



Evaluation Summary



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Applying the G20 Training Strategy: Partnership of the ILO and the Russian Federation

Quick Facts

Countries:	Viet Nam, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan
Mode of Evaluation:	Independent mid-term evaluation
ILO Offices	SKILLS, ILO-Moscow
Evaluation Manager:	Sergio Iriarte Quezada
Evaluation Consultant:	Donata Maccelli
Project End:	November 2015
Project Code:	GLO/12/50/RUS (umbrella project) GLO/14/54/RUS (SKILLS) RER/12/50/RUS (ILO-Moscow)
Donor & Project Budget:	Russian Federation, USD 8 million (GLO/12/32/RUS, umbrella)
Keywords:	Employment, training, tools, capacity-building, government, social partners

Background & Context

In Pittsburgh in September 2009, in a period of stringent economic and financial crisis, G20 Leaders committed to implementing recovery plans that support decent work, help preserve employment and prioritize job growth. They acknowledged the role of skills development and the need for developing workers' ability to adapt to a constantly changing market demand. ILO was requested to develop a training strategy, which

was duly prepared and submitted to the Leaders at their Summit in Toronto, in June 2010, and later in Seoul in November 2010.

The G20 Training Strategy for a Skilled Workforce for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth was elaborated in close and intensive collaboration with ILO social partners and with international, regional and national organizations and institutions. The document underlines the importance of a number of key elements, among which continuous workplace training and lifelong learning, anticipating and building competencies for future needs, broad access to training opportunities. It subsequently elaborates 'building blocks', aimed at linking education and training to the world of work and at improving provision of matching skills to the labour market. In Seoul, in November 2010, the G20 leaders pledged to support developing countries in implementing national strategies on skills for employment, building on the G20 Training Strategy. On that occasion, the Russian Federation expressed interest to support the ILO in the application of the G20 Training Strategy to the skills development and employment needs in a range of countries.

The G20 Training Strategy project is a response to that interest. The initiative is implemented in line with the Concept of Russia's Participation in International Development Assistance.

The budget allocated to the project is 8 Million USD. The countries selected for the implementation of the project are Armenia, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Viet Nam. The

external implementing agency is the Moscow Skolkovo School of Management.

The indirect beneficiaries are unemployed, underemployed, TVET students, women, youth and persons with disabilities, who will benefit from improved training programmes and job opportunities, in addition to adults who are involved in short term qualification measures. The direct recipients of the project are national TVET managers, administrators, TVET policy makers and practitioners in each country, as well as staff of the Public Employment Services. The project is also aimed at strengthening employers' and workers' organizations, through their involvement in tripartite dialogue and their participation in the formulation of sectoral skills.

Project Overview

The project is structured around two main types of intervention, respectively reflecting the donor's and ILO interests: the introduction of two tools developed in the Moscow-based Skolkovo Education Development Centre (SEDeC), the first one focused on foresight of skills needed in the labour market, the other one aimed at improving management skills of VET schools managers; and a mix of activities and events on different topics related to TVET and skills development. These have been determined in agreement with national partners, are aligned with the working principles enshrined in DWCPs and adapt the philosophy and building blocks of the G20 Strategy.

At national level the project aims at developing and implementing pilot initiatives, taking into account the specificities of the target countries. The focus will be on management aspects of TVET bodies and institutions and the improvement of participation of the social partners in skills development mechanisms.

The sectoral interventions, especially in Jordan, Viet Nam and Kyrgyzstan are based on applying the Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification (STED) tool, and on implementing the findings of this work. The sub-regional interventions aim at

supporting capacity development and knowledge sharing among the institutions and other bodies of the constituents in the five target countries.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation findings refer to the DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Particular attention was paid to the analysis of the project design. The exercise has followed a step-by-step approach comprising i) Desk Review and preparation of questionnaires for country visits; ii) Country visits for data collection and interviews to stakeholders; iii) Report preparation; and iv) Report submission, debriefing with ILO stakeholders, review and completion.

The evaluation focused on three of the five target countries, namely Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Viet Nam. The selection includes countries from both geographical areas identified in the project (CIS countries and Middle / South East Asia).

The main sources of information were: interviews with key ILO Offices in Geneva, Moscow and target countries; documentation collected; interviews with stakeholders and beneficiaries of the project.

Main Findings & Conclusions

ILO policies and priorities were well embedded into the overall and specific objectives of the programme and those objectives were consistent with the overall strategies indicated in the ILO Strategic Framework and in the Programme & Budget document. The project is also well aligned with national priorities, indicated both in country strategic documents and in the DWCPs, and is globally consistent and supportive of the policy and programme framework in which it was placed, The fact that Russian Federation is the donor increases the interest and strategic relevance of the initiative. The intervention logic correctly takes into consideration both the donor's, the countries' and ILO's priorities. The project design suffers from a series of shortcomings: the project is output-based,

impact indicators are not formulated, and sustainability measures are not envisaged. The detailed design of activities took place only in the inception phase, when funds were already allocated, thus giving to the project a sort of top-down approach.

