



Evaluation Summary



International
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Independent Mid-Term Evaluation

Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) in Myanmar supply chains; A Vision Zero Fund (VZF) project - Implementation Phase (Phase II)

Quick Facts

Country: Myanmar.

Mid-Term Evaluation: 3 August 2019

Mode of Evaluation: Independent Mid-Term

Administrative Office: ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), Bangkok

Technical Office: LABADMIN/OSH, Geneva

Evaluation Manager: Mr. Phu Huynh, Employment Specialist DWT, and Ms. Pamornrat Pringsulaka, Regional Evaluation Officer (REO), Bangkok.

Evaluation Consultant: Theo van der Loop (International Consultant)

Programme End: April 2020.

Programme Code: MMR/16/51/MUL.

Donor & Project Budget: Vision Zero Fund (VZF) – a G7 Multi-Donor Trust Fund: USD 1.7 million (for Phase I and II).

Keywords: Occupational Safety and Health (OSH), Decent Work, Garment and Ginger Supply Chains, Myanmar.

Background & Context

Background and project description

The present Evaluation Report is mandated by the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Independent Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) of the project entitled “Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) in Myanmar supply chains; A Vision Zero Fund (VZF) project - Implementation Phase (Phase II)”. The Government of Myanmar is engaged in a Reform Process which intends to create the required conditions for improving the safety and health of workers. The GoM has adopted in recent years several new policies and regulations in this area including the OSH Law in early 2019. The VZF-OSH project in Myanmar is a 28-months project, implemented from January 2018 to April 2020. Including Phase I, which ran from May to December 2017, it concerns a 36-months project with a total approved budget of US\$1.7 million. It is funded through VZF, a G7

multi-donor trust fund, and is implemented by the ILO. The Mandate of the VZF-Global initiative is “preventing and reducing workplace-related deaths and serious injuries by strengthening public frameworks and establishing sustainable business practices”. The Vision Zero Fund is rooted in the concept that injuries, accidents and diseases at the work place are preventable and that consequently the primary objective of public and private action is to ensure that adequate prevention mechanisms are in place. In Myanmar, VZF is working on two Global Supply Chains (GSC): the garment supply chain and a supply chain in agriculture, which were identified during the inception phase. The objectives of the project are aligned to those of VZF-Global, and the project in particular aims to reduce the number of work-related fatalities and accidents and occupational diseases, and support access to mechanisms to adequately compensate victims and their families in the Garment and Ginger value chains.

Objective and Methodology of the Evaluation

The Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) aims to:

- 1) Review and assess progress and achievements of the project against its planned objectives and outputs by using six OECD/DAC evaluation criteria: Relevance, Validity of design, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Impact and Sustainability.
- 2) Recommend modifications for project improvements.
- 3) Contribute towards organizational learning and promoting accountability to the ILO, national key stakeholders and the donor.
- 4) Document lessons learned and emerging good practices.
- 5) The findings of the MTE will contribute to the design of the next phase of the project.

The MTE covers the project as a whole from the start of Phase II, namely since January 2018 until June 2019. The MTE also covers the entire geographical coverage of the project, with field visits specifically in Yangon, Naypyidaw and Shan State (namely Taunggyi and Aung Ban). The evaluation integrates gender dimensions, disability inclusion and other non-discrimination issues as

cross-cutting concerns throughout the methodology, deliverables, and final report of the evaluation. The clients and users of the independent evaluation include the project staff, ILO management at the country, regional and headquarters levels, the donor i.e. the VZF Multi-Donor Trust Fund, ILO tripartite constituents, and the partners of the project. The results of the MTE will also guide the project management in planning and implementation of the second half of the project phase.

The Data Collection Worksheet in Annex 4 identifies 21 Evaluation Questions divided over the six Evaluation Criteria mentioned above. The Methodology for the MTE consist of a mix of qualitative and quantitative data collected, including interviews with key stakeholders and Focus Group Discussions at national level and with field visits to Shan State, as well as observations, critical reflection and triangulation of information acquired.

