



ILO EVALUATION

- Evaluation Title: Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh
- ILO TC/SYMBOL: BGD/11/01/SDC
- Type of Evaluation : Final Independent Project Evaluation
- Country(ies) : Bangladesh
- Date of the evaluation: May-July 2015
- Name of consultant(s): Luca Aiolfi
- ILO Administrative Office: Country Office Bangladesh
- ILO Technical Backstopping Office: MIGRANT, Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
- Date project ends: 31 October 2015
- Donor: country and budget US\$ Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
US\$ 3,500,000
- Evaluation Manager: Erlien Wubs
- Evaluation Budget: US\$ 24,264
- Key Words: Labour migration - Migration policy

This evaluation has been conducted according to ILO's evaluation policies and procedures. It has not been professionally edited, but has undergone quality control by the ILO Evaluation Unit.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abbreviations and Acronyms

1. Executive Summary	4
2. Background and Project Description	11
3. Evaluation Purpose and Methodology	13
4. Overall Findings:	17
Relevance and strategic fit of the project	17
Validity of project design	18
Efficiency and implementation	20
Effectiveness	23
Emerging impact and sustainability	30
Gender concerns	33
5. Lessons learned, good practices and recommendations	34

ANNEX 1 – List of persons met/interviewed, Fact finding mission to Bangladesh 31 May – 9 June 2015	
ANNEX 2 - Participants to stakeholders' workshop, Dhaka, 9 June 2015	
ANNEX 3 - Indicator verification, June 2015	
ANNEX 4 – Terms of Reference of the evaluation	
ANNEX 5 - Inception Report	
ANNEX 6 - Good practices	
ANNEX 7 - Lessons Learnt	

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACIs	Areas of Critical Importance (ILO)
ACTRAV	Bureau for Workers' Activities (ILO)
AENEAS	Programme for Financial and Technical Assistance to Third Countries in the area of Migration and Asylum (EU)
BAIRA	Bangladesh Association of International Recruitment Agencies
BEF	Bangladesh Employers' Federation
BIAM	Bangladesh Institute of Administration and Management
BIL	BRAC Institute of Languages
BILS	Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies
BLAST	BLAST (Outreach at Law)
BMET	Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training
BOESL	Bangladesh Overseas Employment and Services Ltd.
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CBOs	Community-based Organisations
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
DAM	Dhaka Ahsania Mission
DEMOS	District Employment and Manpower Offices
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme (ILO)
ERD	External Resources Department - Ministry of Finance
EU	European Union
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
G2G	Government-to-Government (bilateral agreements)
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HDRC	Human Development Resource Centre
IMED	Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division, Ministry of Planning
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILO/DWT CO	International Labour Organization/Decent Work Team Country Office
IOM	International Organization for Migration
JC	Joint Committee (for Bilateral Cooperation)
KLAC	Kuala Lumpur Legal Aid Centre
MACCs	Migration Advisory and Counseling Centers
MEWOE	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
MFA	Migrants Forum Asia
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MRU	Market Research Unit
MTE	Mid-Term Evaluation

NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPC	National Project Coordinator
NWCCE	National Coordination Committee for Workers' Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OVI	Objectively verifiable indicators
PARDEV	Department of Partnership and Field Support (ILO)
PCC	Project Coordinating Committee
PDT	Pre-Departure Training
PMT	Project Management Team
PSC	Project Steering Committee
RMMRU	Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit
ROAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ILO)
ROAS	Regional Office for Arab States (ILO)
SARTUC	South Asian Regional Trade Union Council
SB	Special Branch (Police)
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation
SEA	South-East Asia
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
ToRs	Terms of Reference
ToT	Training of Trainers
TPMA	Thematic Programme on Cooperation with Third Countries in the areas of Migration and Asylum (EU)
TTCs	Technical Training Centers
TUs	Trade Unions
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women
UN WOMEN	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
WARBE	WARBE Development Foundation
WEWB	Wage Earners' Welfare Board
WEWF	Wage Earners' Welfare Fund

1. Executive Summary

The project “**Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh**” (BGD/11/01/SDC) is funded by the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and executed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) with a project budget of US\$ 3,500,000. The beneficiary country is Bangladesh.

The project duration was initially set at three years with 1 July 2011 as the official starting date. However activities could only start in mid 2012, due to a longer than expected approval process by the Government of Bangladesh and for this reason it was extended a first time by one year to 30 June 2015. A second no-cost extension by four months has been recently granted, to allow for the completion of all pending activities, and the final end date of the project is therefore set at 31 October 2015.

The project represents the first phase of a wider engagement by the Government of Bangladesh, with technical and financial assistance from ILO and SDC, to improve the governance of labour migration, the protection of migrant workers and the promotion of migration development linkages.

The main implementing partners of the project are the Ministry of Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE) and its Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM).

The project was designed as a first phase, in order to explore a range of actions towards establishing a labour migration governance framework, to be followed by a second phase meant to expand programme framework for legal, policy and institutional strengthening for improved social protection and outreach and proven practices on the basis of learning and identified needs. While implementation of the first phase is approaching its conclusion, project development for the second phase is already at an advanced stage. The new intervention (with a foreseen duration of five years) is expected to start in the second half of 2015 to overlap with the ongoing phase for smooth exit and entry between the two phases.

The overall objective of the project is “to contribute to the sustainable economic and social development of Bangladesh through the creation of decent employment opportunities and the protection of the male and female migrant workers and their family members”.

More specifically, it pursues a three-pronged intervention strategy and accordingly consists of three well defined components, separate but mutually reinforcing, having the following specific objectives or project outcomes:

- 1) Strengthened policy and institutional frameworks to maximize the development impact of migration and the improved protection of migrant male and female workers and their families;
- 2) Improved operational efficiency and effectiveness in overseas employment promotion and social protection for male and female Bangladeshi workers, with special attention to regulation and supervision of recruitment agencies and the reduction of migration costs for aspiring migrant workers;
- 3) Strengthened social protection and support for Bangladeshi migrant workers, with special attention on female migrant workers, available onsite and on their return.

The present evaluation is an independent final evaluation and its purpose is to determine whether the project objectives have been achieved as well as to assess the emerging impact of the project. The evaluation team consists of one independent international consultant (Team Leader) and one independent national consultant.

The evaluation has covered the project duration from inception until June 2015 (there will still be four months of project implementation, as a result of the recently approved project extension) and will serve the following - external and internal - stakeholder groups :

- Government of Bangladesh;
- Target groups, project implementing partners and ILO tripartite constituents in Bangladesh;
- The Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC);
- ILO management and technical specialists at ILO DWT/CO Bangladesh, ROAP and Headquarters;
- Project staff;
- Final beneficiaries of the project – female and male migrant workers.

The evaluation has been conducted in accordance with the ILO guidelines for independence, credibility and transparency and has followed the OECD/DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance. It has therefore addressed the following criteria: relevance and strategic fit of the project; validity of design; efficiency and implementation (including overall management approach); effectiveness; emerging impact and sustainability. In addition, the evaluation has paid particular attention to gender concerns, as a primary cross-cutting theme. Finally, the evaluation findings attempt to document lessons learned and good practices, and give way to a set of recommendations addressed to the relevant authorities, ILO, SDC, and other project partners, for their consideration with respect to the envisaged second phase of the project.

The methodology of the evaluation is based on the review of project documentation, on interviews with key stakeholders and on the participation in selected events during the fact-finding mission to Bangladesh.

Main conclusions of the evaluation

From the analysis of findings provided in the report, the following main conclusions were drawn:

Relevance and strategic fit of the project

Plenty of evidence has emerged during the evaluation on the high relevance of the project to the needs and constraints of Bangladesh in the area of labour migration. The project was formulated at the request of the Government of Bangladesh (MEWOE) and is fully in line with the fundamental policy documents of the country, in particular with the 6th Five Year Plan (2011-2015) and the National Sustainable Development Strategy of Bangladesh, 2010 – 2021. It has been found fully consistent with essential elements of the Swiss Cooperation Strategy for Bangladesh and with the ILO Decent Work Country Programme for 2012-2015. Furthermore, the project fits strategically with ILO's mandate to protect migrant workers, international labour standards and key instruments for the protection of migrant workers, including relevant international conventions and the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration. A process of constant cooperation among project partners and stakeholders has ensured that the project has remained highly relevant throughout its implementation. The project was in fact moulded along the way through a participatory process aimed at better defining the concrete activities which were necessary to eventually achieve the stated objectives.

Validity of project design

The project is quite complex and addresses all critical aspects of labour migration governance with a particularly strong emphasis on policy development and institutional support. It consists of three components characterized by strong inter-connections. While the three specific objectives and relating main outputs remained valid throughout project duration, very significant changes took place in terms of methodological adaptation and at the level of activities during implementation. This flexibility and design adaptation is one of the strong features of the project and the national partners have been fully associated to this process of change. However, given the large number of partners involved and the complex inter-linking of the issues

addressed, it has been difficult to maintain the logical coherence of having no more than one partner for each block of activities. These were divided in so many sub-activities implemented by different stakeholders with the result that tracking progress became almost impossible and that lines of responsibility tended to evaporate. Ideally, in a complex intervention such as this, a “one output - one partner” relationship should be maintained in order to ensure accountability and facilitate coordination.

Efficiency and implementation

The project is very well managed technically and administratively by a Project Management Team (PMT) located within the premises of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE). The PMT happens to be very reduced in size, particularly for a project of this complexity, its activity diversification, the high technical content of most outputs and the considerable number of partners involved at various levels in the project. The choice of office location, has made it possible to maintain constant contact with all relevant MEWOE wings and BMET and this has greatly facilitated cooperation and coordination. There has been good quality and extensive reporting by the ILO/PMT on progress achieved. The project has witnessed delays from its inception. Apart from the late start-up due to a lengthy approval process, delays have predominantly affected blocks of activities relating to the second and third components implemented by international partners. Some difficulties in harmonizing project interventions have materialized and a degree of “confusion and disagreements on project directions have sometimes resulted in stagnation”. However, in the final stages of the project, all partners have acted upon a recommendation of the Mid-Term Evaluation and made an extraordinary effort to bring implementation back on track.

Effectiveness

An analysis of project effectiveness has been carried out by project component. The project had a very vast aim and the activities carried out covered an ever increasing range of issues. While considerable achievements were made, these are not in most cases self-conclusive but do represent the necessary groundwork for a longer term process that needs to be sustained. This was clear from the outset and stakeholders are currently working at a smooth transition to a new (longer) phase which should ensure expansion and consolidation of results. A large number of high-quality outputs were produced, shared and disseminated as appropriate; furthermore, evidence has emerged that these outputs fed into the elaboration of labour migration policies by national stakeholders. The three specific objectives have been largely achieved. However, some activities relating to the third specific objective, that is, two activities under outputs/results 3.2 and all activities under 3.3, were implemented at the very end of the project and substantial evidence and reports have not yet materialized to help forming a definitive opinion on overall achievement for that component. In any case, since these activities concerning setting up a referral system and social and professional reintegration of returned workers had the character of pilot initiatives, and could not be based on earlier documented experience, they will have to be further analyzed and assessed in connection with the formulation process for the new project/second phase. Scope of advisory assistance to the MEOWE and WEWB has been widened by the ILO to address the challenges arising from delays in these activities. The resultant decision to address life and health benefits and strengthen the legal foundation is an example of this efforts. Stronger advocacy has also led to the enhanced efforts by the government to provide pre-departure orientation to migrating workers and a commitment to progressively move towards 100 per cent coverage of the migrating workers under pre-departure services.

Emerging impact and sustainability

Substantial evidence of initial or likely impact has emerged during the evaluation. The project brought together for the first time several categories of stakeholders (Government, Trade Unions, employers, recruitment agencies, international organizations, NGOs, research institutions, etc) which had only been engaged separately, at one time or another, in earlier projects on international migration. This dialogue shift was an important achievement. The strategy used by ILO has been admirable since it has not attempted to lead or impose the discussion but has rather put the constituents at the forefront, allowing them to define their own priorities, stepping in eventually to provide technical assistance to support agreed courses of actions, which are of course inspired by international instruments, standards and best practices. As regards the institutional framework, there is evidence of emerging impact at several levels following enactment by Parliament of the Overseas Employment and Migrant's Act, 2013, drafted with ILO's technical assistance, while the comprehensive reviews of BMET and WEF are expected to have a direct impact on the programmatic outlook and work modalities of these entities and this will in turn impact on the actual delivery (and content) of the services to be provided to migrant workers. Ownership and sustainability are also quite high due to the active involvement of national stakeholders in the definition of the activities and throughout project implementation; in particular, once formulated, these activities were taken into the national plans of action of the targeted institutions and this is an additional indicator of the level of ownership acquired by the project.

