



# Evaluation Summary



International  
Labour  
Office

Evaluation  
Office

## “Promoting Decent Work Opportunities for Non-Syrian Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Turkey”

### Independent Midterm Evaluation

#### Quick Facts

**Countries:** Turkey

**Midterm Evaluation:** September 2019

**Evaluation Mode:** Independent

**Administrative Office:** ILO/CO-Ankara

**Technical Office:** MIGRATION

**Evaluation Manager:** Özge BERBER AGTAŞ

**Evaluation Consultant(s):** Ms Ayşe İdil Aybars

**Project Code:** TUR/17/04/USA

**Donor(s) & Budget:** USA; USD 2,100.000

**Keywords:** migrant protection, job training, entrepreneurship training, skills development

#### Background & Context

##### Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

Turkey is ranked as the country hosting the highest number of refugees and asylum seekers since 2015. The Government of Turkey has been dealing with significant refugee influxes since 2011. According to UNHCR data from July 2019, the number of Syrian refugees has reached 3.6 million, while Turkey is currently hosting around 370.000 non-Syrian refugees and asylum seekers,

46% of which consists of Afghans, 39% of Iraqis, and 15% of other nationalities. Applications for international protection have been steadily increasing over the last years and, as of 2017, 95% of 112.415 refugees applying for international protection in Turkey were from Iraq, Afghanistan and Iran (Eryurt 2019), which constitute the largest share of non-Syrian refugees in Turkey. The increase in the number of applications for international protection, as well as the ongoing war, conflict and political instability in the countries of the region increases the likelihood of this group to stay permanently in Turkey. In this context, policies of integration and cohesion become all the more important. The Government of Turkey has taken a number of significant steps to improve the living conditions and livelihoods of Syrian refugees, particularly within the context of education, health and employment. Protection measures and welfare actions targeting displaced persons of other nationalities, however, are significantly less visible and there is an urgent need to support the latter group to reach decent living conditions in Turkey. In this respect, policies to promote the labour market participation of this group gain particular significance.

The theory of change of the Project is improving livelihoods of this particularly vulnerable group of refugees, namely, non-Syrians in Turkey, through assessing their socio-economic situation, equipping them with skills and advocating for their

decent work opportunities. The overall objective of the project is to enhance the knowledge base on non-Syrian refugees, and to contribute to their livelihoods and access to decent work in Turkey. To this end, the project has three specific objectives that correspond to three main components around which it is being implemented:

*Objective 1: Enhancing the knowledge and evidence base by identifying, collating and analyzing reliable data and information on refugees, in particular non-Syrians, in the labour market through local and national level research, studies and surveys to inform policy-making interventions.*

*Objective 2: Identifying the challenges that non-Syrian asylum seekers and refugees encounter in Turkey, and strengthening the capacity of national and local authorities to address some of these challenges; strengthening coordination mechanisms among and between national and international actors, including the main government institutions, social partners and private sector, to improve efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of action related to labour market interventions.*

*Objective 3: Improving information and wider understanding on the non-Syrian refugees and asylum seekers, particularly on their rights, benefits and responsibilities in order to enhance the labour market integration of non-Syrians through improving their skills and supporting existing national mechanisms.*

*The Project is funded by the US Department of State's Federal Assistance Award, and it has an allocated budget of USD 2,1 million for a period of 18 months, initially foreseen to be between September 2017 and March 2019, but currently extended by nine months to end of December 2019. The Project is being implemented across seven pilot provinces in Turkey, namely, Adana, Denizli, Eskişehir, Erzurum, Konya, Sakarya and Samsun. The seven provinces were identified in order to ensure a balanced geographical representation across Turkey's regions and on the basis of existing administrative datasets on the nationality*

*and geographical distribution of non-Syrian refugees and asylum seekers.*

### **Present Situation of the Project**

*ILO is working in close cooperation with DGILF as its main implementing partner. The other main partners in Ankara include DGMM, TurkStat, as well as academics and researchers as external collaborators. Across the seven provinces, the Project activities are being implemented with institutions working on refugees and asylum seekers under international protection, including the provincial directorates of İŞKUR and Migration Management, provincial and district municipalities, chambers of commerce and industry, HEMs, as well as NGOs and private sector companies in several cities, which contribute to the organization of language and vocational trainings for the target groups in order to increase their basic living and occupational skills.*

### **Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation**

*The purpose of the evaluation is to consider the project's relevance, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of outcomes, and test underlying assumptions about contributions to broader developmental impacts, with an aim to: improve project performance and contribute towards organizational learning; help those responsible for managing the resources and activities of a project to enhance development results from the short term to a sustainable long term; assess the effectiveness of planning and management for future impacts; support accountability aims by incorporating lessons learned in the decision-making process of project stakeholders, including donors and national partners.*