Main Findings & Conclusions

The findings are presented in this section according to the six Evaluation Criteria distinguished throughout this report, followed by the overarching conclusion. The **Relevance** of the project for the people and for the country of Myanmar has been very high from the beginning as OSH standards in these and other sectors left much to be desired both in terms of awareness among workers, employers and some government staff, as well as in terms of implementation of these standards. All stakeholders also stressed that the relevance is still as valid as when the project started especially now that the OSH Law has just been passed by the Parliament. The project is aligned with several broader national policies and programmes of the Government of Myanmar (GoM), and contributes to the Myanmar DWCP 2018–2021. Furthermore, it is aligned with the UNDAF 2018-2021, and with SDG-8, target 8.8. Concerning gender equality, non-discrimination and disability inclusion, the project has shown to be much less flexible and responsive to such concerns, and there are no explicit elements in the design to address them.

The **Validity of Design** is generally satisfactory, with a project design which was assessed to be logical and coherent, and which was laid down in and monitored through the Log Frame and the Implementation Plan. However, the Performance Plan has not been updated, and the Assumptions need to be broadened, while the Risk Analysis is solid but needs to include the risk of the EU's potential withdrawal of EBA. The project has involved the right stakeholders in the different project activities but especially the Ministry of Labour, Immigration and Population (MOLIP) and its

Factories and General Labour Laws Inspection Department (FGLLID) as the primary partner has expressed its preference to be involved in all activities especially also if other ministries are involved. Of the social partners most contacts are with the Myanmar Garment Manufacturers Association (MGMA), partly through the ACTEMP expert, and with the Confederation of Trade Unions Myanmar (CTUM). Two issues of concern on the validity of the design include the fact that the activities are relatively diverse and that there was too little explicit attention for gender.

In terms of **Effectiveness**, the project has made substantial progress towards achieving its planned objectives, and Section 3.3 lists a series of notable achievements. The project in close cooperation with the ILO Liaison Office in Yangon has been particularly effective in establishing consultative institutional structures such as the PCC of the ILO OSH Portfolio and the NTDF. Coordination between donors has also been pursued somewhat, especially with the Embassy of Denmark, but this could be broadened. Some of the success factors responsible for that progress include: the preparations made in the Inception Phase, the commitment towards OSH on the side of the tripartite partners, the fact that OSH-issues are relatively uncontroversial, and the early recruitment of key staff combined with a high degree of staff continuity and having one NPO located in South Shan State for the ginger value chain. A number of constraints were also identified, including delays in start-up following inception, a general lack of qualified trainers in Myanmar, and price volatility of agricultural products. The stakeholders have all clearly been involved in the implementation of their respective project components, and both at FGLLID and at SSB a certain sense of ownership of the project could be assessed by the MTE, although especially FGLLID could itself be more pro-active. The key stakeholders and beneficiaries interviewed during this MTE are clearly satisfied with the quality of knowledge tools, technical advice, training and other activities delivered by the project.

With respect to **Efficiency**, it was found that the resources have been used in a relatively efficient manner and that they have in general been allocated strategically. However, the budget allocation is a bit skewed toward costs for the Project Team (almost half of the expenditures), which is large for a project of USD 1.7 million. Special circumstances can in good part account for this. As a result, only just over one-third of the budget is dedicated to actual activities (including consultants). Generally spending is very much on track. The project has received adequate support from different stakeholders, such as from ILO-DWT Bangkok, the VZF Secretariat and the

LABADMIN/OSH Branch both in ILO Geneva. The project in close cooperation with ILO Liaison Office in Yangon was successful in leveraging partnerships with a series of other ILO projects through the ILO OSH Portfolio institutionalised through the tripartite PCC chaired by FGLLID. The newly passed OSH Law constitutes a new opportunity for the project that needs to be taken up with priority. The project management processes and arrangements have generally worked quite well in delivering project outputs and results in particular due to some of the success factors explained in the above.

