



Improving Workers' Rights in Rural Sectors of the Indo-Pacific with a Focus on Women – Independent Midterm evaluation

QUICK FACTS

Countries: Philippines, Indonesia

Evaluation date: 31 July 2023

Evaluation type: Project

Evaluation timing: Mid-term

Administrative Office: Country Office Manila, Philippines and Country Office Jakarta, Indonesia

Technical Office: LABADMIN/OSH

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DC Symbol: RAS/20/07/USA

Donor(s) & budget: US Department of Labor, US\$ 5,000,000

Key Words: labour inspection, occupational safety and health, gender equality, non-discrimination, rural sectors, fishing, mining, agriculture



BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The project aims to contribute to improved working conditions and adherence to labour standards in targeted rural sectors in the Philippines and Indonesia, with a focus on women workers. The selected sectors are mining (small-scale and large-scale), banana, and tuna in the Philippines, and palm oil and fish processing in Indonesia. The overarching vision is to support the ILO's constituents in Indo-Pacific countries to improve working conditions in rural sectors, in line with ILO instruments, through improvements in relevant national governance frameworks well as local demonstration models.

The project has two long term outcomes. **Long Term Outcome 1 (LTO 1)** focuses on enhanced governance frameworks for compliance with labour laws, gender equality and occupational safety and health (OSH) standards in rural sectors. This is intended to be achieved through 1) enhanced gender-responsive tripartite national and regional planning for promoting labour standards compliance; 2) promotional frameworks for occupational safety and health in the target sectors in line with Convention 187; and 3) improved inspection policy and processes on sector-specific labour laws, OSH and gender issues. **Long Term Outcome 2 (LTO 2)** aims to achieve an enabling environment for compliance with labour laws, OSH, and gender equality in pilot enterprises and communities in rural sectors. This outcome is supported by pilot enterprise and community models for gender-responsive mechanisms on labour laws compliance and OSH, as well as awareness campaigns on rural workers' rights conducted by the social partners. LTO 2 is delivered through implementation agreements with employers' and workers' organizations. In the Philippines, the local sites are in Camarines Norte province (small-scale mining), Caraga (large-scale mining), Davao Del Norte (banana) and General Santos (tuna supply chain). In Indonesia the sites are North Sulawesi and Ambon provinces (fish processing), and East Kalimantan and Riau provinces (palm oil).

The project is overseen by the respective Country Offices, with a Project Manager in the Philippines and a National Project Coordinator in Indonesia. The Safety + Health for All Flagship

	Programme support team in Geneva provides technical backstopping.
Present situation of the project	The project duration is 1 December 2020 to 30 November 2024. It began in the Philippines in December 2020, and in Indonesia a year later, in November 2021. In March 2022, USDOL provided a cost increase of US\$1 million to expand the scope and duration in Indonesia. At the time of the evaluation data collection the project had been underway for 30 months in the Philippines, and 18 months in Indonesia. However, the full staff team in Indonesia was only complete in November 2022.
Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation	The midterm evaluation is intended to provide the ILO and USDOL with an objective assessment of the project's performance and progress towards its objectives, and to make strategic recommendations for any mid-course adjustments. The evaluation encompasses activities implemented since the project inception to the time of the evaluation data collection.
Methodology of evaluation	The evaluation addresses questions corresponding to the criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, potential impact and sustainability. The evaluation team conducted qualitative interviews with 107 project stakeholders, including project staff, donor representatives, ILO backstopping staff, and tripartite stakeholders in the Philippines and Indonesia. Findings from the interviews were triangulated with analysis of project and context documents. The team held interviews with stakeholders in the Philippines remotely, due to the constituents' schedules, while those in Indonesia included both in-person and online interviews. Stakeholder validation meetings were convened in each country in May 2023. As a limitation, since the project had not yet engaged with workers in enterprises or communities it was not possible to gain their perspectives on the project's relevance or benefits.
MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS	<p>Design. The evaluation found that the project design logic is sound, but the technical complexity and sectoral and geographic scope have stretched the human resources and time available, especially in the Philippines.</p> <p>Relevance. The project has established strong buy-in from the ILO's government, employers', and workers' organization stakeholders in both countries. These include the Department of Labour and</p>



Employment in the Philippines and the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) in Indonesia, and their labour inspectorate divisions, as well as other related sectoral policy departments. The trade unions and employers' organizations also find project focus relevant to their priorities. However, the fishing sector employers in the Philippines show some hesitance to participating as demonstration enterprises, due primarily to resistance to trade union membership and dialogue. **Effectiveness.** In the **Philippines** the project has made significant progress toward its governance outcomes but experienced significant delays affecting delivery of the industry engagement component, which may not be satisfactorily completed within the project timeframe. Delays came about through external conditions, including the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic during most of 2021, as well as internal management delays and a high level of staff turnover. Towards **LTO 1**, evident positive results are strengthened capacity of regional Industry Tripartite Councils (mining, tuna and banana) to address labour standards; and adoption by the labour inspectorate of strategic compliance planning, prioritising the target rural sectors. Towards implementation of the industry engagement interventions (**LTO 2**), a trade union partner completed an awareness campaign towards tuna industry workers' rights; and the project successfully introduced the Participatory Action-Oriented Training methodology for OSH to its partners in preparation for roll-out in the local enterprises and communities. After lengthy preparations, implementation agreements for good practices models in enterprises and communities are due to commence in the second half of 2023.

