



“PROAGRO – PROMOTION OF DECENT WORK IN AGRIBUSINESS ETHIOPIA AND MOROCCO” INDEPENDENT CLUSTER MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE PROJECTS

QUICK FACTS

Countries: Ethiopia and Morocco

Evaluation date: 23 January 2023

Evaluation type: Clustered

Evaluation timing: Mid-term

Administrative Office: COs Alger and Addis

Technical Office: EMPLOYMENT Policy Department

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DC Symbol: ETH/20/50/DEU; MAR/20/50/DEU

Donor(s) & budget: Germany/BMZ. Budget ProAgro Ethiopia: US\$ 5,464,123 ProAgro Maroc: US\$ 5,464,123

Key Words: Agriculture, business development service, capacity building, decent work, employment creation, enterprise development, freedom of association, government: capacity building, employers: capacity building, rural economy, social protection Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB), workers organization: capacity building, youth employment

BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

<p>Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure</p>	<p>The ProAgro projects have an overall objective of creating decent jobs opportunities in the agribusiness sector. They have two interrelated and mutually reinforcing pillars:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Fostering a conducive environment for decent job creation and sustainable investment, and 2) Value chain, skills development, and enterprise development. <p>The outcomes of the two ProAgro projects are similar but were adapted to respond to local conditions. They are delineated into four key priority areas of focus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Sustainable investment 2) Dynamic value chain development 3) Skills development 4) Entrepreneurship strengthening <p>They emphasise partnership and capacity strengthening at national level and decentralized level. Management is based in the capital of both countries with no decentralized staff.</p>
<p>Present situation of the project</p>	<p>The projects have the same start and end dates. Especially in Morocco accelerating implementation has followed a comparatively long inception period, while Ethiopia is also picking up speed. Contextual factors in both countries influenced implementation. Notably COVID19 in both, internal conflict in Ethiopia and some diplomatic challenges in Morocco. The challenges have since been resolved or decreased.</p>
<p>Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation</p>	<p>The evaluation was conducted to determine the relevance, validity, effectiveness efficiency, sustainability and impact of the Promotion of Decent Work in Agribusiness projects in Ethiopia and Morocco. Cross cutting factors on gender issues and other vulnerable groups were assessed.</p> <p>The scope comprises an analysis in the projects' entirety up to midterm from August 2020 to July 2022. The evaluation field work was carried out between 31 October and 11 November 2022 for Morocco and November 7 – 21 for Ethiopia.</p> <p>The clients the ILO tri-partite constituents, ILO headquarters, regional and sub-regional offices, ILO project staff, international and national development partners; other associated private sector persons including from cooperatives—and in Ethiopia in industrial estates—Technical Vocational Education and Skills Training institutes, university/research institutes.</p>
<p>Methodology of evaluation</p>	<p>Triangulated mixed methods data collection and analysis were at the core of the evaluation. Analysis of documentation, interviews and focus groups, and observations of training and/or interactions between stakeholders were included. A systems approach was used to ensure full assessment of</p>

the integrated networking approaches used in the projects. Limitations included no opportunity to randomly select direct beneficiaries and extremely limited time available to prepare field level work.

MAIN FINDINGS & CONCLUSIONS

Relevance

The evaluation determines that the design of the projects in both countries is highly relevant to national and international policies, strategies, Decent Work Country Programs (DWCP) and other priorities. They are very well aligned with ILO constituent policy and programme frameworks.

Validity

The projects' overall design is found to be coherent and internal complementarity is adequate. The projects' have a high level of complexity with many expected targets. Vertical and horizontal logic across the logical frameworks exists and project outputs clearly link to outcomes and impact. The risks described remain rather general.

Effectiveness

- The projects worked intensively to reach expected results as well as possible in difficult circumstances. However, the level and quality of results achieved to date differs between the projects and between their various components. The above cited external factors affected the speed of implementation.
- An important success in both projects is the approximately ten months that was allocated to the inception period. The assessments and capacity analyses together with the associated networking helped to prepare a good foundation for the remaining project implementation period.
- Internal factors leading to the achievement of results are largely due to the integrated approach to work with stakeholders are strategic.
- In **Ethiopia** while some important targets have been met, it is evident that there is a substantial need to scale up direct actions and increase follow-up with partners in the remainder of the project period.
- The evaluation expects the **Morocco** project to meet most of its targets though some will be harder to reach than others. The most notable success identified is the development of partnerships and networking with various actors. Challenges to achieving targets include the difficulties of identifying financing for new enterprise start-ups following training and/or mentoring provided with project support.
- Promoting social dialogue and obtaining collective agreements requires balancing to ensure effective results that respond to workers' and employers' goals. Consequently, this is a subject that the evaluation notes as requiring consistent attention in both projects.