With respect to **Impact**, good progress has been made with respect to several specific institutions and structures but at the same time it was found that a lot still remains to be done. Achievements with long-term effects include: the different types of Capacity Building on OSH; partnership building with FGLLID and SSB and also, although to a lesser extent, with Workers' and Employers' Organisations (WO/EO); and the work on Employment Injury Insurance (EII) with the SSB. Generally, the project's knowledge and experience have been effectively transferred to the national partners. While the project did not explicitly include gender issues, by default women did definitely benefit because the workers in garment factories are mostly women, and the staff of some ministries have a majority of women. The intervention did indeed make a difference to SDG 8 especially by enhancing awareness on OSH and by improving certain OSH conditions.

The issue of whether the project should pursue any new sectors to enhance its impact is a multi-faceted question with widely diverging stakeholder viewpoints. Firstly, it will depend on whether a new Phase will be approved by the VZF Steering Committee beyond April 2020. Subsequently, it depends on the volume of funding and the duration of such a follow-up phase: With a similar budget and duration as the current project, adding an additional sector does not seem feasible, unless one of the existing sectors is abandoned. Some stakeholders prefer to abandon the Garment Sector since so many other partners/donors are already engaged in this sector, while other want to continue with this sector for varying reasons. The Construction Sector is mentioned most as a priority sector, especially also by FGLLID, because of the relatively many accidents. Interestingly, the three workers' organisations are completely divided on this issue. Regarding the ginger value chain there is more or less consensus on maintaining the geographical focus on South Shan State, even if another agricultural product would be added besides ginger, for example a 'native' crop such as soy-bean. There are pros and cons for both choices

(maintaining garments and/or expanding to construction), but as FGLLID has underlined their explicit preference on different occasions (including very recently at the Stakeholder Workshop) this needs to be taken with priority and considered very carefully.

In order to consolidate the achievement and **Sustainability** of OSH outcomes, the project is recommended to focus on the sustaining of the sense of ownership developed by MOLIP, both at FGLLID and at SSB, by involving them in the design and the development of a possible follow-up phase, by engaging FGLLID in all components of the project, by intensifying the involvement of the main social partners (EO/WO), especially UMFCI and CTUM, and by support to the OSH Training Centre. The project does not yet have an exit strategy but the PRODOC (2018: 42-43) specifies that a sustainability plan will be developed mid-way following the mid-term review. Following the request for project extension made by the Myanmar tripartite constituents, a second phase might well follow beyond April 2020. The MTE recommends that this plan should include a high-level 'Sustainability Workshop'. Since gender equality has not been an explicit target, there will at best be an accidental impact of the interventions on gender equality. This needs to be made explicit soonest, and it would be best to have an expert consultant draft a Gender Action Plan. The intervention did make a sustainable contribution to SDG 8/Target 8.8.

The **Overarching Conclusion** of the MTE is that the project certainly remains highly relevant for Myanmar as well as for the donor countries and other international frameworks (including SDGs) especially also now that the OSH Law has just been passed by the Parliament, that its design was logical and coherent but could benefit from more explicit attention for gender, and that a series of notable achievements were made especially with the FGLLID, the SSB and with stakeholders in Shan State. Consultative structures were established (PCC, NTDF, donor coordination), and several partnerships were forged. The project's budget allocation is a bit skewed toward costs for the Project Team, while spending is on track. The project management processes and arrangements have generally worked quite well in delivering project outputs in particular also due to early staff recruitment and continuity. Concerning the gender dimension, it must be underlined that the project should step up its efforts in the next phase. Several achievements have a longer-term impact, e.g. capacity building, the building of partnerships, and the work on EII. The issue of whether the project should pursue any new sectors to enhance its impact is broadly discussed and advised upon (see

Recommendations). In terms of sustainability, the project should work now on an exit plan and include a high-level 'Sustainability Workshop'.

