



Advancing the Decent Work Agenda in North Africa – Independent Midterm evaluation

QUICK FACTS

Countries: Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia

Evaluation date: 05 October 2022

Evaluation type: Project

Evaluation timing: Mid-term

Administrative Office: Cairo CO/Algiers CO

Technical Office: Cairo CO/DWT

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DC Symbol: RAF/18/50/SWE and RAF/18/01/SWE

Donor(s) & budget: Sweden, US\$ 5,524,938

Key Words: [Use themes as provided in i-eval Discovery](#) Employment, International Labour Standards (ILS), Private Sector, OHS, Statistics, North Africa, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

“The ‘Advancing the Decent Work Agenda in North Africa’ (ADWA) project is a partnership between the Government of Sweden - through the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida) - and the International Labour Organization (ILO) to advance the Decent Work Agenda in North Africa. It is a five-year project (2018-2023) that takes an innovative approach to promote evidence-based policies for full employment and effective access to International Labour Standards (ILS), including at the workplace level.

The project has three main outcomes:

Outcome 1: Improved Data Collection, Data Analysis, and Data Use for Economic Policy Reforms to Steer Towards Job-rich Growth in Target North African Countries.

Outcome 2: Improved Ratification, Reflection in National Jurisprudence, Enforcement, and Knowledge of ILSs in Target North African Countries.

Outcome 3: Enhanced Engagement of the Private Sector to Achieve Decent Work in Telecomm and Automotive Sectors in Target North African Countries.

The project is intervening both at regional and at national levels. The country focus is on Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia, with some specific activities carried out in Algeria (ILO SCORE programme) in the context of a PPP signed between the ILO and Volvo in 2019. There is also a PPP signed with Ericsson for Egypt. The CTA forms part of the ILO Decent Work Team/Country Office Cairo. ILO National Project coordinators in Tunis and Rabat and the project’s administrative support from Algiers (for Tunis and Rabat) are also part of the project team.

Present situation of the project

The Project duration is from 30 November 2018 to 30 November 2023 (5 years). The mid-term evaluation took place in 2022, delayed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The **evaluation purpose** and objectives are as follows:

- a. Assess the relevance and coherence of the project’s design regarding countries’ needs and how the target groups perceive and value the project.
- b. Identify the project’s contributions to DWCP or similar national frameworks, the SDGs, the countries UNDAF,



the ILO P&B objectives, and Countries' outcomes and synergy with other projects and programs.

- c. Analyse the implementation strategies of the project with regard to their potential effectiveness in achieving the project outcomes and impacts, including unexpected results and factors affecting project implementation (positively and negatively).
- d. Review the institutional setup, capacity for project implementation, coordination mechanisms, and the use and usefulness of management tools, including the project monitoring tools and work plans.
- e. Assess the implementation efficiency of the project.
- f. Review the strategies for outcomes' sustainability and orientation to impact.
- g. Identify lessons learned, potential good practices, and lessons to be learned for the key stakeholders.
- h. Provide strategic recommendations for the different key stakeholders to improve the achievement of project results and attainment of project objectives.

The **scope** of the evaluation covers the entire life and aspects of the project until the start date of the evaluation, excluding Algeria, as that project component was not implemented due to unforeseen political changes in the country.

Evaluation clients: The evaluation is intended for internal use of the organization; its findings and recommendations will be primarily geared toward learning and specifically directed to:

- ILO Decent Work Team/Country Office Cairo,
- ILO National Project coordinators in Tunis and Rabat and the project's administrative support from Algiers (for Tunis and Rabat)

**Methodology of
evaluation**

The team leader used a **theory-based evaluation approach** for this mid-term evaluation. The suggested approach addressed the expected time lag between the project activities and outputs

contributing to the project outcomes and, ultimately, the project goal to advance the Decent Work Agenda in North Africa.

In the context of the theory-based evaluation approach, the changes in policy influencing were mapped and analyzed using the CHANGE framework. In contrast, changes in stakeholders' technical capacities were intended to be addressed to the extent possible through a capacity-building evaluation survey using the Kirkpatrick model. The Kirkpatrick-based survey had to be replaced with a SWOT analysis during focus group discussions, given the challenges of reaching judges through the survey. In total the evaluators interviewed 56 project stakeholders, including the project team and the donor.

Limitations: The evaluation experienced a slight delay in its implementation, which was initially due to take place between May and June 2022 on a very tight schedule. Other limitations included the challenges of reaching judges through an online survey. Focus group discussions were used for a very small sample of judges as a mitigation measure, though this did not allow to reach a larger number of judges, as originally envisaged.

MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

ADWA' is highly relevant but built on a suboptimal project design. ADWA' is closely aligned to the national contexts in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia based on the relevant national development strategies and the Tunisia DWCP, the only country with a DWCP in place. ADWA' interventions were largely needs-based, and relevance to stakeholders' needs was very high. However, the evaluation finds that the regional component seems to be instead supply-driven. Access to final beneficiaries was limited for the evaluation, and hence no assessment was made. Tripartite constituents were informed about ADWA' once the project was designed. An active participation in the design phase did not take place due to time limitations, which is perceived as a limitation. Gender is absent from the project design and partly addressed in the implementation of ADWA', with room for systematically enhancing its inclusion. Disability does only figure marginally in the project. The expanded ToC reconstructed by the team leader clearly maps the project assumptions and shows problems with the project design's



validity at first sight. While the project document correctly identified the main economic and employment-related problems facing North African countries, the uneven maturity of social dialogue in the project countries affects the ILO, as tripartite engagement is the cornerstone of ILO operations.