Gender concerns

Gender concerns have been satisfactorily addressed through the project. The project emphasizes a rights-based approach in line with the Beijing Platform of Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) and has a "women-focused" approach to gender equality. Bringing to the forefront the woman perspective was a considerable achievement in an environment where traditional considerations had often prevailed. While several activities were designed to benefit specifically migrant women, all have paid particular attention to gender aspects. The project has contributed to fill many longstanding gaps. Data disaggregated by gender has been collected and is now available and utilized by researchers, administrators and other stakeholders to develop policies and concrete responses in problem areas. All training and capacity building initiatives were developed in a gender-sensitive fashion and included strong components on women issues. Skills diversification was promoted through the contribution of project partners. All migrant women now receive pre-departure briefing/orientation; help-lines were set up in Muscat, Oman and Dubai, United Arab Emirates to ensure that migrant women have an outreach/access to air their grievances, and many more examples are documented of activities which lay special emphasis on women. The PMT includes a dedicated Gender Focal Point for monitoring and reporting on all project activities from a gender perspective.

Lessons learned

The main lessons learned from the project are the following:

1. Flexibility of design and in implementation turned out to be very beneficial for the actual achievement of the intended results in view of the participatory approach followed in all phases of the project cycle. The active involvement of all national stakeholders in this process of adaptation, has ensured the constant alignment of the activities with their needs and priorities and this had a clear impact on ownership of results.

2. The project was characterized by a very comprehensive approach which was necessary to overcome the high degree of fragmentation, that prevailed at the time of its conception, in providing responses to international migration challenges. By inter-linking all relevant dimensions of labour migration and bringing together for the first time all fundamental actors in this domain, the project represented a first attempt of coordinated action in this field. This approach should be directly credited with the impressive achievements reached, particularly as regards policy development and a strengthened institutional framework and commitments concerning outreach and social protection.
3. While it is universally recognized that the ILO's tripartite structure is a given factor for generating added value, the contributions of the ILO Country Office and PMT were in this case particularly crucial in view of the fact that (in Bangladesh) Government, trade unions and employers (plus civil society) do not have a tradition of close cooperation. The project, by bringing together all different categories of stakeholders and allowing all constituents to participate in the elaboration of the various activities, directly contributed to a dialogue shift which should prove its significance beyond the scope of an individual project. The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE) has taken technical cooperation from the ILO very seriously, especially as regards social protection and outreach to the migrant workers. MEWOE fully understands ILO's mandate in promoting employment and social protection and inclusion which has enabled officials and other partners to develop new services, assess new policies and exchange good practices in outreach through trade unions and employers' organizations.
4. A degree of ambiguity and misunderstanding could not be avoided at the project outset among some implementers regarding the ultimate responsibility for project direction, the role to be played by each in project execution, the chosen implementation modalities and the need to maintain the necessary inter-linkage between the different components. Pre-nomination of implementing partners was made on the basis of past engagement in the sector, which led to pre-project attributions of outputs prior to their detailed conceptualization, or more general assumptions regarding operational capacity. This has created problems because once activities had been fully elaborated, or incorporated into the project as part of the described design adaptation, it appeared evident that the original repartition of competencies was not in fact optimal and other potential partners were sometimes in a better position to implement specific activities and had sometimes to be taken on board.
5. While project adaptation along the way has been a positive factor and has ensured continued relevance, it has been difficult to maintain the logical coherence given not-so-logical distribution of activities under single outputs among the ILO, the IOM and UN Women. Activities were also divided in so many sub-activities and distributed among the ILO and its two international organization partners with the result that tracking progress under those outputs became almost impossible and that lines of responsibility tended to evaporate. It also weakened the ability of the PMT to keep sub-activities logically connected as one activity or all activities under one output. A complex project of this kind should try to simplify things as much as possible by maintaining, ideally, a "one output - one partner" relationship in order to ensure accountability and facilitate coordination. This is not only an issue of effectiveness but also essential from the perspective of financial tracking for measuring cost-effectiveness.

Good practices

The project has generated several good practices of which the key ones are:

1. The project provided a platform and a framework for all categories of stakeholders to come together and express their views and ask questions to each other. The strategy used by the ILO project in pursuing this has been admirable in the sense that it has not attempted to lead or impose the

discussion but has rather put the constituents at the forefront, allowing them to define their priorities, to seek concurrence of all participants to the dialogue within a specific category, and step in eventually to provide technical assistance to support agreed courses of actions, which are of course inspired by international instruments, standards and best practices.

2. The project inspired confidence-building and made possible effective collaboration among all target groups (despite their differences) in achieving their own specific as well as common goals in this complex and multi-faceted project. The fact that the PMT is based within the premises of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment was of high strategic and practical value as it made possible to maintain constant contact (formal and informal) with all the relevant MEWOE wings, the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) and the Wage Earners' Welfare Fund (WEWF) and therefore facilitates cooperation and coordination at a national level on a daily basis. The choice of office location has in fact produced effects that go beyond the project itself as it allowed the PMT, among other things, to support the government counterparts when they required including through ad hoc extra-project specific inputs.
3. The project has produced a vast number of studies, research and practical tools of generally high quality which were made accessible to relevant stakeholders. Evidence has emerged that these outputs are currently used by the target groups in defining their policies and priorities, for the elaboration of new project interventions or as the basis for further evaluation and research. Given the high turnover that affects most, if not all, the actors involved, there is however the need to ensure capitalisation of the knowledge produced by the project over the longer term by assisting target groups, whenever required, in systematizing the knowledge provided.

Recommendations

1. The design of the new project/second phase should be based on extensive pre-project consultations with all relevant actors in the field of international migration in order to ensure the consistency of the follow up intervention and to avoid redundancy and duplication with other initiatives being planned or carried out by primary stakeholders in Bangladesh.

Addressed to ILO, SDC and MEWOE - High priority – No financial resources required

2. The first project/phase had a very wide scope – which was a correct strategy at the time – but it might be advisable to follow a more focused approach for the new project/second phase. This however should not impact the participation areas agreed with the ILO constituents, particularly the workers' and employers' organization, and the ILO's mandate and role concerning social security and protection of the workers.

Addressed to ILO and MEWOE - High priority - No financial resources required

3. There seem to exist some deficiencies in the country as regards thematic coordination on migration in general among international organizations and NGOs involved in this field. An independent mechanism to ensure that regular rounds of consultation do take place between these actors (in addition to individual meetings) in order to facilitate such coordination, to avoid duplication of activities and enable practical synergies would be essential.

Addressed to ILO, SDC and international organizations and NGOs involved in the labour migration field in Bangladesh - Medium priority - Limited financial resources required

4. Pre-nomination of implementing partners is not recommended for the new project/phase. ILO should try to maintain, across the entire project cycle, a one output/one partner relationship in order to draw clear lines of responsibility for the actual production of outputs.

Addressed to ILO - High priority - No financial resources required

5. While continuity is essential and completed activities are necessarily leading to new ones, technical assistance from ILO in the new project/phase should primarily serve the purpose of helping the Government of Bangladesh in “internalizing” the outputs produced and in making possible their operationalization.

Addressed to ILO, MEWOE, BMET and other national stakeholders (including Workers' Organizations, Employers' Organizations and BAIRA) - High priority - Targeted allocation of financial resources through the formulation process required

6. Attention must be paid to geographic prioritization in the next project/phase. While civil society has a fundamental role to play in expanding outreach at the community level, in connecting effectively with people at the periphery, stronger operational partnerships should be developed from the outset and become a pre-requisite for financial support. Furthermore, mechanisms should be put in place to enable positive and constructive interaction between NGOs and the State (by effectively involving local authorities in the planned activities) so as to transfer achievements at the local level into the overall dynamics.

Addressed to ILO, MEWOE, BMET and other relevant government institutions - Medium priority - Financial resources required

7. At the same time, suitable civil society organisations should be identified, and more vigorously mobilized, including through appropriate capacity building and by supporting their participation in international networks, for the purpose of establishing partnerships with operational counterparts in countries of destination with a view to provide fundamental support to migrant workers.

Addressed to ILO, MEWOE and implementing partners eventually called upon to carry out project activities and produce outputs during the second phase - Medium priority - Limited financial resources required

2. Background and Project Description

The project “**Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh**” (BGD/11/01/SDC) is funded by the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC) and executed by the International Labour Organization (ILO) with a project budget of US\$ 3,500,000. The beneficiary country is Bangladesh.

The project duration is from 1 July 2011 to 31 October 2015. Activities could only start in mid 2012, due to a longer than expected approval process¹ by the Government of Bangladesh, and for this reason it was extended a first time by one year from the original end date (30 June 2014) to 30 June 2015. By the time this evaluation was fielded, a second no-cost extension by four months was officially granted, to allow for the completion of all pending activities, and the final end date of the project is therefore set at 31 October 2015.

The project represents the first phase of a wider engagement by the Government of Bangladesh, with technical and financial assistance from ILO and SDC, to improve the governance of labour migration, the protection of migrant workers and the promotion of migration development linkages.

The project concept was originally elaborated as a follow-up to the recommendations of a regional ILO/SDC symposium on labour migration held in Dhaka in July 2008. Following this symposium, the Government of Bangladesh, through the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE), requested the International Labour Organization to take the lead in formulating and planning "a comprehensive approach in strengthening the government's administration of overseas employment".

Development of the initial project ideas and overall concept in a full fledged project document took place over a considerable period of time (2009-2011). In addition to MEWOE and its Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), which were envisaged as main implementing partners from the outset, the Government of Bangladesh requested that the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)², who had been actively engaged in migration programmes in the country over several years, be also included by ILO and the donor as international implementing partners in the ILO-executed project. Further project development did therefore take stock of a very substantial range of migration-related efforts by these as well as other relevant actors in Bangladesh over the last few years while at the same time attempting to harmonise the different programmatic approaches and operational modalities of the primary implementing partners.

Finally, to reflect the important role that civil society organisations can play in reaching out to migrant communities, the Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM) was included from the outset of the formulation process as a pre-determined key implementing partner of the project.

The project, subject of this evaluation exercise, was designed as a first phase, in order to explore a range of actions towards establishing a labour migration governance framework, to be followed by a second phase meant to expand proven practices on the basis of learning and identified needs. While implementation of the first phase is approaching its conclusion, project development for the second phase is already at an advanced stage and the new intervention (with a foreseen duration of five years) is expected to start in the second half of 2015 to overlap with the first phase for smooth exit and entry between the two phases.

¹This approval process is known as TPP (Technical Programme Proposal).

² At the time, the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

The overall objective of the project is “to contribute to the sustainable economic and social development of Bangladesh through the creation of decent employment opportunities and the protection of the male and female migrant workers and their family members”.

More specifically, the ongoing project (first phase) pursues a three-pronged intervention strategy and accordingly consists of three well defined components, separate but mutually reinforcing, having the following specific objectives or project outcomes:

- 1) Strengthened policy and institutional frameworks to maximize the development impact of migration and the improved protection of migrant male and female workers and their families;

[Measures to upgrade legal, policy and institutional frameworks, including the training of a core team of committed male and female professionals on managing migration for decent work and enhancing migration knowledge through research and meaningful statistics]

- 2) Improved operational efficiency and effectiveness in overseas employment promotion and social protection for male and female Bangladeshi workers, with special attention to regulation and supervision of recruitment agencies and the reduction of migration costs for aspiring migrant workers;

[Gender sensitive measures to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and relevance of current processes and procedures with special attention to the better regulation of private recruitment agencies, recruitment fees and costs and increased social protection and services, especially women in vulnerable occupations]

- 3) Strengthened social protection and support for Bangladeshi migrant workers, with special attention on female migrant workers, available onsite and on their return.

[Measures to enhance services in countries of destination and to provide referral services to returning migrant workers, especially those most affected by the global economic crisis]

For each major component/objective, several clusters of activities were identified in the project document, and amended or better detailed as required during the course of implementation, for the purpose of obtaining the following planned outputs/results :

For objective 1

- Revised draft national migration policy prepared (R. 1.1);
- Mechanisms to foster bilateral cooperation on migration established (R 1.2);
- A planning, coordination and training unit (PCT) established at the BMET to be responsible for institutional coordination, labour market analysis and staff training (R 1.3);
- Sub-regional exchange of experiences and expertise of origin countries on migration management facilitated (R 1.4).

