



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Effective Implementation of the National OSH Programme for Improving Safety and Health at the Workplace

Quick Facts

Countries: Viet Nam

Final Evaluation: August, 2011

Mode of Evaluation: independent

Technical Area: IFP/Safework

Evaluation Management: Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific

Evaluation Team: Peter Bille Larsen

Project Start: September, 2008

Project End: December, 2011

Project Code: RAS/10/56M/JPN (and RAS/08/07M/JPN, RAS/08/11M/JPN, RAS/09/02M/JPN, RAS/09/05M/JPN)

Donor: Japan (891,156 US\$)

Keywords: Occupational Safety and Health

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The project aims to strengthen occupational safety and health (OSH) systems in Vietnam by supporting the First National Programme on Labour Protection and Occupational Safety and Occupational Health. It includes specific objectives to strengthen support systems in the areas of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the informal economy, rural workplaces as well as large enterprises and multinationals. Its intervention logic involves a dual approach of supporting national policy and programme efforts along with

participatory bottom activities to stimulate voluntary OSH improvements at the enterprise and household level. The project strategy is country-driven coordinated through the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA). Policy processes are closely linked to ILO standards and regional processes notably in the ASEAN context. The participatory approach involved supporting enterprises to identify and design their own OSH improvements. Such action has concentrated in four provinces (Thai Nguyen, Thua Thien Hue, Thanh Hoa and Dong Nai). The 3-year project is funded through the Development Cooperation Programme between ILO and MHLW – Japan implemented between February 2009 and December 2011 (actual start-up June 2009). The main implementing agency is the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) along with cooperation with other ministries, tri-partite constituents and mass organizations.

Present situation of project

Upon a slight delay in the initial stages¹, project implementation has run smoothly from June, 2009 till now. By July 28, 2011, the project had spent 637,550 USD, leaving a balance of 253,606 USD. A considerable proportion of these funds are committed to planned activities in the remaining project

¹ This was justified as a result of “necessary administrative procedures” in order to set-up the project office.

period. A no-cost extension of 6 months could be considered to allow the project a full 3-year implementation period.

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

While technically a final independent evaluation, it was undertaken prior to actual project finalization. Primary use involved both taking stock of project implementation as well as gaining lessons for future project design. Initial aims were to assess to what extent (i) progress has been made in achieving the project's outcomes and (ii) how the project outcomes have contributed to implementing the Decent Work Country Programme in Viet Nam. The main purpose was to assess whether the project had achieved its immediate objectives, emerging impacts and the sustainability of project interventions both in terms of benefits and partner capacity.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation involved a desk review of relevant materials in preparation for the field mission to Viet Nam. On-site methods used included document reviews, focus group discussions, site-visits and in-depth interviews. Due to time constraints, field visits were only undertaken in two pilot provinces (Thanh Hoa and Dong Nai) involving enterprise visits, focus group discussions and interviews with target group representatives and beneficiaries. Beyond initial project documentation provided, provincial authorities also provided statistics and separate project implementation reports in Vietnamese. In both provinces, selected interviews were undertaken with beneficiaries. Given the tight time schedule and status of the project, quantitative methods were not employed. Instead, efforts were made to broaden stakeholder groups reached and interviewed by the evaluator (see relevant appendices). The project period from February 2009 to July 2011 was covered by the evaluation. The evaluation norms, standards, and ethical safeguards have been followed.

Main Findings & Conclusions

The project responds to a growing development challenge covering core

economic sectors with emerging OSH challenges, while responding closely to the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP). It has supported critical policy level advances building on long-term relationships of trust and cooperation. The project has also piloted hands-on advances and OSH improvements at the enterprise and household level, while generating a new space for future activities to scale-up support OSH systems to SMEs, the informal and rural sectors.

Key finding 1: The project was overall considered successful in supporting both national and provincial level processes to catalyze OSH improvements along with national policy and programme development

Key finding 2: The project largely responds to national needs and areas with major OSH challenges, although national data yet reflect regional trends, gender and sector specific challenges allowing for more tailored project design.

Key finding 3: The project strategically promotes inter-ministerial coordination, yet lacks an explicit analysis of OSH system gaps at national and provincial levels to enhance coordination

Key finding 4: The intervention logic combining national level support processes with enterprise level change was considered highly effective, although linkages between the two levels were not always explicit nor fully reflective of potential reach

Key finding 5: Somewhat overambitious objective formulations and lack of outcome indicators rendered delivery challenging, even if overall strategic direction was relevant

Key finding 6: The very inclusive scope of the project has allowed the project to initiate activities in the main areas of OSH needs at a macro-level, yet also displays diverging definitions and needs to better identify vulnerability

Key finding 7: Project support to national level processes has successfully, and with limited resources, combined policy development linked to ILO standards, DWCP programme implementation and programme

design as Viet Nam now embarks on the 2nd National OSH programme

Key finding 8: The project has successfully supported the introduction of systematic planning approaches for national OSH processes, in turn revealing the need for a more systematic assessment of vulnerability including the informal sector and hazardous child labour

Key finding 9: The project overall implemented SME-related activities effectively, yet also displayed the magnitude and comprehensive nature of building effective support systems for SMEs

Key finding 10: Participatory pilot activities in the informal and rural economies have effectively revealed the scale of challenges at stake rendering clear the need for a comprehensive systems approach to OSH concerns

Key finding 11: Planned outputs in relation to large enterprises and multinationals were partially reached, in particular seeking to catalyze debate on emerging lifestyle issues.