Coherence: The evaluation finds that the project resources were used in a complementary manner within project outcomes, to maximize their reach, given the relatively small country budget for each country.

Efficiency: The project design and administration are complex, with often overworked project staff engaged with highly bureaucratic national structures.

Given the total project budget of US\$ 6.094.220,63, to co-financing leveraged constitutes US\$ 304,161, i.e., 4,99% of the budget.

About 16 months before the end of the project, the average delivery and encumbrances by country and region is 73,68% (median), which closely corresponds to the rates for Morocco and Egypt. In contrast, the rate for Tunisia, with 53,17%, is significantly lower due to the political instability affecting project implementation.

Effectiveness: the project makes good progress in achieving targets for indicators under outcomes 1 and 2, while outcome 3 shows a less favourable performance.

The evaluation finds positive results at mid-term for outcome 1 (achievement of 78% of indicators fully on track and 22% on track) and outcome 2 (25% of targets for indicators exceeded, 42% fully on track, and 25% on track). Outcome 3: 71% of targets for outcome indicators are off track.

Policy change: ADWA' managed to drive change from shaping ideas to behaviour change of constituents and impact concerning improved skills and institutional capacities for 43% of the interventions for outcome 1 and 50% for outcome 2 out of ten interventions analysed in depth, reflecting high effectiveness of about half of the ADWA' interventions, in politically complex contexts.



Factors contributing to project progress comprise stakeholders’ buy-in and the alignment to national strategies, priorities, and mandates, high-quality project management, and donor flexibility. Challenges for project progress include political challenges, the effects of COVID-19 and related restrictions to movement, the accessibility of data, and high levels of bureaucracy affecting the engagement with government counterparts. Internally, regional-level cooperation is challenging for the ILO mainly due to its operational structure.

The likelihood of project results’ impact is overall high.

The evaluation identified positive changes in national stakeholders, while ultimate project beneficiaries were not reached during the evaluation.

Overall, needs-based action, the use of validation processes, and frequent communication enhanced the likelihood of project impact in the three countries.

The likelihood of sustainability of ADWA’ results is high, with exciting opportunities emerging to deepen its engagement in the three countries to contribute even more to transformative change.

National level interest and participation are high in all three project countries for outcomes 1 and 2 but show shortcomings for the regional component and the government engagement for outcome 3 in Egypt.

ADWA’ continuously communicates with its counterparts to facilitate project implementation and maintain ownership. In Tunisia, ADWA’ is taking a solid tripartite approach since 2019 to promote ownership of social partners which is not possible in the same way in the other project countries due to political limitations or constituents’ capacities and representativeness.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Recommendations

R 1: ILO project team: Given the limited project resources, which are spread quite thinly, it is recommended to focus the implementation of phase I on the truly needs-based components of ADWA’. Contracts for the regional component should not be extended or renewed with the view to terminate this component.



R 2: ILO project team: *At the same time, greater involvement of civil society and the media is a necessity. ADWA project should focus more on building partnerships with these organizations and the media, particularly in Tunisia and Morocco, in order to play a triggering role in the ratification of certain conventions, changes in laws and regulations concerning workers' rights. The latter would also better link outcomes 1 and 2.*

R 3: ILO project team and constituents: *Maintain the intention to include gender prominently in the project's design of phase II post 2023, as envisaged. Look actively for opportunities to address disability in the design of phase II.*

R 4: ILO project team and constituents: *It is recommended to actively consult tripartite constituents in the remaining months of 2022 and 2023 in the project countries about the design of phase II post 2023. Constituents should actively participate in that process.*

R 5: ILO project team: *The project requires a realistic design for phase II post 2023, with a ToC built on feasible assumptions.*

R 6: ILO project team: *Revise the staffing structure and reduce the number of national officers for the three outcomes in Egypt to free up staff resources to better support the CTA. Consider moving the full-time administrative support from the Algiers CO to Rabat (50%) and Tunis (50%).*

R 7: ILO project team: *Engage with the donor as a follow-up of this mid-term evaluation and agree to keep the current country focus on Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia at least till the end of 2023.*

R 8: ILO CTA: *Review the CTA's workload and identify areas for delegation to one additional support staff to free up time for the CTA to lead on reaching out to potential new donors as early as possible in 2022.*

R 9: ILO project team: *It is recommended to strengthen the project's approach to capacity building on the lessons learned concerning*

	<p><i>capacity building practices. The need shows for systematically applying training needs assessment, follow-up to capacity building, institutionalizations by involving local partners, for example through a train the trainers approach, the documentation of training and the exploration of hybrid training modalities where feasible.</i></p>
<p>Main lessons learned and good practices</p>	<p>Needs-based project design and implementation ADWA' clearly shows where the project meets stakeholder needs, progress was made, and the results are being used.</p> <p>Involving tripartite constituents in project design The challenges with the relevance, impact, and sustainability of results of the regional component are significant due to the component using 39% of the project budget¹. In this case, a disconnect between the donor priorities for regional cooperation, which does not meet a demand in the region, emerges. This seems to be the case in a region where there is not a single regional body for all project countries to use the regional project results, a shortcoming that tripartite constituents could easily have identified.</p> <p>Good practice The CTA used the end of the evaluation process to bring together the entire technical project team for a stocktaking and planning meeting. The evaluator was invited to present evaluation results and to discuss recommendations with the project team. This process facilitated the exchange among the project team across the project countries to enhance understanding of the evaluation results and the way forward for the project. The CTA's intention to meet the entire project team for all three countries at regular intervals for reflection and stock-taking of project results (e.g., 6-monthly) is likely to contribute to learning and inform planning.</p>

¹ Source : ADWA' Financial data 17.07.2022