For objective 2

- Strategic measures to promote overseas employment in countries under protected conditions (R 2.1);
- Recruitment agencies better regulated and more effective licensing system established (R 2.2);

- Awareness raising programs aimed at introducing people to risks involved in overseas employment developed and implemented (R 2.3).

For objective 3 :

- Key social protection programs reviewed and revised to better serve male and female migrant workers and their families, with special attention on female migrant workers (R 3.1);
- System for monitoring return migration developed and operational (R 3.2);
- Three networks and institutions providing referral services for migrant workers established and functioning (R 3.3).

Analysis of the production of these outputs/results, and of the most significant activities and sub-activities, is provided in Chapter 4 – Overall Findings, particularly in the section on Effectiveness.

3. Evaluation Purpose and Methodology

The need for a final independent evaluation has been envisaged from the outset and was accordingly reflected in the original project design. This is in line with the ILO Evaluation Policy (November 2005) and ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation³ (2012) which provide for systematic evaluation of programmes and projects in order to improve quality, accountability, transparency of the ILO's work, strengthen the decision-making process and support constituents in forwarding decent work.

As stated in the Terms of Reference, the purpose of the evaluation is to determine whether the project objectives have been achieved and to assess the emerging impact of the project. More specifically, the evaluation has the following key objectives:

- To assess the extent to which the project has taken into account and acted upon the mid-term evaluation's recommendations;
- To assess the overall performance of the project against its results framework;
- To assess the effectiveness of the project's governance framework, and the effectiveness of the partnerships with implementing partners;
- To assess the emerging impact of the project and the sustainability of project results;
- To identify key lessons learnt and good practices, and provide recommendations for the implementation of the second phase, which is expected to commence from July/Aug 2015⁴.

The evaluation is managed by the ILO evaluation manager, based at ILO Headquarters, Department of Partnership and Development Cooperation (PARDEV). The evaluation team consists of one independent international consultant (Team Leader) and one independent national consultant.

³ ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_168289/lang--en/index.htm

⁴ As mentioned in the ToR, but now postponed to November/December 2015, at the earliest, following extension of the project/first phase until 31 October 2015.

The evaluation has covered the project duration from inception until June 2015 (there will still be four months of project implementation, as a result of the recently approved project extension) and will serve the following - external and internal - client groups:

- Government of Bangladesh ;
- Target groups, project implementing partners and ILO tripartite constituents in Bangladesh ;
- The Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) ;
- ILO management and technical specialists at ILO DWT/CO Bangladesh, ROAP and Headquarters;
- Project staff ;
- Final beneficiaries of the project – female and male migrant workers.

In line with the above indications, the project evaluation has taken place during the period 25 May – 17 July 2015, with the following breakdown of main activities:

Phase	Description	Tentative Dates	Responsible persons
1.	Briefing with evaluation manager (phone). Desk review of project documentation. Inception report.	25 – 29 May 2015	Evaluation team leader, with support from evaluation team
2.	Travel to Bangladesh	30 May 2015	Team Leader
3.	Fact finding mission in Bangladesh, consultations with stakeholders, meetings with ILO. A complete mission itinerary and agenda of meetings was prepared and constantly updated by the ILO project (please refer to the last available evaluation schedule for a full programme of the mission).	31 May – 8 June 2015	Evaluation team with logistical support from the project
4.	Stakeholders Workshop in Dhaka. Debriefing with ILO (PMT)	9 June 2015	Evaluation team leader, with support from evaluation team
5.	Return travel from Bangladesh	10 June 2015	Team Leader
6.	Draft evaluation report based on desk review and fact finding mission	16-25 June 2015 Submitted to Evaluation manager on 26 June 2015	Evaluation Team leader
7.	Circulate draft evaluation report to key stakeholders, consolidate comments and send to evaluation team leader	27 June – 19 July 2015	Evaluation manager
8.	Submission of revised evaluation report (including explanations if/why comments were not included)	20 July 2015	Evaluation team leader
9.	Final report, with ILO Summary and Lessons learnt/Best practices templates	24 July 2015	Evaluation team leader

A consolidated list of key stakeholders met during the evaluation mission (or interviewed by other means) is included as Annex 1. For a list of participants to the Stakeholders workshop if 9 June in Dhaka, please see Annex 2.

Methodology

The evaluation has been conducted in accordance with the ILO guidelines for independence, credibility and transparency and has followed the OECD/DAC criteria for evaluating development assistance.

It has therefore addressed the following overall aspects/criteria : relevance and strategic fit of the project; validity of design; efficiency and implementation (including overall management approach); effectiveness; emerging impact and sustainability.

For each criterion, the following potential issues were analysed :

Relevance and strategic fit of the project

Potential issues: a) compliance with national strategies and priorities in the context of the labour migration governance agenda and project consistency with ongoing trends and patterns of labour migration in Bangladesh and potential receiving countries; b) strategic fit of project objectives with ILO/DW country programming and ILO global strategies; c) compliance with SDC's cooperation strategy in Bangladesh.

Method: analysis of relevant documentation – interviews with stakeholders.

Indicators: degree of compliance, complementarity and focus.

Validity of project design

Potential issues: a) coherence of the overall project design; b) choice of stakeholders (partners, target groups etc) ; c) changes that occurred during the life of the project and consistency of new activities in relation with the original objectives and expected results.

Method: analysis of relevant documentation – interviews with stakeholders.

Indicators: level of pre-project preparation, synergy with other initiatives, follow-up given to the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation ; technical quality.

Efficiency and implementation (including overall management approach)

Potential issues: a) availability and use of resources ; b) management of the implementation and respect of timetable/deadlines ; effectiveness of the project governance structure (PSC, PCC) ; collaboration with key project partners; quality of outputs.

Method: analysis of relevant documentation – interviews with stakeholders.

Indicators: compliance with contractual obligations, rules and procedures; technical quality of work plans, reports and timelines; transparency.

Effectiveness

Potential issues: a) achievement of planned results/outputs by component and contribution to the achievement of the project objectives; b) level of involvement and participation of partners and target groups in actual implementation; c) level of satisfaction of partners, target groups and beneficiaries with the project outcomes.

Method: analysis of relevant documentation – interviews with stakeholders – participation in project events ; visit to selected field locations.

Indicators: compliance with project OVIs; degree of participation in project activities ; level, quality and timeliness of feedback received from stakeholders.

Emerging impact and sustainability

Potential issues: a) tangible impact on target groups (including benefits for female and male migrant workers); b) multiplier effects and scope for replication, extension of the project outcomes and dissemination of results ; c) institutional sustainability and ownership ; d) financial sustainability of the activities/structures funded or supported by the project; e) structural and possible long-term impacts.

Method: analysis of relevant documentation – interviews with stakeholders – visit to selected field locations.

Indicators: compliance with project OVIs ; coordination and complementarity with other initiatives ; forward planning by relevant stakeholders.

The evaluation has also paid particular attention to gender concerns, as a primary cross-cutting theme, in order to determine to what extent gender equality issues have been identified and addressed in the different components of the project and whether migrant women and men have benefited equitably from the various project activities.

Analysis of the project on the basis of the above-mentioned standard criteria was structured as much as possible along the lines proposed in the ToR in order to address the clusters of evaluation questions presented therein for each of these criteria and determine whether and/or to what extent the project has achieved its stated objectives and produced the desired outputs/results. The analysis of project effectiveness is broken down by component (see Overall findings) following the logical structure of the project.

Finally, the evaluation findings attempt to document lessons learned and good practices, and give way to a set of recommendations addressed to the relevant authorities, ILO, SDC, and other project partners, for their consideration with respect to the envisaged second phase of the project and other similar interventions in the future.

As regards the methodological approach, and considering the short time available for the actual implementation of the evaluation exercise, qualitative methods and tools for data collection and analysis have mostly applied; more specifically a combination of the following:

- a) Desk review of relevant project documentation (Project document and logical framework; Mid-term evaluation report; Technical Cooperation Progress Reports, work plans, monitoring reports; minutes of PSC meetings; Bangladesh DWCP; knowledge products; surveys and other key documents and handouts produced by the project; Concept-note for Phase II, etc.);
- b) Individual interviews of key informants or focus group interviews with target groups arranged during the mission to Bangladesh;
- c) Interviews by skype or telephone with selected informants based outside Bangladesh including for the initial briefing and post-field visit debriefing, as applicable;
- d) Direct on-site observation of some project activities (through participation to project events in Dhaka during the fact finding mission or supplementary field visits to selected locations by the national evaluator to complement information gathered at the central level) to enable assess the impact of the project and give an insight of the progress achieved;
- e) Stakeholders workshop in Bangladesh with project partners, tripartite constituents, Project Steering Committee members and other stakeholders (as applicable) to be held at the end of the mission (9 June) to present the preliminary findings of the evaluation and provide an opportunity for self-evaluation to stakeholders, to reflect on lessons learned and best practices and to suggest possible recommendations for the future.

The fact finding mission was followed by a reporting phase and the draft final report was submitted on 26 June. The evaluation results and conclusions rely on the analysis and referencing of information received during the interviews, meetings and workshops, together with the review of written project material. They also rely on personal observations of situations related to labour migration, and on parallels drawn with other projects implemented in this sector in Bangladesh and other countries (when applicable) in the course of previous evaluation exercises.

4. Overall Findings

Relevance and strategic fit of the project

Relevance was assessed from several perspectives.

International labour migration is a fact of life for Bangladesh and its paramount importance goes beyond existing economic indicators. Since 1976, over 9.2 million Bangladeshis have found employment abroad, mainly in the Middle East, and it is estimated that currently more than 8 million Bangladeshis are living and working in more than one hundred countries across the world. Migrant workers currently represent about 13% of the total labour force of the country and remittances account for more than 10% of the GDP. In the 2012–13 fiscal year, the remittances sent to Bangladesh through legal channels by migrant workers were US\$14.46 billion and Bangladesh is currently ranked sixth among the top ten remittance-receiving countries in the world (and it is the second largest remittance receiver in South Asia)⁵. The outbound migration of workers have stabilized in the last couple of years at about 400,000 - 425,000 per annum (but it was even higher during the life of the project: over 600,000 in 2012) which represents a significant safety valve as far as employment is concerned for a country where generating decent work in the domestic market, at the level required by the existing demand, remains a major challenge given that over 1,5 million people do reach the working age every year.

Plenty of evidence has emerged from the analysis of project documentation and during the field interviews with national stakeholders on the high relevance of the project (in its three components) to the needs and constraints of Bangladesh in the area of labour migration. First of all, the ongoing project - which aims to contribute to the sustainable economic and social development of Bangladesh through technical cooperation in strengthening national efforts to improve migration policy and its applicable programmes – was formulated at the request of the Government of Bangladesh (MEWOE) who took the initiative and actually steered the project conception phase, as explained in the Background and Project description chapter. It is therefore not surprising that the project concept appears fully in line with the fundamental policy documents of the country. In this regard, labour migration has been for quite a long time an integral part of the poverty elimination strategy of the Government with its underlying objective of becoming in due course a middle income country (Government of Bangladesh Vision 2021). More precisely, the Government of Bangladesh has fully recognised that a well-functioning labour migration system which supports high quality overseas employment (for those who freely choose it) is an essential element of this strategy. The project is therefore fully consistent with the 6th Five Year Plan (2011-2015), with other national strategies (including the National Sustainable Development Strategy of Bangladesh, 2010 – 2021) and specific priorities in this area which are meant to address the many gaps and negative conditions that prevent individuals from fully realizing the potential benefits of labour migration. Through its multi-dimensional approach, the project subject to this evaluation therefore directly contributes, by providing the necessary groundwork, to the efforts of the Government of Bangladesh in addressing these gaps and challenges :

- Enabling the poorest to access training and overseas work opportunities ;
- Increasing the skill level of migrants to enhance their earnings and empowerment ;
- Enabling more women, in a wider range of occupations, to work overseas in conditions of safety and respect ;
- Providing a range of services to support migrant workers while abroad and on return ;

⁵See *In the corridors of remittance: cost and use of remittances in Bangladesh*, Abul Barkat, Asmar Osman, Subhash Kumar Sen Gupta, (HDFC), International Labour Organization, Dhaka: ILO, 2014.