In **Indonesia**, the project experienced logistical and administrative delays in 2022, but has accelerated implementation since the staffing was complete in late 2022. Key achievements toward **LTO 1** include the creation of a tripartite forum to address compliance with labour standards in fish processing in North Sulawesi province, and support to completion of the National OSH profile 2022. Planned support to strategic labour inspection processes is at an early stage. Towards **LTO 2**, implementation agreements have been signed as of July 2023 with the Indonesian Palm Oil Association and the Indonesian Pole and Line and Handline Fisheries Association (covering processing enterprises) to implement labour standards improvements in 8 selected enterprises and surrounding communities.



Sustainability. In the **Philippines**, the likely sustainable benefits noted include (1) improved governance frameworks for mining, agriculture and fishing through the Industry Tripartite Councils, with improved representation of small-scale mining associations in the targeted mining tripartite council as an emerging impact; (2) adoption of strategic compliance planning approaches by the labour inspectorates at the regional level. Emerging long-term benefits in **Indonesia** include: (1) Improved national policy on gender equality at work and OSH awareness through support to the MOM’s Respectful Workplace Policy; (2) new provincial tripartite forums to address labour standards in the fish processing and palm oil sectors. The industry-level engagements were not substantively underway in either country to permit an assessment of sustainability.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Main recommendations (selected recommendations)

Project-wide recommendations:

- ILO should prepare a proposal to USDOL to request a one-year project extension to enable the project to realize its outcomes in both countries, including the budget revision, indicating whether a cost-increase is requested.
- ILO should consider appointing an International Project Manager to oversee strategic direction and implementation in both countries for the second half of the project.
- Review and adjust the Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning system regarding a) performance targets for the current performance monitoring outcome indicators; b) additional qualitative measures to capture ongoing change in rural women workers’ conditions in the pilot enterprises.
- Prepare plans together with the implementing partners to document and share the good practices and lessons from the pilot enterprises and communities for potential replication via the industry tripartite mechanisms and to inform national level learning.
- Consult with partners and among the project staff to identify opportunities for learning exchange between the Philippines and Indonesia stakeholders and the project teams to achieve the planned sub-regional activity.

	<p>Philippines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expand project staffing by recruiting an Administration and Finance Assistant and an additional technical officer; and establish clear task designations.• Conduct a strategic planning exercise as soon as possible following the MTE to guide the second half of the project and develop a clear roadmap, especially addressing the challenges to secure private enterprise engagement in the fishing sector.• Strengthen the focus on women rural workers in the target sectors under Long Term Outcome 2, for example, by working with newly established women’s worker associations in banana and fish processing, in addition to the project’s gender mainstreaming approach. <p>Indonesia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conduct a strategic review and planning process, initially internally, to clarify the optimal strategies and project scope for supporting national and regional policy frameworks aligned with ILO instruments; and secondly, conduct a participatory planning exercise with stakeholders to clarify strategies and workplan going forward.• Identify opportunities to strengthen the focus on rural women workers at the industry level, in addition to gender mainstreaming. This can be pursued through supporting the active role of women in predominantly male-led organizations and enterprises, strengthening workplace gender committees, and capturing changes in women’s OSH and other workplace improvements in the M&E system.
<p>Main lessons learned and good practices</p>	<p>Lessons Learned</p> <p>Parallel implementation is advisable in multi-country projects with unique governance and industry contexts. In multi-country projects seeking to achieve parallel outcomes, it is advisable to provide the same timeframe in each country. The original two-phase strategy, where Indonesia would apply models developed in the Philippines but within a shorter timeframe was adjusted to allow Indonesia an expanded scope and time to develop tailored interventions.</p> <p>Multiple strategies are required to secure the buy-in of the private sector enterprises in fisheries supply chains to participate as good</p>



practice pilot models. The project and partners in the Philippines encountered challenges engaging tuna fishing/processing enterprises as demonstration models. Social dialogue is weak in the sector and vessel operators and processing companies appear resistant to engage with the trade union/s. In response, the project team is exploring alternative leverage points to engage private enterprises in improving workplace standards.

Good Practices

Introduction of the ILO Strategic Compliance Planning (SCP) approach to labour inspection focus on higher risk rural sectors, including mining, agriculture and fishing. The SCP approach for labour inspection is proving valuable to the Philippines Department of Labour and Employment to prioritize sectors and sub-sectors for labour inspection. Following training by the regional Labour Inspection Specialist, labour inspectorates developed strategic compliance plans as part of their annual planning, several of which prioritized mining, fishing and banana sectors for inspection.¹

Tailoring the ILO Participatory Action-Oriented Training (PAOT) methodology for OSH promotion in fishing, agriculture, and mining. The PAOT methodology for OSH promotion is emerging as an effective entry point for better occupational safety and health practices in rural sectors, especially to protect more vulnerable workers in small enterprises and micro enterprises. The approach has attracted strong interest from national and regional constituent partners in the Philippines.

The Indonesia Country Office established sectoral Project Advisory Committees which enabled coherent and efficient implementation processes among constituents of multiple projects working in the palm oil and fisheries sectors.

¹ [ILO Strategic Compliance Planning Brief](#)