



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Effective Governance of Labour Migration and its Skills Dimensions – Final Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: *Moldova, Ukraine*

Final Evaluation: *October–November 2013*

Mode of Evaluation: *Independent*

ILO Office Administratively backstopping the Project: *DWT/CO-Budapest*

ILO Technical Backstopping Office: *MIGRANT*

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Project End: *December 31, 2013*

Project Code: *RER/09/04/EEC*

Donor & Project Budget: *EU (Euro 1,884,376)*

Keywords: *migration, skills*

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The project **Effective Governance of Labour Migration and its Skill Dimensions** is funded by the European Commission through the Thematic Programme “Cooperation with Third Countries in the Area of Migration and Asylum” (TPMA). The project is co-funded and implemented by the International Labour Organization (ILO). The beneficiary countries are Moldova and Ukraine.

The project addresses issues of labour migration under the ILO’s overarching framework of decent work with its tripartite structure, involving governmental institutions, employers, trade unions and migrant workers from Moldova and Ukraine. It is implemented in partnership with the International

Organization for Migration (IOM). The project started on 1 March 2011 and is ending on 31 December 2013. The present evaluation comes at the final stage of the project.

The overall objective of the project is to strengthen the capacity of Moldova and Ukraine to regulate labour migration and promote sustainable return, with a particular focus on enhancing human resources capital and preventing skills waste. It consists of four components corresponding to the following specific objectives:

- 1) Building capacity to analyse the skills shortages and oversupply as a result of migration.
- 2) Enhancing the capacity of the migration sending countries to balance migration flow and return with national needs and EU Member states’ skills needs.
- 3) Building capacity to negotiate and manage rights based labour migration schemes, including bilateral agreements on social protection.
- 4) Delivering technical assistance and building capacity to govern labour migration, enact relevant legislation and engage social partners.

Present Situation of the Project

The project can be seen as the continuation of the work already performed by ILO, through its tripartite constituents’ structure, resting on social partnership and enhancing social dialogue, on the promotion of decent work principles in Moldova and Ukraine in general and on specific activities related to labour migration in particular. ILO brings

to the forefront overall principles and an embedded rights-based approach - ILO's international labour standards, ILO's Migrant Worker Conventions and the Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration - on which basis the main project activities and outputs are built. As a result, labour migration aspects are not addressed in a disjointed fashion but become, and are accordingly treated, as part of the overall labour dimension; this enables integration of migration issues by relevant national stakeholders in their policy-making and work plans.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The evaluation aims to improve further programming, inform organizational decision making, ensure transparency and accountability to the donor. Its objectives are to assess: the coherence and relevance of the project's overall and specific objectives regarding migration management in Moldova and Ukraine; the quality of the project design; the activities implemented and results achieved (including any changes) and their efficiency and effectiveness, as well as their impact and sustainability; to document the main success aspects of the project and problems encountered; and to suggest recommendations towards next steps, future strategies and new areas of technical cooperation.

The evaluation is meant to cover the entire actual project duration (34 months) and to serve the following - external and internal - client groups:

- ILO tripartite constituents, target groups and project implementing partners in the target countries;
- The EU Delegations to Ukraine and Moldova;
- ILO management and technical specialists at ILO DWT/CO Budapest and Headquarters;
- Project staff;
- Final beneficiaries of the project – migrant workers.

Methodology of evaluation

The methodology of the evaluation is based on the review of project documentation, on interviews with key stakeholders and on the participation to selected events during the field missions to Moldova and Ukraine. It follows the OECD/DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance. It

has therefore addressed the following overall aspects/criteria: a) relevance and rationale of the project; b) quality of design; c) efficiency and implementation; d) effectiveness; e) impact and sustainability.

Considering the short time available for the initial preparations (prior to the first field mission) and for the actual implementation of the evaluation exercise, the following combination of (mostly qualitative) methods and tools for data collection and analysis has applied:

- a) Desk review of relevant project documentation
- b) Individual interviews of key informants or focus group interviews with target groups arranged during the field missions to Moldova and Ukraine
- c) Interviews by skype or telephone with selected informants at ILO DWT/CO Budapest and ILO HQ (including for the initial briefing and post-field visit debriefing, as applicable)
- d) Direct on-site observations of some project activities during the field visits (for example, through participation to project events) to enable assess the impact of the project and give a direct insight of the progress achieved.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Relevance and rationale of the project

Plenty of evidence has emerged from the analysis of project documentation and during the field interviews with national stakeholders on the high relevance of the project (in its four components) to the needs and constraints of the target countries in the area of labour migration.

It has been found fully consistent with EU priorities in the field of migration, in particular with those identified for the target countries, and with the ILO Decent Work Country Programmes for Moldova and Ukraine for 2012-2015. The activities defined for the various components fully address the needs and constraints of the national stakeholders of both countries who have actively participated in their elaboration.

Quality of project design

The project is quite complex as it covers a wide range of issues. It consists of four different components which – although inter-connections are certainly present – can also be analyzed separately. Each component is well detailed and logically structured by pertinent blocks of results and clusters of activities. The analysis of needs and constraints provided in the project description, and subsequent revisions, is factual, well written, rather comprehensive and differentiated by country. It should be noted however that a significant number of activities initially planned had to be modified during the project lifetime, due to various factors. These changes were introduced mostly in response to the needs of the target groups or to ensure complementarity with other initiatives by various donors/stakeholders and overall cost effectiveness.