- Establishing the necessary national frameworks and institutions ;
- Negotiating MoUs and bilateral agreements with destination countries (also with a view to expanding the range of destination countries beyond traditional GCC countries and for ensuring the dignity of male and female migrants at destination).

As explained more in detail in the following sections, relevance is clearly not limited only to the original project concept. The project was in fact moulded along the way through a participatory process aimed at better defining the concrete activities which were necessary to eventually achieve the stated objectives. This was done through constant cooperation with the national target groups and the chosen modus operandi made it possible for the continued relevance of the project to be ensured.

The project is likewise fully in line and fits strategically with ILO constitutional mandate to protect migrant workers, international labour standards and key instruments for the protection of migrant workers including relevant international conventions and the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration. Furthermore, its development objective and the three specific objectives are clearly consistent with the ILO Decent Work Country Programme for Bangladesh for 2012-2015 and in particular with DWCP priority 3 (Extending social protection to the workers and their families, including migrant workers) and relating DWCP outcome 9 (Management system of labour migration improved). Blocks of activities foreseen by the project directly contribute and address a number of ILO's Areas of Critical Importance (ACIs). As a further testimony of the continued relevance of the project, it should be noted how its components have specifically started to address at an early time areas which would later be underlined in all their significance as the six points of the ILO Agenda for Fair Migration, approved at the International Labour Conference (ILC) in 2014, or address issues which are consistent with the newly developed outcomes and indicators of the ILO Programme and Budget 2016 – 2017.

The project is also aligned to the UN Development Framework (both UNDAF, 2006-10 and UNDAF, 2012-16). Of the current UNDAF's seven pillars and twelve outcomes, the following are most directly linked to the ongoing project:

- Pillar one - Democratic governance and human rights;
- Pillar two - Pro-poor economic growth with equity;
- Pillar three - Social services for human development (particularly Outcome 2 on Social protection);
- Pillar seven - Gender equality and women's advancement

Finally, the project objectives and the three-pronged strategy pursued also appears in line with the essential elements of the Swiss Cooperation Strategy of Bangladesh at the time of project conception as well as with the current strategy for 2013-17, in particular its goal under the domain for Skills Development for Bangladesh aiming "to support measures and policy development intended to reduce the costs of migration including through the provision of life and vocational skills".

Validity of project design

The project is quite complex and addresses a wide range of issues. The shared aspiration of its primary initiators was to build upon earlier interventions, which were characterized by a more restricted scope, and design this time a very comprehensive programme addressing all critical aspects of labour migration governance with a particularly strong emphasis on policy development and institutional support. This proposition found translation in the chosen project architecture consisting of three components which were well detailed and logically structured by pertinent blocks of results/outputs and clusters of activities. Although there are strong inter-connections between components, and it was necessary to address them concurrently during the first phase, each (and particularly the third component) do in fact lead towards

different directions and scopes of work which might possibly find expression in separate and more focused follow up interventions, addressing specific individual components, during the second phase.

A logical framework matrix was prepared at the beginning of the formulation stage and only slightly revised later on to reflect more precisely the means of verification for the stated indicators. The latter, however, were not clearly defined and quantified from the outset, as pointed out by the Mid-Term Evaluation (MTE) carried out in October 2013. It was in fact one of the recommendations of the MTE that the indicators of achievement be clarified in more precise terms in order to make it possible to analyze the accomplishments reached upon closure of the project/first phase. Since the required effort for adjusting the indicators appeared to be linked to another shortcoming identified, and recommendation made, by the MTE (the need to conduct an impact analysis - see paragraph on impact and sustainability) which could not be accommodated under this project/phase, the setting of realistic and measurable indicators was also ultimately left unattended. Nevertheless, it should have been possible for the primary stakeholders to come together and provide, at no extra cost to the project, this essential improvement to the logical framework. As a matter of fact, by the end of 2013, many activities had already been completed and sufficient background information did exist and could be accessed in order to clarify the initial indicators and define project targets more specifically.

While the three specific objectives/outcomes and the relating main outputs to be produced remained valid throughout project duration, very significant changes took place at the level of activities and sub-activities during implementation. Furthermore, considerable changes were required in terms of methodological adaptation. This occurred for a number of reasons. Firstly, not all activities had been already identified, or sufficiently elaborated and detailed in the original project document – something that is not always easy to do, or at all possible, given the dynamic context of migration and expected long period of implementation during which drastic changes can occur. Secondly, modifications were in fact made in response to the needs of target groups, as they developed, due to mutating circumstances or to ensure complementarity with other initiatives and cost effectiveness. This flexibility and design adaptation is one of the strong features of the project and served the purpose of maintaining the same as highly relevant and in line with a constantly changing environment. This process of adaptation appears quite evident when comparing different monitoring tools produced by the project (for instance the first and second workplans). The national partners in particular have been fully associated to this process of change and continued to evaluate how activities had remained valid or whether alternatives and/or corrective measures should instead have been pursued.

As briefly explained in chapter 2, the elaboration of the project concept first and, ultimately, the formulation of the project document under analysis took a long period of time. This means that pre-project consultations with the national partners, for the purpose of incorporating their needs and constraints in the original proposal, and with the implementing partners, to design the mechanics of the intervention and develop activities and operational modalities, were overstretched through time. When this happens, gaps in the consultation process usually do arise, particularly when important personnel changes affect one or more of the primary stakeholders (and in this case all had been affected to the point that institutional memory on the early stages of the project cannot always be given for granted). Nevertheless, because of the flexibility of design witnessed by the project, these gaps had more of an impact on efficiency and management (as we shall see) rather than on design per se. However, at least two additional specific points should be made here which have a direct bearing on the validity of the project design.

Firstly, communication and awareness are both very prominent strategies and important areas of work to be taken into consideration and addressed in the project. However, these were elaborated as stand-alone activities, for the most part concentrated under output 2.3 (Awareness raising programmes aimed at introducing people to the risks involved in overseas employment developed and implemented), rather than as an overall communication strategy (and budget) meant to support the project as a whole. Once activities leading to the attainment of output 2.3 were completed, no budget was left to support additional communication requirements for the various components. This was clearly an oversight at the design stage and in future a communication and awareness strategy should be planned and integrated throughout the entire project (in addition to developing specific self-contained awareness activities).

Secondly, given that two other international partners were involved and the complex inter-linking of the issues at hand - with these partners having dealt with the same issues in past endeavours - a rather poor strategy of breaking down individual outputs among the three international organizations was adopted with the result that the logical coherence of those outputs was affected. Activities were divided in so many sub-activities implemented by the ILO and its two international partners with the result that tracking progress became almost impossible and that lines of responsibility tended to evaporate. Likewise, some implementing partners resorted to further sub-contracting down the line which made things even more complicated. On the contrary, a complex project of this kind should try to simplify things as much as possible by maintaining, ideally, a "one output - one partner" relationship in order to ensure accountability and facilitate coordination.

Efficiency and implementation

The project is very well managed technically and administratively by a Project Management Team (PMT) led by a Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) and located within the premises of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE). The CTA works very closely with a National Project Coordinator (NPC), a senior official at the rank of Additional Secretary, designated by the MEWOE for the primary purpose of maintaining a very close coordination and liaison between the project and the ministry. The CTA reports directly to the Director of the ILO Country Office in Dhaka. While overall technical, financial and management responsibilities lies therefore with the CTA, under the supervision of the ILO Country Office, technical backstopping is regularly provided by the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP) and additional support can be mobilized for specific activities from ILO HQ - Department of Partnership and Development Cooperation (PARDEV), MIGRANT, EMP/SKILLS and ACTRAV technical units – as well as from other ILO regional and country offices and specialized units, as applicable and required.

The PMT happens to be very reduced in size, particularly for a project of this complexity, its activity diversification, the high technical content of most outputs and the considerable number of partners (and co-partners) and other stakeholders involved at various levels in the project. It consists, in addition to the CTA, of just one National Programme Officer, one administrative/financial assistant and one driver. As such, the project has huge technical staff deficiencies which could only be made up by the CTA taking up an ever increasing load of tasks in a rather stakanovistic fashion which is clearly a personalized rather than institutionalized solution to the problem. It must be mentioned however that in the initial stages the project had the opportunity to avail itself of the useful contribution of an SDC expert – a position covered by the donor at no extra cost for the project and the country – and, as a result, staffing shortcomings were less evident as long as this arrangement lasted.

The PMT coordinates all activities in close cooperation with the project partners and has regular communication with all other stakeholders involved. The fact that the PMT is based within the premises of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment, rather than at the ILO Country Office, makes it possible to maintain constant contact (formal and informal) with all the relevant MEWOE wings, the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) and the Wage Earners' Welfare Fund (WEWF) and therefore facilitates cooperation and coordination on a daily basis. The choice of office location produces effects that go beyond the project itself and these effects do in turn eventually reinforce the project environment in a kind of virtuous circle. For example, it allowed the PMT to support the national counterparts when they required it including through ad hoc extra-project specific inputs, to progressively build their trust, to customize a mutually beneficial modus operandi, to consult them separately on more contentious issues before bringing them together as soon as enough confidence had been built and/or an agreement in principle reached, to facilitate social dialogue by increasingly bringing together Trade Unions and Government in view of the office contiguity and so on.

There is regular reporting by the implementing agency of progress achieved through the project. Reporting requirements, whether contractually sanctioned or not, are however quite stringent and more demanding on the PMT than it is usually the case for similar ILO projects in other countries. Although formal interim reports (Technical Cooperation Progress Reports) are only required, as per the ILO-SDC Agreement provisions, on a six months basis in the form of six-monthly and annual reports, the PMT also prepares a number of other reports to the Government, including Quarterly and Monthly reports to the MEWOE. MEWOE must in fact report monthly to different bodies, such as IMED and ERD, as per standard procedures of the Government of Bangladesh, on its regular activities including on the progress of the ILO project given that such activities are fully incorporated in its national plan of action. This in turn makes it a requirement for the PMT to submit monthly and quarterly reports to enable MEWOE to comply with the above. Furthermore, flow of information on the status of the project is supplemented by Monitoring Reports (which feed into the Six-months Technical Cooperation Report to the donor), Partners' Reports (that need to be verified, supplemented, edited and customized as required); ad hoc Technical Reports covering specific activities; Programme and Budget Reports of the ILO; contribution reports to UNDAF, Work Plans (constantly updated) and several Monitoring Matrix (such as Indicators' verification tables, Accomplishments by activity and output, etc) which provide a variety of snapshots and analysis of project progress at different points of time and based on new demands from the Project Steering Committee (PSC) members, ad-hoc demand from Government, etc.

The quality of these reports and monitoring tools is usually very good. Overall, it can be said that these documents, considering the level of detail provided and the degree of dissemination, further underline the transparent approach followed in the implementation of the project. However, considering all the substantial changes which have occurred at the level of activities, it has become increasingly difficult, for people who are not intimate with the day-to-day management of the entire project, to keep track of progress achieved on the basis of the various monitoring tools available, from logical framework(s) to formal reports to the described informal monitoring tables and tools. A degree of standardization both in terms of number and type of reports and on primary monitoring tools to be produced and used would be greatly beneficial in terms of efficiency. On the other hand, if reporting requirements cannot really be redrawn, as was mentioned in the stakeholders workshop⁶, the project would have to consider incorporating in the next phase a specific dedicated resource with the required technical expertise and language abilities (many reports need to be translated also in Bangla and need to be carefully cross-checked and verified) who could take over such wide range of reporting responsibilities.

The primary project governance structure is the PSC which was established from the outset to provide overall policy direction to the project and oversight of its activities. The relevant provisions on its role, functions and operating modalities are found in the original project document and in the annex "Roles, Responsibilities and Mandate of Project Stakeholders: Terms of Reference" which was submitted for approval to the first PSC meeting on 5 July 2012. In this regard, the project document states that "the MEWOE will organize the policy level PSC with the MEWOE Secretary as Chair. The PSC will advise and guide the project in its overall policy directions and implementation. It will confirm the project work plans, review progress regularly and facilitate project's implementation". The committee is supposed to meet at least twice a year and there have been so far six PSC meetings (the last one on 15 April 2015). This 20 members body currently includes: MEWOE, BMET, Ministry of Labour and Employment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Planning, Ministry of Finance (ERD), Ministry of Education, Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED), Bangladesh Employers Federation (BEF), National Coordination Committee for Workers' Education (NCCWE), Bangladesh Association of International Recruitment Agencies (BAIRA), Warbe Development Foundation, Refugee and Migratory Movements Research Unit (RMMRU), SDC, IOM, UN Women and the ILO. Although membership is quite broad, information gathered during the mission point to the fact that PSC meetings are quite effective, given the participation of both decision makers and technical experts, and that it serves its primary purpose of reviewing project progress, endorsing activities and reports and, whenever external factors make it necessary to modify activities, of taking quick decisions

⁶ Internal reporting requirements within the Government, and consequently also PMT inputs towards the preparation of such reports, are set by government rules and regulations and do apply to all projects implemented in Bangladesh.

so that sound alternative options can be effectively pursued. SDC has apparently expressed the wish to co-chair the Project Steering Committee as this is quite important from the donor's perspective; however the PSC is usually seen as a national mechanism in Bangladesh (the project document clearly states that "the final membership and detailed terms of reference of the PSC.....will be determined by the Government of Bangladesh in consultation with key stakeholders") and further analysis on its membership, role and actual functioning goes beyond the scope of this evaluation.

