



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
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Norway & Sweden funded programmes for Outcome 9: Employers have strong, independent & representative organisations

Quick Facts

Countries: Botswana, Cambodia, Honduras, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malawi, Philippines, Swaziland, Vanuatu, Viet Nam, Zambia

Final Evaluation: 1 December 2015- 29 February 2016.

Mode of Evaluation: Independent

Administrative Office: ILO-HQ, Geneva

Technical Office: ACT/EMP

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Project End: 31 December 2015

Project Code: GLO/14/73/SID,
GLO/14/59/NOR, RAS/14/58/NOR

Donor & Project Budget:

GLO/14/73/SID - Budget: US\$ US\$257,706.-

GLO/14/59/NOR - Budget: US\$ US\$715,305.-

RAS/14/58/NOR - Budget: Initial allocation (2014-15):
US\$ US\$1'447,818.

Keywords: employers' organisations, capacity building, sustainable enterprise, gender, employment creation, business environment, public private dialogue, public sector advocacy

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

GLO/14/73/SID: "Enhancing policy capacity of Employers organizations to promote enabling environment for sustainable enterprise and job-rich growth" (SP)

The program aimed to enhance the capacity of employers' organizations to engage in policy development with government and other stakeholders to promote enabling environment for sustainable enterprises. It builds on the results achieved in the previous biennia (2012-2013) and supports the further refinement of the Global Product (EASE Toolkit) and the application of its tools in 6 countries. At the country level, the program aimed to implement the selected priorities identified in the Business Agendas developed in the previous phases with a particular focus on advocacy capacity, impact management and mainstreaming gender considerations in the specific policy positions.

This programme started on August 2014 and will conclude on December 2015 and covered Botswana, Honduras, Malawi, Swaziland, Vanuatu and Zambia. The donor was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Sweden. The budget of the program was US\$ US\$257,706.-

GLO/14/59/NOR: “Global Component of Strengthening Employers’ Organizations for Effective and Impactful Engagement in Inclusive Social and Labour Policy and Service Development” (NP – Global).

This programme aimed to strengthen the institutional capacity of employers’ organizations in policy development and dialogue at national, regional and interregional levels and to assist employers’ organisations in the development of new and improved services to increase membership recruitment and retention. Mainstreaming gender in EO policy work and promoting women in business and management and women entrepreneurs are also key elements of the programme strategy.

Elements of the Global Products which were included under this program focused on gender mainstreaming and promoting women in business and management and greening economies, enterprises and jobs.

This programme started on January 2014 and will conclude on December 2015 and covered Armenia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Fiji, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malawi, Moldova, Montenegro, Nepal, Philippines, Viet Nam and Zambia.¹The donor was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway with a budget: US\$ US\$715,305.-

RAS/14/58/NOR “Strengthening Employers’ Organizations for effective and impactful engagement in inclusive social and labour policy and service development.” (NP – RAS)

This program derives from GLO/14/59/NOR (described above) but only focused only on ASEAN region countries. The program aimed to address critical labour and social challenges in the ASEAN region from a policy angle by engaging five employers’ organizations (EOs) as main actors to influence the environment in which their enterprise members operate nationally and regionally. This effort is combined with implementation and development of related tools and services to better engage EO members for effective and impactful change.

¹ The evaluation only reviewed the work carried out in Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malawi, Philippines, Viet Nam and Zambia (which were also included in the two other programs under review.)

The project aimed to contribute to addressing the prevalence of a large informal economy in this region by looking into critical issues such as skills, labour policies and non-discrimination at work at national level as well as regional level. EOs will in particular need to be in a stronger position to advise their members on the challenges and opportunities of the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) 2015 and fast-pacing changes in the nature of jobs and modalities of work brought by technology advancement and transformations in the ASEAN region. Participating EOs undertook a rigorous process which enabled them to develop evidence-based policy strategies and positions on key issues and engage more effectively with their members and stakeholders.

This programme started in October 2014 and will end in December 2015 and covered Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Philippines and Viet Nam. The donor was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway with an initial allocation (2014-15) of US\$ US\$1’447,818.-

Present Situation of the Project

The aim of outcome 9, employers have strong, independent and representative organisations is “to enable employer and business organisations to deliver value through targeted activities and services that their member enterprises cannot provide on their own” on the basis that “when effective, [EOs] influence the development of an enabling environment of policies, institutions, relationships and behaviours that foster private sector development, thereby producing the jobs and incomes needed to raise living standards”. As one of its three constituents, employers’ organisations have a special relationship with the ILO. The Bureau for Employers’ Activities (ACT/EMP) is responsible for nurturing that relationship.

