



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Human resources in Albania Project – Midterm Evaluation

Quick Facts

Countries: Albania
Mid-Term Evaluation: October
Mode of Evaluation: Independent
ILO Office Administratively backstopping the Project: DWT/CO-Budapest
Technical Backstopping Office: EMP/SKILLS
Evaluation Manager: Maria Borsos
Evaluation Consultant: Donata Maccelli
Project End: December 2014
Project Code: ALB/11/01/EEC
Donor & Project Budget: European Commission
€2,988,422
Keywords: human resources, government capacity building

Background & Context

The overall development objective of Human Resources Development in Albania project is to have improved labour market functioning and the quality of human capital in Albania. The project purpose is to improve the capacity of labour market institutions, mainly the State labour Inspectorate (SLI) and the National Employment Service (NES), and promote employment by enhancing the employability of Albanian workforce.

The action has been implemented over the period from 2012 to 2013 (administrative and other issues have slowed down the starting date of the project). A no-cost extension of 6

months was requested to the Contract Authority with the submission of the second progress report (April 2013). A one-year extension was approved at the end of August 2013 by the EU Delegation upon submission of relevant annexes.

The evaluation concentrates on the aspects of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. Impact considerations will be limited, as the project actual implementation period was only one year and three months when the evaluation was carried out and many activities were undergoing.

Horizontal (cross-cutting) issues of special interest, such as gender, have been taken into consideration in evaluating effectiveness. The evaluation exercise has been carried out respecting the ILO guidelines, recommending a high level of stakeholders' participation.

PURPOSE, SCOPE AND CLIENTS

Purpose: The purpose of the evaluation is:

- To assess the coherence and relevance of the project's general and specific objectives regarding the situation of the Albanian labour conditions, employment services and education and training systems;
- To assess the implemented activities and respective results achieved and their efficiency and effectiveness with regard to indicators of achievements defined for each Component of the project;

- To identify main success aspects of the project and the problems encountered during its implementation, as well as the means undertaken by the contracted agency to overcome these problems;
- To identify lessons learned and develop recommendations for similar interventions in the future.

Scope: The evaluation covers the whole period and the entire scope of the implementation of the project. Initially it was planned to be a final evaluation, however, the evaluation type was revised to mid-term upon receipt of the decision from the donor on the extension of the project through August 2014.

Clients: The evaluation serves the following - external and internal – clients’ groups:

- ILO tripartite constituents, including direct beneficiaries of the project action
- Other national counterparts
- The Donor
- ILO DWT/CO-Budapest and Headquarters
- Project staff

Main Findings & Conclusions

Relevance: The ILO-EU IPA project was very relevant and aligned with the national development strategies and with the donors’ community intervention policies/programmes in Albania; specifically, it was well linked to the key strategic frameworks which constituted the background of the project activities. The project design saw a large and active participation of all national stakeholders. Finally, the project – in spite of time and procedural constraints – has been able to rapidly address the changes requested by continuous policy developments in the country. It is to be expected that it will continue to be relevant for the labour sector in Albania and that it will further contribute to the country’s integration into the European Union.

Effectiveness: The project effectiveness – in spite of considerable challenges faced during the implementation and repeated modifications to its structure – has been satisfactory.

Although most of the activities have been carried out in a limited time frame, they have substantially contributed to the achievement of the project objectives and have marked a considerable progress in the target areas of intervention. It is expected that a significant boost will be given to the project in the following months, through an enhanced cooperation with the government authorities and a renovated spirit of collaboration among the key stakeholders – ILO, EUD, MoSWY and MoES in first instance.

Efficiency: As to management efficiency, the project team has been able to manage the complex workload in a satisfactory manner. Financial efficiency has been a critical point, with low utilization of available financial resources compared to time elapsed.

Sustainability and Impact: Several aspects of the project’s outcomes have had a satisfactory impact and are most likely sustainable, such as the adoption of key regulations, the introduction of new tools to monitor the labour market and the associated institutional changes at provincial and municipality levels. It is expected that further impact will be achieved once the strategy will be completed and approved at Government level.

Conclusions: The project has been of high strategic relevance for the country, and was aligned with both EU and ILO internal policies and programming documents and GoA development strategies. The contributed to shared stakeholder and ownership in the design of, and reflection on, labour market, employment and VET policies. It produced immediately tangible results, such as the transposition of EU directives into the national legislation. It elaborated a series of tools and materials which - if appropriately used – will further contribute to increase skills of staff working in beneficiary institutions. Finally, the project has encouraged dialogue and cooperation between the relevant authorities, and has promoted communication among the state and the private sector on themes related to OSH, employment and vocational education and training, inter alia business associations.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Recommendations:

1. Re-consider the available project budget and – if needed and appropriate – proceed with a budget extension request with the EUD
2. Analyse new GoA priorities and negotiate with the government the possibility for ILO to further assist it in the labour reform process
3. Explore possibilities to receive additional financial support from donors for future ILO initiatives.

Lessons learned:

1. Readiness and commitment of stakeholders is an essential pre-requisite to the success of any donor-funded interventions.
2. Flexibility in project structure and implementation is key to success.
3. Improved coordination and dialogue among all stakeholders is per se a valuable result.