The coordination at the technical and operational level among implementation partners is maintained through a second project governance structure, the Project Coordination Committee (PCC) which is chaired by the Director General of the BMET. It includes representatives of MEWOE, BMET, IOM, UN Women, and the ILO. Sometimes, it is also attended by other ministries and divisions, although they are not directly involved in implementation. Frequency of PCC meetings has varied through time : it was envisaged to meet every four months (see project document), has usually met every three months for most of the project duration, and, more recently, it has been convened every six weeks. Twelve PCC meetings have taken place by the time the evaluation mission was fielded. Some drawbacks were reported as regards its composition. Under the current arrangement, not all the partners who are actually involved in implementation could be brought together around the table. Membership was confined to the originally pre-determined international implementing partners (IOM and UN Women), in addition to ILO, MEWOE and BMET, but did not include all those partners that were at a later stage associated to the project and who came to be responsible for implementing sub-activities (often on behalf of core partners) which were inextricably linked to those executed by PCC official members. As a result, a level of fragmentation in the actual coordination process within the PCC ensued and, quite significantly, understanding of the status of a particular output/result remained at times vague in the absence of all relevant interlocutors. Determination of precise responsibilities for delays or for the attribution of corrective measures became quite difficult at PCC meetings. This created the need for ILO (that is, the PMT) to "repeat all the time the same things", by convening separate meetings to be attended by all real and de facto implementers to discuss in detail a specific output/result, which is certainly not ideal from a management point of view. As remarked by a primary stakeholder, the PCC has functioned more as a formal mechanism for sharing information on the progress of implementation, and for underlining the required follow-up by the various entities involved, rather than for seeking jointly technical solutions to issues. Such more substantial role of the PCC would be highly desirable in the second phase.

The project has been affected by significant delays from its inception. This has been quite a normal occurrence for complex multi-stakeholders interventions in the field of migration globally and in South Asia in particular. One of the main reason for the delays is usually of a "procedural nature", and we have already briefly mentioned in chapter 2 how this project was likewise affected at the very beginning, thus necessitating a one year project extension to make up for the late start. We are however more interested in analyzing delays of a more concrete nature, less dependent upon bureaucratic factors, because they can be more easily highlighted and addressed to avoid recurrence in future endeavours. First of all, it should be mentioned that no delays were experienced for the package of activities/outputs leading to the achievement of the first objective (the policy and institutional framework component) which were in fact ahead of schedule for the entire implementation period. This is in itself quite surprising since migration projects usually experience delays precisely in policy and institutional framework development; the fact that the contrary has been witnessed here goes to the credit of the Government of Bangladesh in terms of its high commitment and ownership, aspects which will be further assessed in the appropriate section. Delays have instead predominantly affected blocks of activities relating to the second and third component to be implemented by the two international implementing partners (IOM and UN Women) who had been running behind the original implementation schedules, as evidenced more in detail by the Mid Term Evaluation. It is not the evaluation's purpose to look at all possible explanations and justifications for the occurrence of a specific delay and come up with final conclusions which might put everybody at rest on this issue. What is more important is understanding the underlying process which characterized this project and how any given delay may have affected it beyond merely causing the need for a project extension. In this regard, it appears that the relevance and significance of most activities lies in fact in their sequentiality or in the availability of a certain product at a precise point in time upon which other actions could be performed, more often than not by other

project partners. For this reason, even relatively minor delays at the sub-activity level had a compounding effect which is quite noticeable once we shift the viewfinder to the output level.

In general terms, it seems that some implementers have looked at their (sub)projects more as separate initiatives or ad hoc contributions, de facto internalized but not fully owned, to an external programme, rather than as integral parts of such complex programme to which they should have subscribed in more absolute terms as regards respect for workplans and time-bound indicators. It has been pointed out that international and national implementing agencies have faced difficulties in harmonizing project interventions and that “confusion and disagreements on project directions have sometimes resulted in stagnation”.

On this issue, the arrangement of a Mid Term Evaluation in October 2013 proved timely and important. The seventh recommendation of the MTE (“ensure strict compliance of updated work plans with all partners in order to maximize the outcomes of the project”) has prompted all partners involved to make an extraordinary effort to bring the project implementation back on track. Nevertheless, while delivery of most outputs now appears most likely - also in light of a four months no cost extension giving time until 31 October 2015 to complete all activities - it is quite clear that activities which were implemented well after the original schedule, and will most likely be assessed and analyzed only at the very last moment, including for determining their potential replicability, can start to produce an impact, contrary to original intentions, only in the next project/phase.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness has to do with achievement of the project purpose, that is – in our case - of the three specific objectives/components of the project. More precisely, it concerns the contribution that the results actually produced by the project make towards the achievement of such specific objectives. The project had a very vast aim and the activities carried out covered an ever increasing range of issues. Considerable achievements were made and are widespread across the three components, in most cases however they are not self-conclusive but do represent the necessary groundwork for a longer term process that needs to be sustained. This was clear from the outset and stakeholders are currently working at a smooth transition to a new (longer) phase which should ensure expansion and consolidation of results.

For the purpose of clarity therefore, the analysis of effectiveness is hereby described by project component:

Specific objective 1: Strengthened policy and institutional frameworks to maximize the development impact of migration and the improved protection of migrant male and female workers and their families.

The following are the main blocks of activities carried out and outputs produced in this area of work :

- For expected output/result 1.1. *Revised draft national migration policy prepared*
 - a) Overseas Employment and Migrants’ Act 2013 drafted through consultations and enacted by Parliament;
 - b) Overseas Employment Policy 2014 drafted through extensive consultation and research, submitted to MEWOE for finalization and currently in the adoption process;
 - c) Revision of existing set of Rules (Migration management rules; Recruitment agents license and conduct rules; and Wage Earners’ Welfare Fund rules);
 - d) Drafting of new Migrant Workers Registration Rules;

- e) Technical assistance/support provided for the inter-ministerial processes and internal work required in the finalization of a-d (reviews, clarifications, consultation process, translations etc).
 - f) High quality research for further policy development finalized by HDRC on the following topics:
 - o Causes of and potential redress for high recruitment and migration costs in Bangladesh ;
 - o Skilling the workforce- Labour migration and skills recognition and certification in Bangladesh ;
 - o Reinforcing ties: Enhancing contributions from Bangladeshi diaspora members ;
 - o In the corridors of remittance - Cost and use of remittances in Bangladesh ;
 - o Gender and Migration from Bangladesh: Mainstreaming Migration into the National Development plans from a Gender perspective.
 - g) Stakeholders consultations/panel discussions for research inputs and sharing findings at national and district level.
- For expected output/result 1.2. *Mechanisms to foster bilateral cooperation on migration established;*
 - a) Seven G2G MoUs and one bilateral agreement of GoB reviewed;
 - b) Four new bilateral MoUs/agreements signed with UAE, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Saudi Arabia;
 - c) Blocks of activities to support MEWOE in organizing and conducting Joint Committee meetings for Bilateral Cooperation (drafting of standard ToRs and Agenda; preparatory training workshops; practical support in organizing JC meeting with Jordan etc);
 - d) Several thematic workshops, semestral reviews and ad hoc reviews with Tripartite Plus constituents.
 - For expected output/result 1.3. *A planning, coordination and training unit (PCT) established at the BMET to be responsible for institutional coordination, labour market analysis and staff training;*
 - a) Comprehensive system review of BMET, including a broad review of the regulation of recruitment agent license-holders and of the complaints system/modalities at destination and in Bangladesh;
 - b) Four labour market studies covering cumulatively ten prospective destination countries conducted by the IOM-established Market Research Unit (MRU) prior to its discontinuation (see the section on emerging impact and sustainability) – these studies were found to be of rather poor quality;
 - c) Equipment, training and technical support and advice to BMET provided by IOM to facilitate registration of returned workers, improved management of data and upgrading of website portal (although this activity is technically completed, there are still important bottlenecks that must be resolved. BMET is not yet able to produce data on returned migrants and therefore extrapolate relevant analysis by comparing this data with the outmigration statistics they properly maintain. Data on arrival/return is regularly collected/registered by the MoHA and SB (Bangladesh Police) but information useful for BMET purposes needs to be transmitted to them. IOM has facilitated the process by providing training and technical support and the SB and BMET servers are now linked; however somebody has still to technically activate the import/export of data between these servers since the actual sharing of information is not yet taking place).
 - d) Development of a Training Manual on the Overseas Employment and Migrants Act 2013 by BLAST and outreach trainings to promote knowledge and understanding of the new law, using the above-mentioned manual, performed by CSOs (WARBE Foundation and BOLSA, in coordination with BLAST).
 - e) Fifth Annual Labour Attachés Conference (2013) and training and orientation sessions (2014) for labour attaches. This is a very effective output of the project that builds upon earlier efforts by MEOWE and the project partners over a number of years. Annual training for Labour attachés has in fact started in 2008 with financial support from the EU to IOM and has gradually incorporated the contributions by UN Women (then UNIFEM), ILO and lately by civil society organisations (in this

case, RMMRU). Particularly noteworthy is the ever increasing role played by the Government of Bangladesh in developing the training contents and in conducting and facilitating the various sessions through the participation of senior officials in the respective areas of responsibility. In addition to MEWOE, BMET and WEWB, several other primary national stakeholders and key informants are engaged in the implementation of this initiative (Immigration and Passports, Special Branch/Police, Ministry of Finance, BOESL etc). As in many other activities, ownership by the government is therefore very high and this activity could be seen as a good practice emerging from the project. In this connection it should be recalled that the number of Labour Wings established by the Government at Embassies/Missions abroad to support the welfare of the Bangladeshi expatriates has increased during the project duration by twelve more wings in eleven countries (for a total of 28 Labour Wings currently operating and performing essential functions in 25 countries).

- f) Development of a basic pre-departure manual for 1-3 hours training (and handouts) on safe migration and development of a standard format manual for country-based training (Oman and Qatar) of about 3 - 5 days covering aspects of labour laws, recruitment process, social protection, cultural aspects of the targeted countries etc. These manuals have been developed by RMMRU and will be validated and used by BMET for conducting training of migrant workers as required.
- g) Support to MEWOE and BMET for participation facilitation of selected officials to several international meetings, thematic workshops and roundtables, as well as organization of study tours to ITC Turin and to Jordan.

- For expected output/result 1.4. *Sub-regional exchange of experiences and expertise of countries of origin on migration management facilitated.*

Under this output a broad range of activities were organized targeting the tripartite constituents (and in particular Bangladesh Trade Unions and BEF) : participation in national and international seminars; sub-regional leadership level consultations among trade unions in South Asia and the Arab States; work with SARTUC towards the finalization of a Bangladesh trade union position paper on labour migration; session on labour migration for South Asian employers; extensive training and capacity building on selected labour migration topics, etc.

Specific objective 2: Improved operational efficiency and effectiveness in overseas employment promotion and social protection for male and female Bangladeshi workers, with special attention to regulation and supervision of recruitment agencies and the reduction of migration costs for aspiring migrant workers.