*The evaluation results would contribute for further project development to improve labour market integration of non-Syrian refugees in Turkey.*

*The scope of the evaluation encompasses all activities and components of the project for the period of October 2017 and up to the actual time of the mission. The main clients of the evaluation are the ILO management, project team members and programming staff in charge of the*

*elaboration of new initiatives in the area of Syrian refugees in the region, and national and local partners as well as all relevant constituents and main beneficiaries involved in project implementation in Adana, Denizli, Eskişehir, Erzurum, Konya, Sakarya and Samsun.*

### **Methodology of evaluation**

*The evaluation has been conducted in June-September 2019 based on the conceptual framework provided by OECD/DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact potential, in line with the Results-Based Management (RBM) approach, as well as the core ILO crosscutting priorities of gender equality and non-discrimination, promotion of international labour standards, tripartism, and constituent capacity development. The evaluation is based on data collected from a wide range of sources, including an extensive document analysis (i.e., the project document, Logical Framework, progress reports, mission reports, workshop and meeting reports, research reports, local studies and reports, publicity material, and other outputs of the project, as well as national and international research and publications), and stakeholder consultations through semi-structured interviews with project partners in Ankara and across the provinces where the Project is implemented. The list of questions provided by the TOR and presented in the Inception Report has been used and adjusted to the stakeholders that have been consulted as part of the evaluation on the basis of their specific roles in the Project. In particular, information on the design and implementation of specific activities across different provinces, the most significant points of achievement / innovative aspects of the Project, its key challenges, weaknesses and main points of resistance, as well as suggestions and recommendations for improvement have been sought.*

*A detailed stakeholder analysis has been conducted in collaboration with the Project Team at ILO Ankara Office, which has resulted in the full list of respondents provided for the evaluation. A fieldwork has been conducted with the project*

*partners and relevant stakeholders in Ankara and across the selected implementation provinces of the Project, namely, Adana, Konya and Eskişehir, based on the list of recommended respondents / institutions provided by the Project Team. Three site visits have thus been realized to these selected provinces where most of the activities have been completed with significant outcomes and expected impact. In these provinces, the main project correspondents in municipalities, chambers of commerce and industry, HEMs and NGOs have been visited and interviewed. In total, 26 interviews have been conducted with 34 respondents between June and August 2019. The participatory nature of the evaluation has contributed to the sense of ownership among stakeholders, while at the same time enhancing the interpretation of the evaluator of the real situation on the ground, which is not possible to assess merely based on the documented work and data.*

### **Main Findings & Conclusions**

**Relevance.** *The Project clearly constitutes a major step in addressing a significant priority and is a much timely intervention in the area of improving the livelihoods of Non-Syrian refugees and asylum seekers in Turkey. The design of the Project is appropriate in relation to the ILO's strategic and national policy frameworks, and is in line with its priorities. The Project builds on three closely inter-related and mutually reinforcing pillars, which reflects an incremental approach whereby success in each pillar leads to achievements in the others. The intervention logic appears to be coherent and realistic to achieve the planned outcomes, in particular if further attention is paid in the upcoming period in the effective coordination of the three objectives, as well as the M&E of activities conducted so far.*

*The Project contains clearly defined objectives, and a set of output and impact indicators have been identified in relation to each of the three objectives/components. The interconnections between objectives and activities are clear, and they are mutually supportive. An important limitation, however, concerns the lack of clearly defined and measurable baselines, targets and/or*

indicators to attain the outcomes/objectives identified, which imposes significant challenges in terms of monitoring the progress and assessing the impact.

Particular attention is needed in relation to Objective 2 and its indicators in the upcoming period, as it might prove challenging to assess the 'effective implementation' of International Labour Force Policy Advisory Board, as well as 'joint national efforts' between public institutions, policy dialogue, and capacity-development efforts directed towards these entities, on the basis of meeting minutes, participant lists and related measures/documents.

**Effectiveness.** The findings of the Mid-Term Evaluation point to the overall successful progress of the Project and identifies areas that need further attention and concentrated efforts in the upcoming phase. The main factors promoting the achievement of the Project's objectives include: (1) the collaborative and supportive attitude of the Project Team; (2) the urgent social need addressed by the Project; (3) the consistency and complementarity of the activities and outputs of the Project; and (4) the selection of experts and involvement of the stakeholders. On the other hand, the points that need further consideration in the upcoming period include: (1) the uneven progress recorded across the seven provinces; (2) the problems concerning coordination and collaboration among the three components, as well as among the stakeholders, provinces and activities; (3) the division between Syrian and non-Syrian refugees, leading to implementation difficulties on the ground; (4) the difficulty in following the original timing of the activities; (5) the limitations posed by the existing legislative framework; (6) the need for effectively monitoring the outcomes of the trainings; (7) the problems in reaching out to potential beneficiaries; and (8) need for better coordination with other UN Agencies. While the remaining duration is much limited to achieve all the desired objectives, it is important to continue efforts targeting the non-Syrian population via possible fund sources. Below are the recommendations that are geared for the upcoming phase.

