



Evaluation Summary



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Final evaluation report of four ILO/RBSA projects on employment and sustainable enterprise development in Africa for peace and resilience

Quick Facts

Countries: Central African Republic, Comoros, Sierra Leone and Somalia

Final Evaluation: 5 August 2021

Evaluation Mode: Independent Cluster

Administrative Offices: Country Offices Abuja, Addis Ababa, Antananarivo, and Kinshasa

Technical Office: EMPLOYMENT and ENTERPRISES

Evaluation Manager: Ricardo Furman Wolf

Evaluation Consultant(s): Dr Achim Engelhardt (Team leader), Mr. Abdoul Anziz Said Attoumane (Comoros), Dr. Boniface Nzonikoua (Central African Republic), Mr Pious Sesay (Sierra Leone).

Project Code: CAF/16/01/RBS, COM/16/01/RBS, SOM/16/01/RBS and SLE/16/01/RBS

Donor(s) & Budget: RBSA: 1,000,000 (COM182 - P&B 2018-19) 1,000,000 (SLE 107 -P&B 2018-19) 1,000,000 (CAF106 P&B 2018-19), 864,160 (SOM 101 - P&B 2018-19)

Keywords: RBSA, employment, sustainable enterprises, Central African Republic, Comoros, Sierra Leone and Somalia, employment intensive works

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The projects are focused on the Programme and Budget (P&B) Outcomes on employment promotion and enterprise development. For P&B 2018-19 Outcome 1: More and better jobs for inclusive growth and improved youth employment prospects and Outcome 4: Promoting sustainable enterprises; and for P&B 2020-21 Outcome 3: Economic, social and environmental transitions for full productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all, and Outcome 4: Sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work.

In the **Central African Republic**, the project with its resilience focus aimed to contribute to the creation of opportunities for young people by addressing the root causes of economic, social and environmental vulnerability, in order to enable the country to break out of the vicious circle of conflicts and disasters by creating decent jobs for vulnerable groups. The project was implemented close to the capital city Bangui due to security considerations.

In **Comoros**, the ILO implemented the RBSA project in the three most vulnerable communes, the islands of Mohéli, Anjouan, and Ngazidza. The ultimate beneficiaries of the project were vulnerable women and

men, particularly poor and unemployed young women and men.

In **Sierra Leone**, the support to the government and social partners was multi-pronged, associating small and medium enterprises (SME) interventions with a focus on fragility and resilience.

In **Somalia**, the ILO targeted the government and social partners to strengthen their legal, policy, and institutional capacities.

Present Situation of the Project

All projects were finalized when evaluated.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The evaluation purpose was as follows:

- Assess the extent to which the projects have achieved the stated objectives and expected results while identifying the supporting factors and constraints;
- Identify unexpected positive and negative results of the projects;
- Assess the extent to which the outcomes of the projects will be sustainable;
- Establish the relevance of the project design and implementation strategy in relation to the ILO, United Nations (UN), and the national development frameworks;
- Identify lessons learned and potential good practices, especially regarding models of interventions that can be applied further;
- Provide recommendations to project stakeholders to promote sustainability and support further development of the project outcomes.

The scope of the evaluation is of the four projects as representing ways of working in employment and sustainable enterprises in ILO (vis-à-vis ILO approach expressed in P&Bs 2018-19 and 2020-21)¹. The evaluation covers the entire period from the start of the implementation to the end of all four projects and all projects objectives and results, focusing not only on what has been achieved but how and why.

¹ Two projects were still formulated during the P&B 2016-17) even though they started end of 2017.

Evaluation clients: The evaluation clients are the ILO constituents and ILO Country Offices and relevant Decent Work Country Teams (DWT) and headquarters (HQ) Departments in Geneva.

Methodology of evaluation

The team leader used a theory-based evaluation approach for this final cluster evaluation. The cluster evaluation corresponds to a thematic cluster evaluation under an RBSA funding arrangement. According to the ILO's guidance note on Clustered Evaluations (2020), this cluster evaluation type strongly focuses on learning about innovative project implementation approaches.)

In total, the team leader and national evaluators interviewed 208 stakeholders through telephone interviews, personal interviews, and, in two countries, focus group discussions with beneficiaries (Sierra Leone, Central African Republic). 48,7% of interviewees were women and 51,3% men.

Locally based evaluators in Comoros, the Central African Republic, and Sierra Leone formed part of the evaluation team to undertake primary data collection in the project countries. Their deployment for face-to-face interviews in capital cities and project site visits was only possible in Sierra Leone due to the local ILO offices' COVID-19 restrictions. Telephone interviews mitigated this shortcoming in capital cities. In field locations in the Central African Republic national evaluators identified community facilitators for primary data collection, while for Comoros, the national evaluator used telephone interviews for the outreach to stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Relevance: The evaluation finds that the cluster was highly relevant in post-conflict countries where the ILO is less present and, particularly rural youth and women lacking development opportunities.