- For expected output/result 2.1. *Strategic measures to promote overseas employment in countries under protected conditions*
- a) Six joint research studies carried out in cooperation with ILO offices in the region on labour market analysis (skills in-demand) and labour migration trends covering six country of destinations (Qatar, UAE, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Malaysia and India). A collaborative effort funded by SDC, EU and GiZ;
 - b) A country paper on skills supply (Skills for the International Labour Market) currently being finalized and an employment promotional video highlighting the skills training facilities of Bangladesh produced by IOM and disseminated through Bangladeshi missions abroad;
 - c) External (employment) market analysis of the UAE for women migrants workers of Bangladesh conducted by UN Women. It is the first analysis of this kind and it was meant to serve as a pilot for conducting additional studies covering other countries as well as specifically to expand employment opportunities for Bangladeshi women in the UAE. It provides very valuable information and reflection on occupational profiles of migrant women, current employment and demand scenario, projection of employment demand for migrant women, supply opportunities from Bangladesh, salary structure and

trends, human rights practices, risks and vulnerabilities etc. This product should be seen as part of the consistent advocacy carried out by UN Women as regards upgrading of skills of women migrant workers to enable them to avail better employment opportunities abroad; as a result of these advocacy efforts, BMET has started to provide skills development training in non-traditional areas (e.g. construction work) for potential female workers in collaboration with other stakeholders.

- d) Capacity building and training of BAIRA on the new law and to promote application of the Code of Conduct and Classification System for ethical and professional recruitment (activities linked to output 2.2, in cooperation with BIAM);
- e) Organized visits of employers from Japan, Azerbaijan, UAE and Singapore and Employers' convention in Japan.
- f) Two knowledge and practice surveys conducted amongst randomly selected prospective migrants to (1) different countries and (2) to Malaysia, utilizing BMET services at the "Smart Card" point, to assess their perception of operational efficiency and effectiveness of the systems put in place as well as (for 2) of the cost of migration to Malaysia (G2G agreement).

- For expected output/result 2.2. *Recruitment agencies better regulated and more effective licensing system established*

- a) Substantial blocks of activities and sub-activities leading to the development of a Code of Conduct for recruitment agents and a Classification System for recruitment effectiveness (a huge area of work involving enhanced dialogue with BAIRA through several rounds of consultations, support provided to the MEWOE-established tripartite-plus Technical Committee for developing the Code of Conduct, training workshops on the classification system etc.) ;
- b) Decentralized community training and other services provided by the civil society partner Dhaka Ahsania Mission (DAM). DAM has established four Migration Advisory and Counselling Centres (MACCs), two in Dhaka and one each in Jamalpur and Jessore, offering a broad range of services to migrant workers and families left behind and training and advice on safe migration to prospective migrants (such services include: pre-departure life skills training, skills training, outreach training, counselling services, issue meetings, job placements, practical support for opening bank accounts, obtaining passports, linking up with relevant institutions and service providers, supply of information kits and handouts, follow up support etc.) The available monitoring reports provide detailed information on the number of beneficiaries reached, disaggregated by sex, for each of the different categories of services performed by DAM as well as on the contents of the materials developed either internally by DAM or shared from other sources (including by most project partners) which were used in implementing the various activities. One important sub-activity contracted to DAM which could not take place was to pilot the provision of on-site support services to migrant workers in Malaysia. An essential element of this strategy would have been the establishment of a well-functioning partnership with a Malaysian counterpart, the Kuala Lumpur Legal Aid Centre (KLAC), in order to discuss modalities to that effect and start implementing such support services for Bangladeshi migrant workers there. The partnership could not be established and DAM, most likely, will not be able to reach this objective. Undertaking an action for workers protection on site remains a very important element of this entire area of work which should be better prepared, coordinated and implemented in the next phase. Given that the objective difficulties experienced by many organisations to establish such operational partnerships in GCC countries do not apply to SEA countries (such as Malaysia), this is certainly possible and linkages with networks with a specific mandate and experience in the protection of migrants' rights, national trade unions of the migrant workers, and regional and international trade union bodies, should be pursued to this end.

- For expected output/result 2.3. *Awareness raising programs aimed at introducing people to risks involved in overseas employment developed and implemented*

Activities leading to this result are mostly grouped in two specific sub-components implemented by IOM and UN Women.

- a) Communication activities implemented by IOM. This is a large block of activities and sub-activities for a total US\$ 500,000 which could well have constituted a separate stand-alone project (and was in fact implemented rather autonomously from the main body of the project). In summary, the following has been produced by the project: 1) Communication strategy and implementation plan. The strategy was based on key informants' interviews with government officials and partners, field surveys in four migrant-prone districts (Dhaka, Comilla, Chittagong, Tangail), six divisional and one national consultation in Dhaka involving some 500 persons; 2) based on the strategy, various media were used to disseminate messages related to safe migration and information on available services for migrant workers (i.e. a radio programme aired on Radio ABC and a docudrama based on real-life experiences of migrant workers broadcasted on the popular TV channel, GTV etc.); 3) a considerable amount of communication material of various type was produced and disseminated (100,000 checklists containing pictorial representation of situations arising at each stage of migration were printed and disseminated at Union level and through TTCs, DEMOs and BMET; calendars and posters containing pre-migration information, billboards placed at selected locations and buses painted with messages of safe migration); and 4) community-based theatre activities and community meetings on migration issues. This last point deserves some extra analysis since interactive community theatre programmes have emerged as a good practice for spreading awareness at the grass-roots level in South Asia.
 - The programme was technically developed by a Bangladesh company, Visual Communication Ltd (VISCOM), in cooperation with and under the supervision of IOM, with the aim to educate and create general awareness among the target audience through an entertainment-education approach encompassing safe migration, legal procedures of migration, migration costs and trafficking in persons, including smuggling for labour purposes. The primary audience of the interactive theatre activities consisted mainly of potential migrants (especially those planning to migrate immediately) while returnees, Union Council members, local youth clubs and religious leaders were also reached through community meetings organized at the same locations. A third of these meetings specifically targeted potential women migrant workers. All activities did also reach a secondary audience consisting of service providers (DEMOs, BMET etc.) as well as recruitment agencies at different levels (including BAIRA and BOESL) and community leaders. A total of 312 theatre shows were held at selected locations in Dhaka, Faridpur, Khulna and Cox's Bazar (78 shows per zone) with a total estimated audience of more than 100,000 people (some 350 people for each theatre show). In addition the project organized 36 community meetings for an overall estimated attendance of 1,800 people (50 per meeting). It should be noted that the number of theatre shows conducted by IOM were much more than those foreseen under the ILO project (120 shows) and a much wider audience was thus reached by the organization. This was made possible by linking up with an EC-funded project implemented by IOM which demonstrates willingness and ability to create important synergies in this field of work. The programme proved to be very effective although it was logically recognized that the number of shows were still not enough to cover the requirements in terms of population to be reached and that more efforts should be made to involve more comprehensively local government officials in order to enhance the reliability and sustainability of the entire process.
- b) UN Women has also implemented an important awareness raising sub-component in 10 districts. The programme was specifically designed to create public awareness in the targeted communities on the opportunities, contributions and risks involved in overseas migration with a

focus on female migrant workers. It consisted of 30 theatre shows conducted using the theatre for development approach, projection of a docudrama, theme songs (for the street drama and the docudrama) and 8 radio episodes broadcast on Bangladesh Betar. It is estimated that the full programme reached an audience of some 15,000 people. An impact assessment of the awareness campaign has been commissioned by UN Women and gives interesting insights on its effectiveness and possible replication. For instance, for further implementation of these communication activities, listeners' clubs and CBOs should be selected as partners as they can easily organize local events at better venues and also monitor the longer term impact of the activities and behavioural changes at the audience level. Furthermore, UN Women should think about not covering in future areas in the Dhaka division where people are more aware about these issues and focusing instead at the real periphery, for example by developing partnerships with the 14 community radio programmes operating in Bangladesh which are serving marginalized people in remote regions, in order to disseminate there the intended message. This, incidentally, has proved very successful in similar situations in other countries, most notably in Nepal.

- c) An interesting example of inter-office cooperation between the ILO Country Office and the ILO Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS) in Beirut has led to the printing and dissemination in Bangladesh (following translation in Bangla) as well as in Lebanon, at no cost to the project, of 50,000 copies of the "Information guide for migrant domestic workers in Lebanon" developed by ILO ROAS and the Ministry of Labour of Lebanon with funding from SDC.

Specific objective 3: Strengthened social protection and support for Bangladeshi migrant workers, with special attention on female migrant workers, available on site and on their return.

- For expected output/result 3.1. *Key social protection programs reviewed and revised to better serve male and female migrant workers and their families, with special attention on female migrant workers*
 - a) Comprehensive system review of WEFW, including follow-up given to relevant recommendation of the MTE to support implementation of the review by exploring partnership with national agencies to undertake a feasibility study on social security mechanisms for migrant workers with BMET and WEWB.
 - b) Follow up on the international accreditation of the TVET programmes of the TTCs with MEWOE and BMET. This is a new activity that replaced the originally envisaged vocational training, accreditations-related work and language training for women which should have been implemented by UN Women as from July 2013. These activities had not started by the time the MTE was fielded. Moreover, a question was raised on the sustainability and feasibility of this entire block of activities and its adjustment/reconsideration was recommended. Although language training for migrant women remains fundamental and must be stepped up, given that they operate in a more insulated context while abroad and require more individual capacity to express themselves (while male workers are usually working in groups and can better support each other), the recommendation was accepted and project savings in the amount of US\$ 45,663 from the UN Women allocation have been shifted to MEWOE/BMET to partially cover the cost of international accreditation of a few courses with City and Guilds (the overall cost is close to US\$ 300,000 and the BMET proposal in this regard is pending approval from MEWOE). This activity is expected to take place during the four months' extension of the project.
 - c) Production of four trade-specific language manuals (and takeaway material) in English and Arabic by the BRAC Institute of Languages (BIL) for the following occupations: Domestic work, Care-giving, Electrical, Construction. Plus ToT for 89 trade-based trainers from 38 TTCs.
 - d) Setting up of pre-departure facilities in six TTCs at the divisional level (Khulna, Chittagong, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Barisal and Rangpur) by IOM.
 - e) Extensive ToT programme for Pre-Departure Training (PDT) implemented by RMMRU in the context of the districts-decentralization of existing PDTs. Separate ToTs were conducted for

DEMO and TTC officials, for trainers nominated by CSOs, for Trade Union's trainers and for Recruitment Agents (this was particularly challenging since recruitment agents were not used to a training environment and were involved for the first time in an endeavour of this kind).

- f) A basic training in complaints handling and redressing developed and delivered by IOM to 12 BMET staff who are usually fulfilling these tasks (there is no dedicated staff within BMET for handling complaints on an exclusive basis).
- g) Support provided to the Bangladeshi missions in Muscat and Dubai for setting up helpline services for migrant workers.

- For expected output/result 3.2. *System for monitoring return migration developed and operational*

It is the opinion of the evaluators that this result area was expressed in rather ambitious terms and that it cannot really be said that a system for monitoring return migration, even though substantially developed, will indeed be operational by the end of the first phase. Although the individual activities foreseen and implemented were certainly useful and important, they do represent most of the time a first step in an area that was not previously addressed, with all the limitations that characterize experimentation, and more significantly do not add up collectively towards attainment of the result. While bottlenecks have been witnessed, it is also not certain how the individual outputs produced will be followed up by the implementers after the project is completed, whether the recommendations made will be taken up by the Government and, more in general, whether the identified and suggested processes will eventually be systematized. It appears that migration policies have so far given less attention to the issue of returning migrants and this might have an impact on both the 3.2 and 3.3 areas of work (as mentioned in one of the reports produced under this cluster of activities, "active government policies and strategies are compulsory for successful and sustainable reintegration ...(but) it is found that the reintegration issue of returning migrants is almost absent in the government agenda".

- a) Two very interesting studies by the Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies (BILS): "Profiling of the returning migrant workers of Bangladesh" and "Skills-in-Demand in Bangladesh Labour Market and Entrepreneurship Opportunities".
- b) Mapping of service providers (district-wise mapping of organizations that can provide services to female and male returnee migrant workers) based on a survey conducted for assessing actual needs of returnees. This activity was implemented by UN Women.
- c) Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) developed by UN Women in order to operationalize the following reintegration aspects: referral service procedures; procedures for establishing solidarity-building mechanisms among migrant women; steps for providing support to children of migrant women; guidelines for temporary shelter housing facilities; innovation funding guidelines; establishing and operating network among organizations working for returnee women; and, monitoring procedures. The SOP need to be endorsed by the Government for ensuring implementation.
- d) Design of a reintegration programme targeting 48 vulnerable returnee women (developed by BRAC as a sub-contractor of UN Women); this activity is still under execution and women are in the process of being integrated into self-help groups and cooperatives. Effectiveness and impact will have to be assessed before finalization of the project document for the second phase.