The project is in line with both ILO and target countries' priorities and took into due consideration ILO document and policies, adequately representing different features of ILO policy making. Also, activities at country level were often conducted in synergy with other ILO projects, thus adding value and visibility to the organisation. Coordination with other stakeholders active in the target countries has been good, with many activities jointly carried out with other donors and a satisfactory exchange of information among the donor community active in the sector. This brought about in many cases mutual reinforcement of results. Also, the strategy of looking for maximum sectoral coordination has avoided duplication of efforts.

Activities have partially contributed to the attainment of the immediate objectives. Good management and quality of expertise were undoubtedly appreciated by beneficiaries. On the other side, the sporadic character of many activities has hindered the achievement of results. As for benefits, the project has introduced new tools and has in many cases opened a debate on the important theme of matching skills with labour market needs. However, the scattered character of most activities did not allow for optimal delivery of benefits and the achievement of more solid, durable results.

The management arrangements are quite complex and have been restructured over time, thus provoking delays in the project implementation. There is a sort of 'dual' management based on geographical criteria; this brings about a certain lack of homogeneity in working approaches. Reporting arrangements should be better structured and should provide for result-based principles. In terms of flexibility, the project

arrangements were flexible enough to allow for changes requested by target countries.

It is early to assess the achievement of the project development objectives as the project is still ongoing. Some good results have been achieved in activities at local and sectoral level, but it is not clear whether these could be replicated or expanded. In Viet Nam, where the project execution run in parallel with the draft and approval of the new TVET law, impact is more likely to be achieved vis-à-vis other countries, whose Governments do not have the same level of commitment and determination in the sector. The project gave a good boost to better dialogue among social partners; continuous efforts are required to deep up and consolidate those achievements. An external factor potentially affecting the project results might be the Customs Union agreements, which include Armenia and Kyrgyzstan; opinions however considerably differ, and it is difficult to date to assess at what level and how this will affect the economies of the target countries. Regarding economic and social development, there is neither mechanism nor indicators for measuring the contribution of the project's activities to the economic and social development of the target countries. In general terms, the inputs of the project have been limited to provision of short term events, conferences, introduction of tools and it is hard to pinpoint the direct effect of those inputs over the economic and social development.

The project design has not taken sustainability issues into sufficient consideration. Economic sustainability should analyse for instance the readiness of target countries to take over and further fund at least some project outcomes which are considered of particular relevance. The project – at least in its next phase – should include an exit strategy. Sustainability will also depend upon the capacity of the stakeholders to effectively establish a fruitful dialogue and to focus on specific areas of cooperation; this is a medium term exercise which is advisable to focus on in the next project period. The alignment of project themes with national

priorities has generated a good level of ownership. As for project achievement and outputs, further utilisation of the two tools will depend by the willingness of Governments – especially for the foresight tool, since some countries have already developed their own tools – and upon the ability of the implementing agency (the Skolkovo School) to adapt the instruments to local specifics and to listen to stakeholders’ comments and suggestions. As far as cross-cutting issues are concerned, the project is adequately addressing the needs of people with disabilities in Armenia and Kyrgyzstan, whereas gender equality aspects do not seem to be dealt with.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Project design and management

The project design might be improved, with focus on results, impact and sustainability. Indicators should be streamlined, making them objective and SMART. Impact indicators might be included in the logframe. Its introduction would be beneficial to enhance project design and focus on results. Activities should be reorganized and built partners, or in geographical areas where ILO is already cooperating; this creates synergies. Continuity is required in order to take advantage of results and outputs developed under the project.

Good practices

The project has done much to ensure and institutionalise dialogue and involvement of ILO constituents; the fact that Tripartite Working Groups are in charge of project strategic directions at country level is a proof of this. In several cases, much remains to be done to improve skills, knowledge and capacities of social partners, as several of them acknowledge; this is due for instance to ‘youth’ of organisations (i.e. employers’ associations), or the persistence of old behavioural patterns as in the case of trade unions. In other cases, it is perceived that ILO is more inclined to cooperate with some stakeholders and ‘neglecting

’others. In any case, further work is needed to capacitate the SP to act more effectively in the definition of strategic objectives.

Training and capacity building activities have been carried out in all visited countries, but the general impression is that they have been rather events and occasions for networking than real training, focused on tangible results. Of course they have been fruitful for those purposes but a more continuous, stable intervention is needed in order to achieve the project objectives. An institutionalised “planned” continuous learning process/mechanism is not actually in place as such. This is a really key point to ensure sustainability and bridge the knowledge gaps. In substance, all stakeholders expressed the need for continuous training and further support, with specific reference to those who did not benefit at all from training. There is much left to be done to consolidate and complement the basic knowledge received through project activities.

The project has contributed to enhancing the dialogue between the TVET sector and the labour market in several countries. The best results have been obtained at local level, where the project has been able to boost communication and to stimulate a discussion on labour market needs in a given sector and skills offered by TVET schools. At national levels, as seen in Armenia and Kyrgyzstan, constraints in the institutional framework are still hindering a proper dialogue leading to effective decisions.