Key finding 12: The project was taken as a whole implemented in a cost-effective manner notably securing significant resource contributions from participating enterprises, yet needs the full 3 year period in order to “catch up” with spending delays

Key finding 13: MOLISA expressed interest in reworking current management arrangement allowing for more direct engagement as an executive agency

Key finding 14: Strengthened coordination between MoH/WHO and MOLISA/ILO was widely appreciated, yet needed to be reinforced in terms of joint planning and implementation modalities. Coordination with other bilateral and multilateral agencies was also considered relatively weak.

Key finding 15: Current project activities with tri-partite constituents, other ministries and mass organizations have been relatively limited, yet indicate a significant potential for scaling-up

Key finding 16: National policy and programme level support have demonstrated high impacts in terms of strengthened OSH

standards, methodologies and planning approaches.

Key finding 17: The project has generated localized enterprise-level impacts as well as cross-fertilization of other international and national programmes, yet securing sustained sector or systems-wide impact remains a challenge

Key finding 18: Project approaches championed among SMEs, the informal and rural economies need to be translated into practical OSH systems to ensure sustainable impacts

Key finding 19: The project offers good opportunities to strengthen the integration of core labour standards, tripartism and gender equity at both policy and pilot levels

The project has made major advances at the national policy level facilitating policy and programme dialogue built up around ILO standards and tools. A 2nd national OSH programme has now been approved with considerable public funding. The quantity and quality of the outputs were overall deemed successful by partners revealing the tight collaboration between the ILO and Vietnamese authorities. Important pilot experiences have been developed, notably in the field of SMEs and to some extent with farmers and household businesses. Such pilot experiences need now to be scaled-up and complemented to address the wider objective of building support systems.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Recommendation 1: ILO and MOLISA are recommended to maintain the dual intervention logic in the future phase of the project, and make more explicit the linkage between policy/ national programme level activities and provincial level pilot activities.

Recommendation 2: ILO and MOLISA should in the next phase of the project maintain key priorities, refocus the design of immediate objectives by narrowing down the areas addressed, and aligning a clearly identified set

of outcome indicators more closely to national programme targets.

Recommendation 3: The project should in the next phase facilitate a national process to clarify key definitions (such as the informal economy) as well as facilitate a policy dialogue on OSH and vulnerability.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that the project in current or future activities supports an independent baseline assessment of vulnerability and OSH issues (including the identification of OSH priority sectors and groups) as a strategic planning tool for the national OSH programme and international support.

Recommendation 5: The project is in the short term recommended to undertake a comprehensive diagnosis of current needs, enterprise level impacts in pilot sites and next steps required to construct practical OSH support systems for SMEs.

Recommendation 6: It is recommended that the project in its next phase facilitates consensus building on definitions (notably of the informal economy) and secondly facilitates a comprehensive OSH diagnosis of the informal and rural sectors currently underrepresented in the national profile.

Recommendation 7: The project is recommended to reconsider the importance of addressing larger enterprises and multinationals in the next phase. In the short-term, the exploration of a joint OSH activity with the “better work” project could be considered along with a policy process to address emerging lifestyle issues in order to complete the component.

Recommendation 8: It is recommended that a no-cost project extension of 6 months is given allowing the project to have the full three-year period allocated for project implementation. Additional dedicated technical project staff could also be considered given the considerable scope of the project and the

additional work burden entailed by the project (notably having no staff at the provincial level).

Recommendation 9: The question of governance and management arrangements is recommended as a specific topic of a tripartite discussion between the ILO and Vietnamese authorities in the design of follow-up activities.

Recommendation 10: It is recommended that the donor requests a formalized joint project design process prior to the finalization of respective MOLISA and MOH follow-up phases in order to make full use of both provincial and national level synergy opportunities. Further synergy opportunities should also be explored more systematically with on-going bilateral and multilateral agencies providing support on OSH issues before completing the design of the next phase.

Recommendation 11: It is recommended that the project prior to project finalization explores with social partners how to involve them more directly as implementing agencies on OSH in order to scale-up outreach efforts and make use of mainstreaming opportunities.

Recommendation 12: It is recommended that the project together with provincial partners prior to finalization clearly establish exit strategies and identifies next steps for building protection systems at both national and provincial levels for the identified target sectors of the project. A systematic impact assessment of selected project activities could form part of these activities.

Recommendation 13: The project partners are recommended to elaborate an internal strategy proposal for strengthening the mainstreaming of labour standards, tripartism and gender concerns in future activities.