- For expected output/result 3.3. *Three networks and institutions providing referral services for migrant workers established and functioning*

Some of the considerations made for output/result 3.2. do apply also here.

The block of activities leading to achievement of this output has been implemented by UN Women in cooperation with BRAC. The main purpose was to set up referral and resource centres in three districts

(Faridpur, Manikganj and Dhaka) having the ability to provide a package of reintegration services to return migrants - a totally new area of work for Bangladesh –including entrepreneurship development, business advice, re-training and employment programmes in collaboration with local partners at the community level. This initiative however has started very late (in September 2014) and although UN Women is assessing the pilot in highly positive terms (for example, training on the provision of psycho-social support to abused returning women was provided for the first time and referral of victims to the National Trauma Counselling Centre was activated under the pilot) substantial evidence and reports have not yet materialized that could allow ILO and the evaluation team to further elaborate on this output. It might very well be the case and it will be the responsibility of project partners to analyze these achievements in the coming months.

This sub-component has in fact suffered from significant implementation delays by the international partner as described in the efficiency and implementation section. However, although results from output 3.3 are not yet available, the government, in due consultation with ILO, has already made efforts to provide social protection to the migrant workers. GoB did not in fact wait for the results of the pilot activity carried out by UN Women under output 3.3 because this would have undermined the achievements reached through relating activities under 3.1 and 3.2. For example, the government is already working on the reform of the WEWB, is going to sustain the help-lines set up in Muscat and Dubai, etc. In conclusion, while one partner may have delayed delivery, others worked harder to ensure that substantial results are achieved under this output as well.

Emerging impact and sustainability

A full analysis of the actual impact of the project would require more time than it is allowed under the present evaluation and should also take place well after the end of the implementation period, considering that very important and crucial outputs have not yet materialized (and for this reason the project duration has been extended by four months) or were produced quite late in the life of the project to show already at this stage any measurable impact.

It should also be recalled that the first recommendation of the MTE (October 2013) was to conduct a potential impact analysis by all parties involved in order to better assess what the project will have achieved upon its conclusion. It was noted that “the PMT monitors project activities by means of an Outcome Monitoring Plan but does not report on the potential impact of activities and of the project as a whole” and for this reason it was recommended “that all implementing partners start working on an impact analysis of the activities they are responsible for, so that the PMT (or alternatively a consultant hired for this purpose) will be able to prepare the overall impact analysis for the project” in order to have “a clear view on what the project will actually have achieved upon completion and what the prospects are on a longer-term basis”. The primary stakeholders had agreed in principle to this course of action but the recommendation could not be adhered to because, according to the evaluation policies of the donor and ILO, a (potential) impact assessment can only be done for a project of the duration of five years. Given the technical and procedural impasse, it was decided to consider doing such analysis during the second phase, or follow up project, “prior to or immediately during the preparatory stage” so as to have in future “a robust baseline to monitor from”.

There are clearly objective difficulties to the proposition of identifying emerging impact for a project that does not focus on service delivery as such or bring about “hard”, immediately visible and tangible results, as most development projects do, but invest instead to a significant extent on the production of outputs which lead to “soft” effects (change of attitudes, increased dialogue, new and more efficient work modalities, developed operational abilities, and so on) which need a completely different set of tools, and timeframe, to be fully analyzed and evaluated.

Nevertheless, plenty of signals were detected during the fact finding mission on the emerging impact of the project. Firstly, there is no doubt that the project has had a very tangible impact on the target groups. Although changes in people dialogue are not easily quantifiable, the project brought together for the first time several categories and sub-categories of stakeholders (Government, Trade Unions, employers, recruitment agencies, international organizations, NGOs, CBOs, research institutions, etc) which had only been engaged separately, at one time or another, in earlier projects focusing on international migration. Clearly, much should still be done in future to improve cooperation and sustain what can be occasionally defined as embryonic synergies, but there is no doubt that the project provided a platform and a framework for everybody to come together and express their views and ask questions to each other. This dialogue shift was an important achievement. The strategy used by the ILO project in pursuing this has been admirable in the sense that it has not attempted to lead or impose the discussion but has rather put the constituents at the forefront, allowing them to define their priorities, to seek concurrence of all participants to the dialogue within a specific category (for instance, members of the NWCCE umbrella), and step in eventually to provide technical assistance to support agreed courses of actions, which are of course inspired by international instruments, standards and best practices.

The project has represented a long term contribution to the efforts of the Government of Bangladesh. It had a strong focus on capacity building and training. As regards the institutional framework, a comprehensive review of the BMET and WEFW has been completed which will have an impact on the programmatic outlook and work modalities of these entities which in turn will also impact on the actual delivery (and content) of the services to be provided to migrant workers. The criticality is obviously to make this function in the future and further investments in capacity building at the practical level (transfer of know-how by doing things in practice) are necessary. As a matter of fact, once principles and standards are absorbed, and priority setting follows, the need remains to define what can be successfully implemented, to determine whether they are achievable or not and, in the affirmative, to be able to pursue them effectively; in other words to be able to make such choices 'operational', which requires sustained and diversified institutional capacity building.

There is evidence of emerging impact at several levels following enactment by Parliament of the Overseas Employment and Migrant's Act drafted with the ILO's technical assistance through the project. It is estimated that almost 695,000 workers (of which more than 126,000, or about 18%, were women) migrated from Bangladesh between 24 October 2013 and 2 June 2015 (at the time of the mission) using improved services and provisions (including minimum conditions) under the new law. Likewise, the project has started producing a direct impact, according to preliminary reports being made available, in reducing the high costs of migration to selected destinations (Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Jordan) which were targeted as part of the overall response to contain this phenomenon which affects Bangladeshi migrant workers irrespective of country of destination. Findings and recommendations of the five high quality research studies undertaken by HDRC have been taken into consideration by policy makers in developing the Overseas Employment Policy, currently in adoption process; additionally, the studies contribute to increase the knowledge base on migration issues which has been largely deficient prior to the project. In general we can say that improved statistical data, disaggregated by gender, and analytical interpretation of the studies and surveys conducted under the various components will have a definite impact on the elaboration of policies and on the choices made by practically all stakeholders in their specific domain. Going beyond practical examples, it can finally be said that the new law has created a mind setting that a "kind of checklist should be there" and that "the right things should be put in place"; in other words it has started a process which should unfold over a reasonably long period of time and is meant to embrace not only policy development (adoption of the Overseas Employment Policy, finalisation of the set of four internal rules for MEWOE etc.) but also its concrete application and implementation. Now that the groundwork has been done, that the mind set has been created, there is the opportunity and urgency to move towards a more qualitative level of work which will produce measurable impact on the life of the ultimate beneficiaries of the project.

The analysis of the sustainability criterion carried out by the evaluation team has proved highly satisfactory. This is already inherent to the choice of executing agency given that fact that ILO does not operate as a

project-based organization but looks at longer-term goals and sustainable results which go beyond the confines of a specific intervention. As one primary stakeholder has put it, “we have started together with ILO a thinking process, we continue some actions, and these, as well as our planning, are embedded in sustainable thinking”. As a necessary prerequisite, the national project partners and targeted public institutions were correctly identified from the outset, they are mandated to deal with the issues of overseas migration and have therefore a direct interest in continuing most activities. By and large, these were designed (often jointly) in order to specifically support the Government in fulfilling its own objectives, which are inspired by the relevant international labour standards and recommendations. Moreover, once formulated, these activities were taken into the national plans of action of the targeted institutions and this is an additional indicator of the level of ownership acquired by the project. It should also be underlined that the project was designed in such a way to avoid replacement or duplication of any government service or function and by paying attention to the ability of the Government of Bangladesh to maintain or expand the activities it has chosen to implement.

Clearly, not all activities were correctly identified from the very beginning as regards their sustainability prospects. The MTE identified a few activities with limited potential impact and uncertain sustainability (for instance the establishment of a legal cell in the BMET to assist exploited migrant workers) and requested that efforts be made by relevant stakeholders to adjust or reconsider them.

A case in point is the Market Research Unit (MRU), which was set up by IOM within the BMET in order to gather and accumulate information about potential markets and sectors and help to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for Bangladesh labour migrants (for instance in the fundamental area of the skills actually required at destination and the ensuing challenges for BMET and the country in terms of skills development). It must be mentioned that the MRU concept was not new to this project. It was originally conceived and pursued by IOM in the EU-funded action (under the AENEAS programme) MIGR/2005/103-523 “Regional Dialogue and Program on Facilitating Managed and Legal Migration between Asia and the European Union”, implemented in several Asian countries (but with a specific focus on Bangladesh, India and the Philippines) between January 2006 and January 2009. The MRU concept was further developed and supported in a follow-up project, MIGR/2008/153-434 - “Regional programme and dialogue on facilitating safe and legal migration from South Asia to the EU”, funded by the European Commission under the Thematic Programme for Migration and Asylum and implemented by IOM in Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka from February 2009 until the end of August 2011. It was therefore a very much active initiative by the time the ILO/SDC project was conceived and its original starting date had been set. Although some doubts had already been raised in monitoring exercises of the referred earlier projects as regards the actual integration of these permanent Market Research Units within the government structures of some Colombo Process countries (including Bangladesh) and on the ultimate usefulness of the analysis carried out (“how to ensure that information is acted upon and changes to labour policies and vocational training policies are made with a view to benefit from any emerging labour migration options ?”) the MRU was eventually incorporated in the ongoing project as there was probably still hope to ensure its effectiveness and to sustain it through a longer-term programmatic engagement. In this regard, the setting up of MRUs had been cited by IOM as an example of best practice in other countries. Sri Lanka, for instance, greatly benefited from IOM-established MRUs which were instrumental, at the time, in the identification of two important markets – Canada and Libya – and in the process leading to the successful negotiation of G2G agreements. Moreover, the information gathered made it possible to upgrade and/or better target migrant trainings based on the requirements of the international labour market. Whatever the background and results achieved elsewhere, IOM has eventually agreed that the MRU has displayed very limited added value in Bangladesh, and has not produced tangible results or reports of quality (also because due to budgetary constraints it could not benefit from the recruitment of highly qualified staff) and, given the lack of development possibilities, the MTE recommendation to discontinue this initiative was effectively implemented by all project partners involved.

As a general final remark on the sustainability issue, it should therefore appear quite clear that while some activities have been dropped as a result of a sound judgment made by the primary stakeholders and several other activities, by the end of the intervention, will be absorbed and taken over by beneficiary institutions and continued thereafter in a self-sustaining manner, many more are clearly part of a longer term process and

need to be continued and consolidated through a new intervention/second phase for which external financial resources are required and have been already set aside by the donor.

Gender concerns

Gender concerns have been satisfactorily addressed throughout the project. It is always possible to do more, however any project should not be assessed in a vacuum but contextualized by having regard to the prevailing situation and country context at the time it was initially designed and compared, whenever feasible, with other similar interventions worldwide. For instance, a global evaluation of the results obtained through projects financed by the European Union in the labour-migration sub-sector conducted in June 2011, showed that a minimal number of projects out of the total funded and evaluated had an exclusive focus on female migrant workers (mostly addressing the situation of migrant domestic workers or temporary and circular female labour migration in the agricultural sector) and comparatively few did address in a substantial way migrant women concerns as part of the more general approach followed. It is significant that ILO was possibly the first organization, among beneficiaries of EU funding, to design a project focusing exclusively on gender equality and mainstreaming (“Promotion of Gender sensitive labour migration policies in Costa Rica, Haiti, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic”, 2011-2014). Likewise, it appeared quite evident that ILO had already invested in developing innovative models that can serve as inspiration and guidance to increase gender-sensitivity, such as the project “Decent Work across Borders: A Pilot Project for Migrant Health Professionals and Skilled Workers” (Vietnam, India and the Philippines) targeting highly gendered professions in the countries concerned. With this preamble in mind, it is not surprising that particular attention was devoted at the design stage of the project “Promoting Decent Work through Improved Migration Policy and its Application in Bangladesh” for incorporating a gender perspective in all the outputs.

According to available records, labor migration for Bangladeshi women started in 1991 when a very small number of migrant women left the country to the Middle East. When the project was initially conceived (in 2008) Bangladeshi migrant women workers still represented a very small portion of the whole labour migration process from Bangladesh (2.38 % of the total). Although it increased in the following years, the proportion did remain within a quite modest range (between 4% and 7%) until it peaked in 2013 to about 13 % of the total. In actual numbers, according to BMET data, between 27,000 and 37,000 women migrated abroad for work yearly during the period 2010-2013 (against a total figure ranging between 400,000 and 600,000 migrant workers per year).