Overall, the evaluation of the Project's effectiveness points to a satisfactory performance, particularly in relation to Objective 1, which has successfully achieved its commitments and completed its activities on time and with existing resources. Under Objective 1, a comprehensive Research on the Socio-Economic Situation of International Protection Applicants and Status Holders in Turkey was conducted in January-February 2019 across the seven pilot provinces, led by HUGO. The main objective of this research is to establish the much-needed data set on the socio-economic situation and labour force profile of refugees and asylum seekers under international protection, who live across the seven satellite cities, and to guide the follow-up work on the target group's participation to employment. 5 pilot provinces have been identified so far out of the seven provinces where the research was conducted, namely, Adana, Denizli, Eskişehir and Konya and Samsun. These are the provinces where models of pilot intervention for skills-improvement have started to be implemented.

The effectiveness of Objective 2 requires more time to be assessed, as currently several activities planned under this component are ongoing and progress has remained more challenging to assess within the framework of the evaluation. Under Objective 2, the implementation of the International Labour Force Policy Advisory Board chaired by DGILF, and the organization of one Advisory Board meeting with a specific agenda on non-Syrian refugees and asylum seekers is planned for the upcoming period. A major Workshop on International Labour Force Migration Statistics was held on 12 March 2019 in Ankara with the participation of relevant public institutions, NGOs and universities' migration and population research centers. The main issues that were raised during the workshop concerned the current problems related to the production and sharing of data and statistics, and suggestions for their improvement. The follow-up of the Workshop was provided by a more focused Evaluation Workshop, which was held in ILO Ankara Office on 24 April 2019 with 23 participants from public institutions collecting data and generating

statistics, aiming to discuss in more detail the issues that arose from the previous Workshop and to develop specific recommendations concerning methodology, capacity building, data and statistics sharing, and the establishment of a working group to ensure the continuity of inter-institutional cooperation through an action plan. In the evaluation period, no such working group or action plan was yet ready. However, this is a crucial aspect to ensure the sustainability of the Project and should be placed more emphasis in the upcoming phase. Furthermore, a comprehensive training programme entitled 'Access of Refugees to the Labour Market and Improving Their Resilience' was organized in Turin, Italy, on 17-21 June 2019, involving 40 participants from relevant institutions and Project stakeholders, and consisting of seminars, panel discussions and group exercises on the topic of refugees and their access to the labour market, involving case studies from European countries, as well as territorial and sectorial analyses, and thematic workshops on governance, economic integration and developing sustainable solutions. Finally, the first round of policy dialogue was completed with the organization of eight Information Days targeting the private sector representatives, all facilitated and hosted by Chambers of Industry/Commerce, across all the Project provinces. This activity will continue in the upcoming phase, following the recent completion of the mapping studies, through the second round designed as 'Stakeholder Meetings' in pilot provinces and in Ankara.

The effectiveness of the Project under Objective 3 has also been more limited as the activities defined under this Objective will mostly be completed in the upcoming phase. So far, approximately 550 non-Syrian refugees and asylum seekers have completed the TVET programmes across three of the pilot provinces (Adana, Eskişehir and Konya), and the importance of the formal employment of the target group has been raised in all the meetings with Chambers of Commerce/Industry, Associations of Merchants and Artisans, public institutions and unions. An important obstacle for the employment of non-Syrian population remains as the higher minimum wage criteria, implying

that the employer is obliged to pay this group 1.5 times higher than the minimum wage. While no information or documentation has been shared with the consultant on the numbers of non-Syrian population reached for awareness-raising activities, or ways to reach them, posters on the Project objectives, as well as brochures on work permit, rights and responsibilities have been prepared in Turkish, Arabic and Persian. It is important to develop an effective communication strategy and partnerships at the local level to disseminate this material to the target group. A working breakfast meeting was organized in January 2018 with the participation of academics in order to discuss possible ways to raise awareness, as well as major problems on data and promotion of exchange of knowledge and ideas on the issue. A second meeting was planned for April 2019 but has not yet been realized. The follow up meetings and the launching of the actual campaign are to be carried out in the remaining phase of the Project.

