



Evaluation Summaries

Sustainable development through the Global Compact

Quick Facts

Country : Italy, Albania, Morocco, Tunisia

Mode of Evaluation: Independent midterm evaluation, March 2007

Technical Area: Sustainable development

Evaluation management: Multinational Enterprises Programme (MULTI)

Evaluation team: Giuseppe Querenghi

Project Start: October 2003

Project end: December 2007

Project code: INT/02/M33/ITA

Donor: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Italian government

Keywords: Globalization, Sustainable development, Corporate social responsibility.

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The context of the project is the globalization process and the need to make the global market compatible, in particular, with human and labour rights, if it is to become a powerful tool for sustainable development. The main objectives of this project are the promotion of labour principles included in the Global Compact as well as those stemming from international instruments such as the ILO Tripartite Declaration on Multinational Enterprises and Social Policies and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. The promotion of the said principles is to strengthen social dialogue at the enterprise level. To do so the following immediate objectives have been identified:

- Greater awareness of international labour standards and their integration with the Global Compact agenda;
- Adoption of business practices based on labour standards;
- Development of public/private partnerships that contribute to sustainable development.

The areas on which the project focused are awareness raising, training, collection and exchange of good practice. If the UN Global Compact is mainly devoted to multinational enterprises, the Italian project targets first of all - although not only - small- and medium-sized companies which are already operating, or are planning to operate, in developing countries. The major project partners are employer's organization, trade unions, and individual companies in the countries concerned.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The purpose of this mid-term evaluation, as specified in the Terms of Reference, is to determine project outputs in the three years of implementation; assess the relevance of the project in each country of operation; assess the approach taken; and provide recommendations on how to improve project performance.

The external clients of the evaluation are the donor; institutions/organizations represented in the project's national steering committees and the UN Global Compact. Internal clients are the responsible ILO field offices or national correspondents, ILO technical unit at HQ that contributed to the projects (ACTEMP, ACTRAV,

DIALOGUE, DECLARATION, CODEV, IPEC, SEED, and TURIN) and the Governing Body.

Methodology of evaluation

The following data sources and data collection methods were used by the evaluator:

- Desk review of all project files
- Interviews with key informants, selected for their knowledge of the needs of project participants
- Focus group sessions
- Seminar and project activities observation

The evaluation was conducted from the 23rd of January until the 2nd of March, including field visits to three countries where the program was being implemented (Albania, Morocco, Tunisia).

Main findings and conclusions

The project document was conceptualized before the full incorporation of applying ILO's international standards and even before the geographical coverage was decided upon. Therefore, not only were the initial expected outcomes and outputs not realistic, the indicators were also of very little use. In addition, the tripartite approach adopted later and the focus on labour rights introduced by the ILO were not adequately reflected in the project document, which was never revised. Under these circumstances, the project document was not a valid basis for the evaluation.

The performance of the two experts in charge of the project, based in Geneva and Rome, was considered a good professional standard. Frequent changes in the top management of the technical unit in charge (MULTI) reduced the efficiency of some backstopping functions, namely guidance and advice.

Had the project focused on a narrow interpretation of the Global Compact, as initially thought, it would have not been very relevant for the ILO constituents in the selected developing countries. The enlargement of the project scope to include the tripartite approach as a tool to strengthen social dialogue allowed the project to achieve substantial results in the promotion of fundamental labour principles and international instruments concerning multinational enterprises.

The high degree of commitment to the project shown by the ILO constituents and their feeling of ownership was strongly advanced by their participation in project activities, most of which went far beyond their institutional role and responsibilities in the tripartite Steering Committees established in the project countries.

The widening of the objectives and the tripartite participation have made the exercise more interesting, but also more complex. While the objectives set for awareness raising were attained, the project did not produce so far all the expected results in the areas of training and development of partnership exercises, which will have to allow the implementation of interesting pilot schemes at the company level. This was due to delays in the production of training materials and the duration of preparatory phases extending much longer than foreseen in some countries, for reasons beyond project control. The staff is already taking the necessary measure to fill these gaps.

Sustainability of achievements with regard to awareness raising are to a large extent granted. The website and the database are examples of good practice, and the coordination of the very many networks which were introduced are progressively being taken over by a reliable institution. With regard to training, while in Italy the project partners already implement activities on their own, those in the developing countries concerned would need external support, at least for an additional year after project end, to become more familiar with project materials and integrate them into their educational programmes.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations

Important lessons learned:

- The relevance of action-oriented research should not be underestimated as shown by the successful exercises conducted in this field under the project.
- Projects whose key participants are employers' and workers' organizations should be conceived and designed in cooperation with the relevant ILO departments. If the necessary capacity building work is not done, the structural weakness of some partners might put

serious obstacles to the achievement of meaningful objectives.

- Immediate objectives should be as specific as possible and cannot be set in general terms, just to apply to a variety of different situations. In the case of “umbrella” projects”, in which essential details are necessarily missing, immediate objectives are to be clearly stated as soon as each operation is planned.
- Determining criteria for success is a particular challenge in developing measurable objectives and every endeavour should be made to include in project documents appropriate and specific indicators. Measuring the statistical significance of a change is a classical approach, but it is almost impossible to achieve when samples are small. Within projects like the one under review, previous history can provide a realistic baseline against which the difference made by the project, and therefore the importance of results, can be assessed.

Main recommendations and follow-up :

- The project document should have been completely revised at the beginning of the project life. Since it is now going through its last phase, the revision might be limited to the immediate objectives, the indicators and the outputs of the year 2007.
- Some of the indicators described in the project are neither appropriate nor useful. New indicators are to be worked out by staff in cooperation with relevant ILO units, and then submitted to the Steering Committee, which includes a representative of the donor. The agreement of the project partners on the validity of the indicators is essential, since they will become the main criteria to assess to what extent the objectives have been met. Whether a final evaluation of the project is envisaged or not, this exercise is necessary to put the donor and the ILO in a better

position to come to conclusions about the results of the project.

- The number of contacts the staff has successfully made so far with the companies active in Morocco and Tunisia, and the close cooperation established in those countries with the labour inspection departments, should allow the selection of a very limited number of suitable companies in which pilot partnership projects in the field of training could be carried out. Three would be sufficient under the circumstances, to partially achieve project objectives.
- The staff should prepare as soon as possible :
 - A detailed work plan for 2007, with relevant budget including the last instalment the donor is expected to deliver
 - A project document for a consolidation phase to be submitted to the donor in time to ensure continuity
 - A list of managers and trade union representatives ready to act as resource persons on the occasion of training events
 - A “post project plan”, including all the contacts and initiatives to be undertaken to ensure sustainability. In this connection, MULTI is expected to take the lead and coordinate the various inputs, in particular from ILO departments.