In the 2014–15 biennium, the focus has been on strengthening the capacity of business and employer organisations to operate as representative and responsive organisations and to engage in policy development with governments and other stakeholders to ensure an environment conducive to business development. Policy development work has focused on supporting EOs to adopt evidence-based approaches to policy-making. Interventions should help business organisations focus their efforts on policies that address specific constraints to enterprise development and job creation. The ILO

aimed to strengthen the analytical capacity of organisations, such that they could respond effectively to the policy challenges. The ILO provided advisory services and technical support, including facilitating exchanges of experience, knowledge and know-how between organizations to build capacity and expertise.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess country programme outcomes and global products produced or refined under the three programmes described above, noting that they contribute to but do not constitute all activity under outcome 9. Progress and achievements are assessed in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The terms of reference specified 19 evaluation questions. The scope of the evaluation is the 11 countries in which the three programmes operated during 2014-2015 and the global programmes.

The audience of the evaluation were ACT/EMP headquarters and field specialists, the main employers' organisations in the countries under review, programme managers, main national partners, ILO field office directors, technical support at headquarters, field and HQ technical specialists, responsible evaluation focal points and the development partners.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation took a scientific realist approach and used a mix of complementary methods including:

- Conceptualisation of the programme theory of change, mechanisms and contexts;
- Review and analysis of programme descriptions, progress reports, project evaluations, country assessments, EO business agenda, implementation reports, global product reports etc;
- Semi-structured interviews with ILO staff (in Geneva and Bangkok)
- Semi-structured interviews with employers' organisations (in Cambodia, Vietnam and Zambia);

- Survey of the EOs that were not visited.

The NP and SP programs had a focus on capacity building.

The NP global aimed to strengthen the institutional capacity of employers' organisations in policy development and dialogue.

The NP regional project aimed to address critical labour and social changes in the ASEAN region from a policy angle by engaging five EOs as main actors to influence the environment.

The SP program was designed to contribute to enhancing the capacity of employers' organisations to engage in policy development.

Much of the evaluation has therefore also focused on whether EOs have enhanced their capacity and whether that has led to them being able to fulfil their role as a representative body more effectively.

Where possible, the evaluation assessed outcomes and impact since that is the best indicator of whether the capacity building has been successful.

Main Findings & Conclusions

The work supported by the Governments of Norway and Sweden has been very successful. ACT/EMP has supported EOs to develop strategic plans, to strengthen services and to enhance their capacity, so has delivered on all three ILO's Program and Budget indicators. As a result of their enhanced capacity, they are seen to be generating excellent research (in some cases, better than that of their government) and persuasive policy positions.

Given the contested nature of EO's interactions, however, it is perhaps not surprising that government often base decisions on politics rather than economics.

There is evidence that EOs are beginning to be seen by governments as valuable partners. They are being consulted on issues other than simply social and labour issues. EOs may exist primarily to represent their members' views but they also have a responsibility to promote good practice back to their members, for example in relation to gender equality and greening economies. Indeed, this will contribute to the EOs' credibility when they are advocating reform to government.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Main recommendations and follow-up

Recommendation 1: ACT/EMP should articulate its overall theory of change for its programme of support for employers' organisations to become more effective advocates. This would then serve as a reminder both of the point at which ACT/EMP is intervening but importantly show the intended ultimate outcomes from the interventions. It would help, too, in ensuring that individual project log frames were consistent with the overall purpose. It would also help in making explicit the assumptions in the logic. Outcomes and targets for individual projects should then clearly relate back to the theory of change.

Recommendation 2: Intervention log frames should have baselines that enable some measurement of progress towards the log frame indicators rather than simply providing a situational analysis and should have milestones that indicate progress towards the indicators rather than being a timetable for activities. Ideally indicators should describe a change in behaviour.

Recommendation 3: ACT/EMP could do more to assess the outcomes and impact from interventions with EOs. Assessment could take three forms: (a) ex post impact assessments of particular interventions in an effort to estimate the economic impact from a policy reform; (b) a case studies of individual interventions, which ideally record the intervention – and the EO's resultant actions and progress – from start to finish as it happens; and (c) case studies of individual employers' organisations over a period, to demonstrate how their competence has improved.

Recommendation 4: For global activities, particularly where they are intended to contribute to the work of EOs, it would be sensible periodically to ask the EOs about the difference that they have made.

Recommendation 5: ACT/EMP already offers considerable support to EOs and they appreciate that. Many of their descriptions of issues and solutions suggest that they would benefit from more support both to help them frame their issues more clearly and precisely, based on causes and not on symptoms. This is something with which ILO could

help and may then be able to offer further help in the preparation of compelling policy positions.

Recommendation 6: The reports on Women in Business & Management and Greening Economies are good resources that could potentially be made available more widely. In both cases, the message is just as relevant for BMOs that are not EOs and for businesses that are not members of EOs. ILO will want to continue to focus its attention on supporting EOs but EOs could use these initiatives as an opportunity to promote collaboration with a range of other stakeholders.

Recommendation 7: ACT/EMP seeks additional funding to support EOs who have not previously employed a policy or advocacy officer to employ such a person for a limited period, perhaps on a shared basis, to demonstrate the impact that can be achieved through a dedicated resource.

Recommendation 8: Collaborate with others, including donors such as DFID and DANIDA, advocacy support funds and foundations that support advocacy, to develop a single resource that could be made available to all those supporting BMOs to become more effective advocates.