Validity of project designs: The project designs are patchy, lack key elements such as M&E or an exit strategy, while gender and international labour standards were well-reflected. Tripartism and social

dialogue were unevenly addressed while fair transition to environment was absent. The reconstructed theory of change for the cluster reveals significant shortcomings in the realism of project designs.

Cluster results and effectiveness: results at outcome level across the projects are moderately satisfactory in the context of very fragile post-conflict settings

Efficiency: overall, the cluster used resources appropriately

The **effectiveness of management arrangements** is mixed across the cluster, affected by highly complex project environments and internal lacunae.

Orientation towards impact and sustainability: The evaluation finds that the cluster is truly struggling to sustain RBSA project results.

Based on those key findings, the evaluation drew the following main **conclusions**:

The cluster of RBSA projects on employment and sustainable enterprises addressed the short-term employment needs of mostly vulnerable communities, despite significant project design shortcomings. While the sustainability of the projects failed in the Central African Republic and Comoros, the ILO's risk taking to engage in post-conflict environment was worthwhile, with the RBSA project in Somalia alone contributing to leveraging significant follow-up funding, which amortized the entire investment in the four projects.

Recommendations

Main recommendations and follow-up

Relevance

Recommendation 1. The ILO Department responsible for the allocation of RBSA resources should keep allocating budgets of about US\$ 1 m per RBSA project to maintain the projects' relevance in complex post-conflict settings. Less projects with higher funding are preferable to more projects with reduced budgets to ensure the relevance of investments.

Responsible: ILO.

Priority: Medium.

Timing Next 12 months.

Resource requirement: About US\$ 1 million for each new RBSA project.

Validity of project design

Recommendation 2. When RBSA projects are designed with alignment to the same ILO P&B outcomes or an ILO programming approach such as peace and resilience programming, projects should aim to operate as a cluster. Based on a peace and conflict analysis, the latter would include using a common Theory of Change, planning framework, monitoring, results reporting and evaluation, while having the flexibility of have activities and outputs tailored to specific country contexts.

Responsible: ILO.

Priority: High.

Timing: Next 6 months.

Resource requirement: For coordination issues only.

Recommendation 3. RBSA projects should strengthen quality assurance during project design, including a systematic analysis of project assumptions and the quality of M&E such as SMART indicators, baselines, and targets.

Responsible: ILO.

Priority: High.

Timing: Next 6 months.

Resource requirement: For enhanced quality assurance only.

Effectiveness

Recommendation 4. The Country Director should engage the Small and Medium Size Enterprise Development Agency (SMEDA), prior to the launch of an EU-funded follow up project to ensure that SMEDA systems are in place to act as a better organized and reliable partner for future project implementation.

Responsible: ILO Country Office (CO) Abuja and SMEDA.

Priority: Very high.

Timing: Next 3 to 6 months.

Resource requirement: Travel expenses for visits to Sierra Leone.

Recommendation 5. Despite the challenges characterizing fragile settings, the ILO is encouraged to keep funding RBSA project in post-conflict settings, using a cluster approach under the peace and resilience programming or a common P&B outcome, regardless the very high risks of short-term results only (for example, through the employment-intensive approach) in such extremely volatile environments. Genuine engagement for “leaving no one behind” requires risk-taking.

Responsible: ILO.

Priority: High.

Timing: Next 6 months.

Resource requirement: Up to US\$ 1 million for each new RBSA project.

Effectiveness of management arrangements

Recommendation 6. Whilst in some cases RBSA the can play a major role as entry point in countries where ILO has no permanent presence nor major initiatives on going, **to effectively implement RBSA projects in the peace and resilience context, countries should be prioritised where established office structures are available, complemented by an active ILO engagement in the UNCT in the conflict affected countries.**

Responsible: ILO.

Priority: Medium.

Timing: Next 12 months.

Resource requirement: Up to US\$ 1 million for each new RBSA project.

Orientation towards impact and sustainability

Recommendation 7. The Head of the Office should return to the country as soon as possible to represent the ILO in the UNCT and give a strong signal to tripartite constituents that the ILO takes leadership in facilitating social dialogue and aims to remain an accessible partner in the country.

Responsible: ILO Somalia.

Priority: Very high.

Timing: Next 3 to 6 months.

Resource requirement: No additional HR expenses.

Recommendation 8. The Country Directors in their role as non-resident members of the UNCTs in the Central African Republic and Comoros,

respectively, should aim to catalyse the participation of the ILO in joint UN programmes. The latter could address shortcomings in institutional capacities and follow-up engagement with trained cooperatives in both countries.

Responsible: ILO Country Office Kinshasa and ILO Country Office Antananarivo.

Priority: Medium.

Timing: Next 12 months.

Resource requirement: Travel expenses for additional visits to the Central African Republic and Comoros or time for virtual engagement.