Efficiency and implementation

The project was very well managed technically and administratively. Excellent support was provided at the country level by the national project teams. All stakeholders were actively engaged in project implementation and Project Steering Committees proved to be effective, participatory and transparent. The project was managed in a very flexible manner and there was a constant effort to avoid duplication with other initiatives. Delays were experienced during the first year of implementation – quite a common occurrence for TPMA projects - but the project made up for it with rapid progress from mid-term onwards. Project duration was possibly on the short side for such a complex and articulated project.

Effectiveness

An in-depth analysis of project effectiveness has been carried out by project component. The four specific objectives have been largely achieved. The findings of the evaluation have documented the actual delivery of several clusters of very relevant activities which have led to the achievement of the planned results. A large number of high-quality outputs have been produced, shared among national stakeholders in both countries and disseminated as appropriate. The project had a strong focus on capacity building which was appropriately tailored to the needs of the target groups, relevant to the situations of

Moldova and Ukraine and inspired by international best practices. Plenty of evidence has emerged during the field visits on the extent to which the knowledge acquired through the project has fed into policy-making processes on labor migration in the target countries, and the tools developed are used by national stakeholders. A very high level of satisfaction with the quality of project outcomes was expressed by the beneficiaries.

Impact and sustainability

There is evident tangible impact on the target groups in Moldova and Ukraine considering for instance that the knowledge acquired and methodologies developed through the various capacity building initiatives have been effectively “internalized” and contribute to the definition of ways and modalities followed by national stakeholders for further work in their mandated areas. Substantial positive impact on migrant workers in terms of increased protection, portability of social security benefits or recognition of skills acquired abroad is also very likely to materialize as a result of the project achievements. Ownership and sustainability are also quite high due to the active involvement of national stakeholders in the definition of the activities and throughout project implementation.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

1. The overarching recommendation is that the project should be able to continue its work with a suitable follow-up action. The ILO project has provided the groundwork in several areas where activities should be considered as part of a long-term process.
2. Ideally a follow-up project should focus on components 2 and 3 where there is a large scope of work ahead for the mandated institutions in Moldova and Ukraine.
3. As regards component 2, there is the urgent need to design/develop more Occupational Profiles and Occupational Standards that can be the base for educational standards in both countries. Moreover, further progress should be made in setting up national systems for the recognition of prior learning.

4. As regards component 3, it is recommended to continue supporting the Governments of Moldova and Ukraine in negotiating bilateral agreements on social security with additional (including main) countries of destination of migrant workers and in further supporting national administrations in the full implementation of the agreements so far concluded.
5. Knowledge capitalization is most important for a project that has created a significant reservoir of best practices and innovative research. Efforts should be made by ILO and project partners to ensure, even beyond the life of the project, optimal dissemination and transfer of experiences and of the approaches and tools successfully used in the project.
6. Following the very positive project outcome of the signature of agreements between the Trade Unions in Italy, Moldova and Ukraine for the protection of their migrant workers, ILO should support other efforts of its social partners in this regard. For both target countries it is also very important to ensure that agreements at the national level are eventually channeled at the sectoral level in order to have practical application.
7. Issues related to strengthening the link between (legal/labour) migration and development have generated considerable interest during the various events organized by the project. In view of the preliminary work carried out under the project, possible next steps would be to:
 - a) develop practical models applicable to the situations of Moldova and Ukraine for more fully engaging the diaspora in the development of the countries of origin; and
 - b) in situations where circular migration is de facto predominant but spontaneous, unregulated, unpredictable and frequently unsatisfactory, there is the opportunity to identify, negotiate and support concrete temporary and circular labour migration initiatives between countries of origin and destination in order to produce benefits on both sides and clearly for the migrant workers themselves.
8. With respect to good practices, a final recommendation would be to replicate to other countries, as applicable, some of the comprehensive capacity building initiatives

carried out through the project. For instance the training module on planning, negotiating and implementing bilateral and multilateral social security agreements can be adapted very quickly to many other situations globally.

Important lessons learned

1. Flexibility of design and in implementation turned out to be very beneficial to the project in view of the participatory approach followed and the active involvement of all national stakeholders.
2. The project did not operate in a vacuum. It was built upon and expanded work carried out through earlier initiatives in the target countries and elsewhere. It made best use of existing structures and constantly attempted to avoid duplication and overlapping.
3. While the ILO's tripartite structure, bringing together Governments, workers and employers, is broadly speaking a given factor for generating added value, in this project equal participation of all stakeholders, from the various partnerships, was actually ensured.
4. The project was characterized by a very comprehensive approach which combined *inter alia* the necessary investment to create a solid knowledge-base to support appropriate policy-making and extensive capacity building responding to the specific requirements of the target groups and final users.
5. The scope of the project was very wide and addressed several areas with planned activities often leading to others. While the project has provided continuity, it has also set the stage for a multiplication of initiatives, extending beyond its lifetime.
6. Finally, continuity and complementary with other initiatives had a clear positive effect at the policy and technical level. For instance, it has enabled to accelerate the process for the conclusion of bilateral social security agreements with EU MS which will in time produce a very tangible impact (social and financial) for Moldova and Ukraine and for their migrant workers in signatory countries.