



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

Mid-Term Evaluation of Promoting the Effective Governance of Labour Migration from South Asia through Actions on Labour Market Information, Protection during Recruitment and Employment, Skills and Development Impact (SALM) (RAS/12/07/EEC)

Quick Facts

Countries: *Nepal, India, Pakistan*

Mode of Evaluation: *Independent*

ILO Office Administratively backstopping the Project: *CO-Nepal*

ILO Technical Backstopping Office: *MIGRANT*

Evaluation Manager: *n/a*

Evaluation Consultant: *Elaine McGregor, Maastricht University; Katrin Marchand, Maastricht University*

Project End: *31st May 2016*

Project Code: *RAS/12/07/EEC*

Donor & Project Budget: *European Commission (€1,925,749), ILO (€481,437)*

Keywords: *labour migration, migration policy*

Background & Context

This report presents the results of the independent mid-term evaluation of the Promoting the Effective Governance of Labour Migration from South Asia through Actions on Labour Market Information, Protection during Recruitment and Employment, Skills, and Development Impact (SALM) project (RAS/12/07/EEC).

The project has an official starting date of 1 June 2013. The Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) of the project was hired and started assignment in September 2013. The project is due to be completed on 31 May 2016.

The overall objective of the SALM project is to promote well-managed labour migration from South Asia to the Gulf Cooperation Council countries (GCC), to ensure effective protection of the rights of vulnerable migrant workers, enhance the development impact of labour migration and reduce irregular flows. The project targets low-skilled migrant workers from India, Nepal and Pakistan migrating to Kuwait, Qatar and United Arab Emirates (UAE). Specifically, the project aims to:

- 1) Provide reliable information on overseas employment opportunities, and build capacity for matching qualified job seekers with the demand from foreign employers.
- 2) Reduce migration costs and recruitment abuses in countries of origin and destination by improving recruitment services, and increase protection of migrant workers during employment.

3) Enhance training, portability of skills for outgoing and returning migrant workers, and to promote the development impact of migration.

The action of the project is centred on six strategic pillars including generation of labour market information; promotion of safe migration; improvement of recruitment services; protection in employment; improvement of training and portability of skills; and facilitation of migration and development (specific to Nepal).

Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation

The purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to draw lessons from the implementation of the project with a view to assessing whether the project goals and objectives are still relevant. Based on this, the evaluation assessed to what extent the project is on track to reach its objectives and targets and provide recommendations for improvements. The mid-term evaluation was conducted in accordance with ILO standard policies and procedures. The ILO adheres to the United Nations system's evaluation norms and standards as well as to the OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Standards.

Methodology of evaluation

The methodological approach was qualitative in nature: primarily comprising of 1) desk research; and 2) qualitative interviews and focus groups. The evaluators conducted fieldwork in India (23-26 March), Pakistan (24-27 March) and Nepal (30 March-1 April). In total 57 interviews/focus groups took place with 76 individuals representing a variety of stakeholders.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Relevance and strategic fit of the intervention

The project is highly relevant and fits strategically within the work of ILO at the national, regional and global level. The project is in alignment with the ILO Multilateral

Framework on Labour Migration's relevant principles and guidelines. At a global level the project feeds into ILO's P&B outcome on labour migration (Outcome 7) and into ILO's new strategic framework (Outcome 9). The project is also of relevance to the Fair Migration Agenda, and has clear and concrete contributions to make in the realization of the Fair Recruitment Initiative.

Validity of intervention design

The overall objective of the project is clearly stated and the specific objectives clearly identify areas where interventions could contribute. The project is clearly tackling relevant issues that are of national, regional and global importance. The specific objectives identify some of the challenges faced by migrant workers such as information asymmetry, migration costs, employer abuse and a lack of recognition of skills obtained, either in the country of destination or upon return; all of which can put migrant workers in vulnerable positions where they are subject to exploitation. All of these challenges can reduce the development potential of migration for the migrant workers and their families.