Recommendations

- 1) Continue activities on OSH as it is no less relevant now than it was at the inception of the Myanmar VZF-OSH project, in fact, in view of the recent passing of the OSH Law support to the tripartite partners to draft the rules and regulations for this law is even more urgent in order not to lose the momentum created by the passing of the law and the imminent start of the OSH Training Centre.
- 2) Make the linkages between the VZF-Global and Country Levels more explicit in terms of Objectives, Theory of Change, Log Frame, etc., and specifically for VZF-Myanmar update the Performance Plan and broaden the Assumptions.
- 3) Pay much more explicit attention to Gender Equality, and possibly also to non-discrimination and disability inclusion. Develop a Gender Action Plan in cooperation with the Gender Expert in DWT-Bangkok and in Geneva. Include explicit gender activities in future (revised) Log Frames, include specific budget lines for issues related to gender equality, and monitor much more closely the activities in terms of sex-disaggregated data. Partner in this respect with UNWOMEN and also for example liaise with the new CTUM's Women Centre in Hlaing Tharyar.
- 4) Enhance further the beginning sense of ownership at MOLIP/FGLLID in the coming period, by involving them in all components of the project including those with other Ministries, by involving them closely in the design and the development of a potential follow-up phase beyond April 2020 and by jointly developing a Consolidated Work Plan whereby the PCC should also be closely involved (including all ILO OSH Portfolio projects). This would also induce a more pro-active role of the FGLLID.
- 5) Continue to closely involve the key social partners and explore further capacity building for the different trade unions on OSH matters. Consider maintaining not only an ILO-ACTEMP expert at the ILO Liaison Office in Yangon, but also an ACTRAV expert.
- 6) Maintain attention for the complementarity among donor and other development partner interventions in the OSH area in order to avoid overlap and gaps, in particular, through the successful ILO OSH Portfolio and the PCC, but also through promoting the setting-up of a Local Consultative Group (LCG) on OSH.
- 7) Monitor expenditures closely as they are skewed towards the project team albeit for the clear reasons of the need for an international CTA/STO and the need for two NPOs as the two selected sectors are so diverse and geographically differently concentrated.
- 8) Find alternatives in the Ginger Value Chain activities for the important inputs by Winrock International as their project was recently completed: Cooperation can be considered for example with UNIDO, GIZ, ACDI-VOCA, HELVETAS (works with private-sector companies) and other projects partners. Consider also involving the pool of local expertise and experience that is constituted by the 16 former Winrock staff members who jointly formed a local Shareholder Company in August 2018 based in South Shan State.
- 9) Closely consider a change in Value Chains as was proposed by FGLLID, by gradually abandoning the garments sector and moving into the Construction Sector, where work accidents and injuries are relatively widespread. Work on the Ginger Value Chain is generally recommended to be continued, although some stakeholders propose to add a second agricultural product (in particular the native crops of Soybean or Corn), while also many farmers operate on a multi-crop basis. However, care should be taken that this does not lead to an even larger project team as a result of employing an NPO for each value chain; the share in the budget of 'activities' needs to be maintained if not increased. If the project manages to acquire substantially more funding, then three sectors might well be possible.
- 10) Develop an exit plan or a 'Sustainability plan' and organize a high-level 'Sustainability Workshop' chaired by the Minister of MOLIP some four months before the end of the project in April 2020.

Lessons Learned and Good Practices

Lastly, from the experience gained by evaluating the VZF OSH Programme in Myanmar in the present report two Lessons Learned (LL) and two Good Practices (GP) have been compiled as follows:

LL1: The Inception Phase of the Myanmar VZF-OSH project was positive in that solid assessments were made of the value chains considered for inclusion in the project, but negative in the sense that an inception phase which is separate from the project itself leads to many delays in the interim period especially related to the approval procedures of the PRODOC.

LL2: The volatility of the prices for agricultural products makes it difficult to properly plan project components.

GP1: The early recruitment of key members of the Project Team in combination with substantial staff continuity is a Good Practice benefiting the project greatly, as is the fact that the NPO responsible for the ginger value chain activities is located in South Shan State itself.

GP2: The ILO OSH Portfolio spearheaded by the PCC is a Good Practice to be followed elsewhere which has worked out well for the VZF project.