Further, several there is a need to work more on changing mindsets among some stakeholders.

Efficiency

The project financial, human, and technical resources were found to be strategically allocated in line with project needs. The projects are generally efficient; however, it is evident that administrative and financial bureaucracy slows down the implementation of project actions.

The extent to which the M&E system enhances accountability, learning and feedback into management was found to be variable. This is, in part, due to the unusual level of complexity because of the wide range of types of project components. Difficulties in measuring outcomes and the impact on institutional capacity strengthening add further intricacies. Monitoring information is used to feed back into project management in both countries to different degrees. The ILO country based offices and ILO headquarters do notably conduct regular follow up of project progress and provide inputs to help address and identified challenges.

Projected Impact and Sustainability

- Project initiatives are likely to bring about sustainable results if the projects implement the remainder of their planned actions fully. Expected contributions to the SDGs, notably SDG 8, are anticipated.
- A similar project can be replicated effectively in some other countries unless they are highly fragile.
- The evaluation determined that institutionalise of training programs and initiatives is promising in both countries. Overall, the main challenge does remain financing from Government and other partners to complement project inputs and scale up the momentum.

Gender and non-discrimination of vulnerable groups, International Labour Standards Assessment

Some attention to gender issue is provided but they do not have an especially high level of gender related focus as compared to other projects, nor with the exception of youth, on other vulnerable groups. The projects include a focus on core international labour standards explicitly as part of their entire approach.

Comparative analysis beyond the two countries contexts

It is important for any comparable project to be adapted to local circumstances, but the main outcomes or similar ones could be maintained. Only the component on social dialogue is particularly challenging as this is a very sensitive subject in many countries.

RECOMMENDATIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Main findings & Conclusions

- 1) Assign a regionally based coordinator (project staff) in project sites outside the capital.
- 2) Increase focus on strengthening communications methods, especially using behaviour change methods to change resistant mindsets against some of the initiatives on decent work.
- 3) Ensure that all outcomes have appropriate measurable indicators that can be feasibly implemented in the local context in which the project is to be implemented.
- 4) Increase exchanges between the two ProAgro projects.
- 5) Increase focus on the inclusion of vulnerable groups in project actions in future similar projects.

Recommendations for ProAgro Ethiopia

- 6) Increase focus on formal and on informal methods for partnership and target group strengthening.
- 7) Increase use of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) data as a management tool using a systems approach.
- 8) Increase input of ILO technical specialists to mentor the project.
- 9) Advocate for a policy directive to ensure dedicated Government personnel to manage the employment facilitation centre in the industrial parks.

Recommendations for ProAgro Morocco

- 10) Take sufficient time to determine possible value chains for focus in a future phase of the ProAgro project or if another similar project is implemented elsewhere.
- 11) Increase focus on (1) identifying and ensuring financing resource agencies are willing to support project beneficiaries who have viable projects; (2) Sustainability and replication of good practices, especially skills development.
- 12) Advocate for and support implementation of recommendations from the ProAgro Morocco supported gender study on rural women and the analysis of competencies study.

Main lessons learned and good practices

Good Practices

- 1) Instead of trying to develop entirely new training contents, tools and materials, the projects relied on tested inputs from various ILO departments that are relevant to the projects.
- 2) Allowing sufficient time for a thoroughly implemented inception period enable the projects to eventually determine the right targets, partners, and localities for project implementation.

Lesson Learned



The overall approach of the projects and their focus are suitable to attain their goals in the project countries and can be replicated in other countries with the exception of highly fragile countries. The integrated approach across the different outcomes and with the large number of partners of different types, is organisationally feasible. High levels of formal and informal interactions to strengthen partnerships and extend networking among partners themselves has provided useful in this regard.