Intervention progress and effectiveness

Despite a fairly slow start, the project is picking up momentum and it is anticipated that all pillars of the project will be tackled in at least one of the project countries. The majority of activities thus far have focused on knowledge generation and capacity building. However, it is also clearly the intention of the project to ensure that the knowledge generated and the capacity built leads to policy development and direct services that contributes towards the promotion of safe migration for migrant workers. The focus on the remainder of the project will inevitably fall more into the area of direct service provision, and in particular, attention should be placed on getting the Migrant Resource Centres (MRCs) operational, or, discussing alternative options for the project should the MRC be blocked by decision makers in Pakistan and/or India. Pre-departure

orientation courses, and further advancing the discussion of rating mechanisms for recruitment agencies should also be prioritised. The access to justice study, which is currently in its inception phase, should help to inform many of these activities. The same is true of the migration and development study underway in Nepal.

Efficiency of resource use

While the project objectives are ambitious for the resources allocated, the achievements of the project to date demonstrate prudent and efficient resource use. The project has pursued synergies with other ILO projects (TRIANGLE, MAGNET, WiF, DWAB) as well as with other international organisations (IOM, ICMPD) and funders (GIZ, SDC). Cost savings have allowed the project to pursue other areas of relevance for project partners. The project has also made efforts to ensure that efforts are not duplicated.

Effectiveness of management arrangements

The majority of respondents were very positive about the project staff and their ability to take flexible and pragmatic decisions that reflected the challenges facing each of the partners. Communication was rated particularly highly with project staff described as available and responsive. Other ILO staff technically backstopping the project also spoke favourably about the project staff and did not identify any major challenges that could be attributed directly to project staff.

Impact orientation and sustainability of the intervention

There is no doubt that work on the protection of labour migrants from India, Nepal and Pakistan predate SALM and will continue after SALM. However, it is too early to judge how sustainable the project output will be.

Recommendations & Lessons Learned

Just weeks after the implementation of the mid-term evaluation, on 25 April 2015, a devastating earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale hit Nepal causing massive damage, displacement and loss of life in Kathmandu Valley. The recommendations of the mid-term should be viewed in this light.

In light of the evaluation, the following recommendations are made:

To the Project Team:

1. The project document should be refined and activities which are not feasible or no longer relevant should be discussed with the funder and omitted. Funds should be reallocated to actions with a higher likelihood of sustainability.
2. Activities that not have not yet started should be initiated.
3. The contribution of the project to regional processes should be more visible in reporting documents.
4. A lack of awareness of project activities across project sites was reported in India and Pakistan. More efforts to share information could be promoted.
5. An admin assistant should be appointed without further delay in India to avoid further delays in India.
6. The project team should develop a clear enumeration strategy to record the number of migrants that have benefited from the range of services and products implemented by the project. Where possible these numbers should be disaggregated by gender, age, education level, occupation, country of origin, country of residence, nature of support received and by whom.
7. Discussions regarding a Phase II project should be further developed. Projects which require the implementation of activities in countries of destination should consider project staff allocated in those countries.

8. The project staff should discuss the viability of requesting a no-cost extension with the EU Delegation in Nepal.

To the Funder:

1. Bearing in the mind that the Call for Proposals called for actions not exceeding 36 months while also recognising the project has faced challenges in its implementation largely due to establishing relationships of trust and mutual understanding with new partners, it would be the recommendation of the evaluation team that the project is granted a short no-cost extension.
2. Applicants for funding should be encouraged to an explicit inception phase in their project documents where the funder and the implementer sit together to discuss any contextual changes that may have implications for the project and refine the project design from the outset.
3. Where a project is administratively backstopped by one EU delegation but implemented in multiple countries, increased efforts to ensure coordination with other EU delegations should be pursued.
4. In tackling complex issues that involve interventions in different regions, targeted calls for interregional projects may be considered.

Lesson Learned

It is too early to really state the lessons that can be taken from the project, however a brief note can be offered on programming. Although it is not possible to already allocate funds from the third instalment of the project budget to activities, the strategic use of implementation agreements, which are then divided into different phases administratively, has been an effective way of planning many of the activities. For example the implementation agreements with GEFONT and MFA for developing support networks in GCC countries run until 2016. This allows the CTA to monitor ongoing progress, however also give the project partners a degree of continuity across the life of the project. This could be useful for future CTAs in

programming activities for their projects in other EC funded projects.

It is possible that future lessons regarding the relevance of mainstreaming migration for development, based on the work of the KMG with the National Planning Committee, could be offered an example for other projects, especially relating to the use of project funded knowledge products to provide inputs to these processes (such as the work on skills training which may be a factor contributing to migration) however it is really too early in its development to offer proper comment at this stage.