued.

Cross-cutting Themes: The project made substantial efforts to promote gender equality, and several activities were specifically targeted at women (GetAhead). The selection of sectors was gender-sensitive and the Project Team is clearly gender sensitive and gender balanced. Non-discrimination and disability inclusion did not receive specific attention while a few activities were implemented related to Environmental concerns. Tripartism and Social Dialogue were mainstreamed at the enterprise/factory level. There was substantial participation from employers' organisations, but much less from the workers' organisations.

Recommendations

- 1. Explore the possibility of a follow-up intervention with possible collaboration and financial support from the Embassy of Norway and/or other Development Partners in order to maintain**

the momentum gathered by the project and to make the project results sustainable. Significantly, all stakeholders interviewed would like the project to continue as they underscored the relevance and importance of its outputs and results.

2. **Involve in similar interventions more partners and national organisations which can replicate results and outputs**, for example through workshops as the Chamber of Food Industries (CFI) is planning. Provide capacity building to such organisations, including explicitly employers' organisations. Where possible, explore to use less ILO Contractors and more national organisations to enhance the institutionalization of project results.
3. **Involve the trade unions more systematically in similar interventions in the future and provide capacity building** to key staff including a minimum number of female staff members.
4. **Establish a Project Steering Committee (PSC) from the very beginning in similar future interventions**, especially if several ministries are involved as in this case. Make sure that ILO's official Tripartite Constituents (MoM, FEI and trade union representation) are involved in the PSC as applies also to the Development Partner.
5. **Improve the Outreach to companies through the Chambers**, and where there is not sufficient trust between companies and Chambers **explore alternative intermediaries** for example NGOs.
6. **The focus of similar interventions in the future should be narrower in terms of sectors while scaling-up (geographically) within successful sector interventions**, in particular for example in the Dairy sector. Perhaps a second sector could be included such as RMG, although this is already covered by other ILO programmes (e.g., BW and ACCEL); exploring the Furniture sector could be another option.
7. **Include a Gender Equality Strategy in a follow-up action from the design stage** in order to mainstream gender, and **make sure to allocate dedicated resources to this Strategy**.
 - Explore linkages with the multi-year project funded by Canada with the Chamber of Food Industries (CFI) on women entrepreneurs (including a so-called Gender Seal).
 - Explore possible linkages with the National Council for Women (NCW).
8. **Consolidate the outcomes of the present phase by discussing long-term strategies with the key stakeholders in a sustainability workshop ('Closing Event')**. Investigate ways to bridge the gap to a potential follow-up intervention and to keep the momentum created by the current project going.
9. Make sure that the design of a follow-up intervention **includes from the very beginning a Full-Fledged M&E Framework** with a Theory of Change, a results framework, a completely detailed Logframe and a proper Data Quality Assurance mechanism.
10. **Create a Repository of all documents** as a legacy of the project, including the digitisation of training modules, at the ILO Country Office Website, and discuss this also with the MoIC and the FEI for (partial) inclusion in their websites. Make sure that in similar interventions **the project website is as much as possible updated**.