



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation
Office

Promoting Social Dialogue – Final evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: *FYR Macedonia*

Final Evaluation: *April 2017*

Evaluation Mode: *Independent*

Administrative Office: *DWT/CO-Budapest*

Technical Office: *DWT/CO Budapest*

Evaluation Manager: *Maria Borsos*

Evaluation Consultant(s): *Andy Harvey*

Project Code: *MKD/13/02/MKD*

Donor(s) & Budget: *European Commission (EUR
1,149,690)*

Keywords: *Collective bargaining, dispute settlement,
social dialogue, tripartism*

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

In FYR Macedonia, the ILO promotes decent work as a national objective and assists constituents to make progress towards achieving that objective. Advancement of social dialogue is one of the priorities in the DWCP for FYR Macedonia in the period 2015-2018. The EU funded project “Promoting social dialogue” contributes to achievement of the goals under this priority of the DWCP.

The overall objective of the project is to extend and enhance tripartite and bipartite social dialogue in Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as a means to achieve economic growth and social progress. The problem of social dialogue is addressed from three levels and the project aims to achieve the following specific objectives:

1. Enhanced institutional capacity of stakeholders in charge of tripartite and bipartite social dialogue in terms of sustainability, efficiency and functionality in order to provide a comprehensive participation of all the relevant stakeholders, especially of the social partners, in the creation, development and implementation of economic and social policies;
2. Strengthened social partnership on the industry/branch/company level including a coordinated and effective machinery for collective bargaining;
3. Establish an operational mechanism of amicable settlement of labour disputes and trained specialized conciliators and arbitrators for labour disputes.

Present Situation of the Project

This project builds on the extensive work done by the ILO to support the establishment of the National Economic and Social Council, develop amicable settlement of labour disputes legislation, and strengthen the capacities of Employers and Workers organizations.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The purpose of the final independent evaluation is accountability, programme improvement and planning of the next steps, including the envisaged second phase of the project.

The objectives of the evaluation are to:

- a) Determine the extent to which the outcomes of the project have been achieved,
- b) Obtain feedback from the national partners and other stakeholders: what is working, what is not and why;
- c) Provide suggestions, recommendations to better target the next steps.

The evaluation covers the project as a whole, 2014 – 2017, in all three pillars. The final evaluation builds on the findings of the mid-term evaluation.

The evaluation serves the following - external and internal - clients' groups: ILO tripartite constituents and national project partners; The donor; ILO management and technical specialists (in the ILO /Budapest and cooperating departments at the Headquarters); Project staff.

Methodology of evaluation

Evaluation methodology was based on assessments of the areas of influence on the tripartite social partners, namely trade union federations, employers' organisations, national government and the NESG and LESG consultative bodies. These influences were assessed through:

- Reviews of evidence of the project, [the products of the project- e.g. dedicated staff, agreements (procedural and substantive) at different levels, normative results (legislation, ratification of ILO conventions, policies etc), infrastructure, training packages and events etc];
- One to one interviews with key stakeholders influencing or influenced by the project [trade union officers, employers, government officials, project staff, ESC stakeholders].

Where available, findings will be compared with similar initiatives in other countries as well as national statistics over the life of the project.

The primary evaluation activities were: Document review; Review of the results of the project and discussions with project team around these; One to one interviews with direct stakeholders – project management, country management, and stakeholders as organised by project management.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Relevance

The overall and specific objectives of the project were entirely relevant to the ambition of FYR Macedonia to join the European Union. In particular, the project addressed the needs of the country to make progress in the field of social policy and employment, including social dialogue at tripartite and bipartite levels that is required under Chapter 19 of the criteria for ability to assume the obligations of membership. The project addressed the objectives of the DWCP to improve mechanisms of social dialogue through strengthening the capacity of the social partners; enhancing the capacity of the tripartite ESCs at national and local levels; by improving the capacity of the social partners to engage in collective bargaining and; by establishing a mechanism for the amicable settlement of labour disputes.

The Project met the needs of FYR Macedonia to improve the infrastructure in which social dialogue can take place in order to meet the requirements set out by the European Union for accession to the EU.

The Project was in line with ILO global mandates and ILO regional and national strategic priorities to improve social dialogue and increase the capacities of the social partners to engage effectively in dialogue and tripartism.

The project adapted well to the challenging political environment in which it had to operate and made good use of a no-cost six month extension to complete project activities.

The compressed timescale in the closing months of the project led to an overloaded activity schedule that put pressures on the social partners to keep up with the high pace of the project, affecting their capacity to maximise the benefits.

Effectiveness

On the national level, the project equipped the NESC to allow it to function more effectively. The project has provided infrastructure to enable the NESC to operate as an effective body in providing opinions and recommendations on legislation and policy to government.

The NESC has established a working tripartite secretariat that enables it to provide opinions and recommendations on legislation and policy to government.

The NESC has established five new standing working committees: Committee on labour relations and salary; Committee on employment and labour market policy; Committee on social security; Committee on occupational safety and health, and Committee on issuing and revoking licenses to mediator and arbitrators.

Six new LESC have been established in the following municipalities - Resen, Veles, Sveti Nikole, Struga, Kichevo and Radovich. Each LESC has been provided with computer and other equipment to allow it to function effectively.

The project has established a machinery for the amicable settlement of disputes through: the training of 90 conciliators, 50 of whom have been licensed; the establishment and training of a tripartite licensing commission; a case management information system; a publicity campaign to promote the conciliation system; ongoing training of conciliators to a high standard; and the promotion of ASLD as part of the process of social dialogue and tripartism.

Efficiency and management arrangements

The project has been well-managed at the country and regional levels. The ILO has provided significant added value via its extensive resources base, technical expertise, project management backstopping, and training inputs, making good use of its comparative advantage. The project management structure and staffing levels were appropriate for a project of this size, enabling the project to meet revised deadlines and requests for flexibility from project partners.

Sustainability and Impact potential

The project has strong potential for sustainability due to the infrastructure that has been built but it will require the tripartite actors to make good use of the infrastructure in the future.

The lack of a clear sustainability plan is a risk to long term sustainability as project continuation plans are based primarily on a new externally funded project.

Recommendations

For future projects:

1. A sustainability strategy and implementation plan should be developed at an early stage of the project.
2. Sustainability should be a mandatory item on the Steering Committee agenda.
3. A theory of change should be developed that allows for fuller understanding of the assumptions and change logic that underpins the project.
4. Any project extensions should be of sufficient duration to allow activities to proceed at a pace that allows partners time to assimilate and embed benefits.

For project partners:

5. Steps should be taken to ensure the neutrality and impartiality of conciliation and to promote its independence from the tripartite actors as a means to settle labour disputes.
6. Trade unions should take steps to ensure they can benefit from a continuation project by resolving or otherwise dealing with internal problems that distract from project objectives.
7. The good practice of deploying the ILO's comparative advantage in project activities should be disseminated through the region and globally.
8. The national government should take steps to ensure that social dialogue is a central feature of the strategies for all economic ministries.
9. The NESC should promote its capacity and functions to ministries outside of the MLSP.
10. LESC should be put on a statutory basis as soon as practicable.

11. Employers' organisations should consolidate gains made under the project and continue to enhance their representative status.
12. Individual unions that are not affiliated to a Global Union Federation should examine the benefits of affiliation for capacity-building support.