**Efficiency.** The project has been receiving adequate political, technical and administrative support from the ILO and its national partners, who are directly involved in the Project design and implementation. For the examined phase, the resources at hand, including funds, expertise, knowledge and know-how, have been in general used efficiently. Still, certain problems have been voiced in relation to the outputs of research studies, which are found to be far from satisfactory, as well as the selection of experts involved in those under Objective 1, which seriously affects the quality of data on which the Project is committed to proceed and the comparability of data across provinces. The reports reviewed for this Evaluation reveal that the quality and depth of labour market analyses, skills profiles etc. significantly varies across different provinces, and a standardized approach would be more efficient in terms of generating the desired outputs. Additionally, there is a need to gear efforts towards the M&E of activities conducted so far in order to assess whether the resources have been used appropriately to reveal the desired outcomes. An impact assessment needs

to be considered at the end of the Project in order to guide future public policies on the issue and establish models to be used in future interventions. A further point concerns the need to improve the management structure to promote more efficient coordination among objectives, activities, stakeholders and provinces. More efforts are needed in terms of adopting a more integrated approach in Project management, and enabling efficient communication and transfer of information among all relevant stakeholders.

**Sustainability and Impact potential.** The issue at stake is by nature sensitive and requires significant governmental policies and strengthened efforts, which should be taken into account while evaluating the performance and progress of the Project. The sustainability of the Project's objectives is therefore strongly dependent on public policies, discourses and approaches, which should be carefully evaluated in particular in the current context where the wider socio-economic conjuncture might lead to attract negative reactions from the public. A difficult balance thus needs to be established between humanitarian concerns and not damaging the social structure, and the Project has been carefully progressing in these challenging circumstances. While most progress has been recorded in relation to Objective 1, the achievements in the other two components are also remarkable, and are likely to have medium to long-term impacts. An important point concerns the follow-up of activities so far conducted, particularly in relation to institutional capacity-building. Also, efforts need to be geared towards launching and effectively implementing a nationwide campaign to raise the awareness of both the beneficiaries and host communities, and carefully implementing it in the face of possible resistance from host communities. A further point concerns the need to involve more civil society and private sector partners in order to increase the impact and sustainability of the Project. The sustainability of the Project is also strongly dependent on collaboration with public partners, and therefore more effective and forward-looking partnerships are crucial with both central and local-level public

institutions in the upcoming phase, building on their actual needs and priorities. A final point concerns the impact of both vocational and language trainings. TVETs provided within the framework of the Project need to be carefully evaluated in the upcoming phase, and the identification and design of these should take into account the results of the research in order to direct the target group towards these gaps. A related point concerns the fact that the skills profiles and labour market analyses reflect a quite diverse picture across provinces in terms of nationalities of the target population, and interventions planned on this basis should take this diversity into account and provide tailor-made measures in individual provinces. Finally, language trainings need to be given particular attention, as these are often found to be insufficient and not adequate to prepare the target group for the labour market, especially those who have no basic literacy, the majority of whom are women.

## Recommendations

### Main recommendations and follow-up

1. Continue efforts in areas, which are planned for the final phase of the Project, particularly as regards Objective 2, which requires persistent and longer-term efforts and continuous advocacy.
2. Ensure the follow-up of workshops held under Objective 2, especially concerning the establishment of the Working Group and adoption of an Action Plan.
3. Develop ways to promote ownership among the stakeholders across the provinces, mainly by more regularly informing them on the Project's progress and by providing opportunities to meet their counterparts in other provinces.
4. Place more efforts on provinces where progress has remained limited. Discuss ways to overcome resistance in those provinces with the involvement of main partners and collaborators, and identify further interventions if necessary in order to raise awareness on the rights of refugees.

*5. Disseminate the good practices emerging out of provincial contexts across to the partners and stakeholders in order to promote mutual learning and ensure the sustainability.*

*6. Plan further activities to bring together the stakeholders involved in different components of the Project in order to ensure that all stakeholders are up-to-date with the progress, and to promote exchange of good practices and know-how.*

*7. Place more attention to develop tailor-made measures across provinces, where research has established diverse compositions of nationalities, education and skills levels, skills requirements, sectors with job openings etc.*

*8. Focus on ways to increase the impact of the training courses, considering ways to make their duration longer, complement them with skills-development courses, and identify new areas of vocational training, particularly targeting value-added sectors & new labour market demands.*

*9. Promote collaboration with other UN agencies working in the field in order to avoid overlapping and repetitive services and activities.*

*10. Concentrate efforts on effective monitoring and evaluation; ensure the follow-up work for the job placement of training participants, as well as their registration at İŞKUR.*

*11. Establish closer collaboration with İŞKUR, particularly in terms of on-the-job training programmes for the target population.*