Possibly because of the low proportion, until recently at least, of women migrating for work from Bangladesh and the fact that, as mentioned in an excellent study produced by the project⁷, “feminization of migration’ has not happened in Bangladesh in a true sense”, gender analysis was not regularly carried out by researchers, organizations and donors as part of the problem analysis required in the preparation of projects addressing international migration. Likewise, there was a huge gap in terms of data on gender at all levels which prevented conceptualization of actions beyond a rather minimalistic approach based on piloting initiatives or inclusion of complementary individual activities in projects which were not thought from the beginning from a gender equality or gender mainstreaming perspective.

The project has certainly started to fill many of these gaps and substantial efforts have been made to ensure that gender concerns are addressed. Data disaggregated by gender has been collected by the project for most activities and is now available and utilized by researchers, administrators, and stakeholders in general, to develop policies and concrete responses in problem areas. Female worker’s social protection is prioritized at all levels. Two language manuals have been developed for providing migrant women employed as domestic workers and care givers with essential knowledge of occupation-related English and Arabic words and expressions to be used in destination countries. In all workshops, meetings, training events, learning

⁷ Abul Barkat and Manzuma Ahsan, HDRC, Gender and Migration from Bangladesh - Mainstreaming migration into the national development plans from a gender perspective, ILO 2014

opportunities or committees, participation of women is specifically sought and ensured. Likewise, all partners are guided to address gender dimensions and monitored for progress as per agreed actions.

Generally speaking, it can be said that the project emphasizes a rights-based approach in line with the Beijing Platform of Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995) and has a “women-focused” approach to gender equality as it recognizes that women migrants are often confronted with gender-specific disadvantages during the entire migration cycle (before departure, in the countries of destination and upon return) and that different constraining factors affect their employment and critical aspects of the migration process including the predominance of stereotyped labour roles for men and women, the lack of policies addressing the specific needs of women migrant workers and the limited legal channels available to them.

Bringing to the forefront the woman perspective was a considerable achievement in an environment where traditional considerations had often prevailed (including acceptability of women travelling abroad for work and leaving behind their families). The discussion generated by the project among all partners has led to the inclusion of a clause against discrimination in the Overseas Employment and Migrants’ Act 2013, has contributed to the creation of “enabling environments that provide equality of employment opportunity and access to benefits to both migrant men and women” and has ensured that specific measures are reflected in the Rules being reviewed in order to empower women migrant workers with choices, access to resources and to claim their rights.

There are of course several activities that are designed to benefit, specifically or at least predominantly, migrant women. This is logically the case for activities implemented by UN Women under the second and third component. Among them are potentially very important and innovative pilot actions that could very well be replicated and expanded in the next phase. In addition, all training and capacity building initiatives were developed in a gender-sensitive fashion and included strong components on women issues. Skills diversification (over and above the traditional sector of migrant domestic workers) was promoted by the project, through the contribution of project partners (UN Women and DAM), particularly in connection with the aim to increase opportunities for migration of women to South-East Asia where no restrictions exist on sector of occupation for women workers. All migrant women now receive pre-departure briefing and orientation (not necessarily done through project funds), help-lines have been set up to ensure that migrant women have an outreach/access to air their grievances and report on their situation and many more examples were provided in the earlier sections, especially under the analysis of effectiveness, about project activities which lay special emphasis on women. Finally, the PMT included a dedicated Gender Focal Point for the specific purpose of monitoring and reporting on all project activities from a gender perspective.

5. Lessons learned, good practices and recommendations

Lessons learned

The main lessons learned from the project are the following:

1. Flexibility of design and in implementation turned out to be very beneficial for the actual achievement of the intended results in view of the participatory approach followed in all phases of the project cycle. The active involvement of all national stakeholders in this process of adaptation, has ensured the constant alignment of the activities with their needs and priorities and this had a clear impact on ownership of results.
2. The project was characterized by a very comprehensive approach which was necessary to overcome the high degree of fragmentation, that prevailed at the time of its conception, in providing responses to international migration challenges. By inter-linking all relevant dimensions of labour

migration and bringing together for the first time all fundamental actors in this domain, the project represented a first attempt of coordinated action in this field. This approach should be directly credited with the impressive achievements reached, particularly as regards policy development and a strengthened institutional framework.

3. While it is universally recognized that the ILO's tripartite structure is a given factor for generating added value, the contributions of the ILO Country Office and PMT were in this case particularly crucial in view of the fact that (in Bangladesh) Government, trade unions and employers (plus civil society) do not have a tradition of close cooperation. The project, by bringing together all different categories of stakeholders and allowing all constituents to participate in the elaboration of the various activities, directly contributed to a dialogue shift which should prove its significance beyond the scope of an individual project. The Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment (MEWOE) has taken technical cooperation from the ILO very seriously, especially as regards social protection and outreach to the migrant workers. MEWOE fully understands ILO's mandate in promoting employment and social protection and inclusion which has enabled officials and other partners to develop new services, assess new policies and exchange good practices in outreach through trade unions and employers organizations.
4. A degree of ambiguity and misunderstanding could not be avoided at the project outset among some implementers regarding the ultimate responsibility for project direction, the role to be played by each in project execution, the chosen implementation modalities and the need to maintain the necessary inter-linkage between the different components. Pre-nomination of implementing partners was made on the basis of past engagement in the sector, which led to pre-project attributions of outputs prior to their detailed conceptualization, or more general assumptions regarding operational capacity. This has created problems because once activities had been fully elaborated, or incorporated into the project as part of the described design adaptation, it appeared evident that the original repartition of competencies was not in fact optimal and other potential partners were sometimes in a better position to implement specific activities and had sometimes to be taken on board.
5. While project adaptation along the way has been a positive factor and has ensured continued relevance, it has been difficult to maintain the logical coherence given not-so-logical distribution of activities under single outputs among ILO, IOM and UN Women. Activities were also divided in so many sub-activities and distributed among ILO and its two international organization partners with the result that tracking progress under those outputs became almost impossible and that lines of responsibility tended to evaporate. It also weakened the ability of the PMT to keep sub-activities logically connected as one activity or all activities under one output. A complex project of this kind should try to simplify things as much as possible by maintaining, ideally, a "one output - one partner" relationship in order to ensure accountability and facilitate coordination. This is not only an issue of effectiveness but also essential from the perspective of financial tracking for measuring cost-effectiveness.

Good practices

The project has generated several good practices of which the key ones are:

1. The project provided a platform and a framework for all categories of stakeholders to come together and express their views and ask questions to each other. The strategy used by the ILO project in pursuing this has been admirable in the sense that it has not attempted to lead or

impose the discussion but has rather put the constituents at the forefront, allowing them to define their priorities, to seek concurrence of all participants to the dialogue within a specific category, and step in eventually to provide technical assistance to support agreed courses of actions, which are of course inspired by international instruments, standards and best practices.

2. The project inspired confidence-building and made possible effective collaboration among all target groups (despite their differences) in achieving their own specific as well as common goals in this complex and multi-faceted project. The fact that the PMT is based within the premises of the Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment was of high strategic and practical value as it made possible to maintain constant contact (formal and informal) with all the relevant MEWOE wings, the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) and the Wage Earners' Welfare Fund (WEWF) and therefore facilitates cooperation and coordination at a national level on a daily basis. The choice of office location has in fact produced effects that go beyond the project itself as it allowed the PMT, among other things, to support the government counterparts when they required including through ad hoc extra-project specific inputs.
3. The project has produced a vast number of studies, research and practical tools of generally high quality which were made accessible to relevant stakeholders. Evidence has emerged that these outputs are currently used by the target groups in defining their policies and priorities, for the elaboration of new project interventions or as the basis for further evaluation and research. Given the high turnover that affects most, if not all, the actors involved, there is however the need to ensure capitalisation of the knowledge produced by the project over the longer term by assisting target groups, whenever required, in systematizing the knowledge provided.

Recommendations:

1. The design of the new project/second phase should be based on extensive pre-project consultations with all relevant actors in the field of international migration (irrespective of initial assumptions as to whether they will be directly involved in actual implementation or not) in order to ensure the consistency of the follow up intervention and to avoid redundancy and duplication with other initiatives being planned or carried out by primary stakeholders in Bangladesh. In designing the new project/phase or during its inception, in line with the 1st and 2nd recommendations of the MTE, an analysis of the potential impact of the envisaged activities should be conducted and an effort should be made to define and include in the logical framework matrix realistic and measurable indicators of achievement for each of the objectives and the intended outputs/results.

Addressed to ILO, SDC and MEWOE - High priority - No financial resources required

2. The first project/phase had a very wide scope – which was a correct strategy at the time – but it might be advisable to follow a more focused approach for the new project/second phase. This however should not impact the participation areas agreed with the ILO constituents, particularly, the workers and employers' organization and the ILO's mandate and role concerning social security and protection of the workers.

Addressed to ILO and MEWOE - High priority - No financial resources required

3. While coordination among the many partners on project-related issues has worked well, **there seem to exist some deficiencies in the country as regards thematic coordination on**

migration in general among international organizations and NGOs involved in this field. Given the dynamic context and the many initiatives that are implemented, it becomes quite difficult to take stock of progress made through the various projects, assess gaps and draw a correct line forward (for instance in the area of training) without enhanced extra-project consultations among all relevant stakeholders. Although, outside the Government, actors in the labour migration field are relatively few, they appear to be in quite strong competition with each other, in particular international actors. **An independent mechanism to ensure that regular rounds of consultation (at least quarterly) do take place between these actors (in addition to individual meetings) in order to facilitate such coordination, to avoid duplication of activities and enable practical synergies would be essential.** This mechanism should also benefit from the participation of specialized research institutions and think-tanks (even if not involved operationally in specific projects) to enable cross-fertilization of ideas and the sharing of research. While coordination on the Government side is satisfactory and the Overseas Employment Policy, currently in the adoption process, already includes two coordination mechanisms, namely, the National Steering Committee, proposed to be led by the Prime Minister to facilitate interministerial coordination and the National Labour Migration Forum to enable stakeholders' influence in labour migration governance, substantial improvements are required in terms of thematic coordination at the technical level among relevant international organizations and NGOs.

Addressed to ILO, SDC and international organizations and NGOs involved in the labour migration field in Bangladesh - Medium priority - Limited financial resources required

4. Pre-nomination of implementing partners is not recommended for the new project/phase. Choices should better be made on case by case basis depending on the actual capacity and commitment of potential partners to implement specific blocks of activities once they have been defined in detail and all potential ramifications are clear. ILO should try to maintain, across the entire project cycle, a one output/one partner relationship in order to draw clear lines of responsibility for the actual production of outputs. This will also facilitate overall management and progress tracking.

Addressed to ILO - High priority - No financial resources required

5. Although considerable achievements were made, these should not be seen as self-conclusive but do represent (in most cases) the necessary groundwork for a longer term process that needs to be sustained through the new project/phase. Generally speaking, while laws, policies, rules and internal reviews have been successfully developed and conducted - and formal adoption and/or validation has materialized or it is at an advanced stage - there is now the need to assist in a targeted manner the beneficiary institutions in applying and effectively implementing such policies, rules and systems. While continuity is essential and completed activities are necessarily leading to new ones, technical assistance from ILO in the new project/phase should primarily serve the purpose of helping the Government of Bangladesh in "internalizing" the outputs produced and in making possible their operationalization.

Addressed to ILO, MEWOE, BMET and other national stakeholders (including Workers' Organizations, Employers' Organizations and BAIRA) - High priority - Targeted allocation of financial resources through the formulation process required.

6. Attention must be paid to geographic prioritization in the next project/phase. Only limited activities have departed from a rather centric approach and more should be done in terms of decentralizing services provided by the Government for potential migrants and returnees. While civil society has a fundamental role to play in expanding outreach at the community level, in connecting effectively with

people at the periphery, stronger operational partnerships should be developed from the outset and become a pre-requisite for financial support. Furthermore, mechanisms should be put in place to enable positive and constructive interaction between NGOs and the State (by effectively involving local authorities in the planned activities) so as to transfer achievements at the local level into the overall dynamics.

Addressed to ILO, MEWOE, BMET and other relevant government institutions - Medium priority - Financial resources required

7. At the same time, suitable civil society organisations should be identified, and more vigorously mobilized, including through appropriate capacity building and by supporting their participation in international networks, for the purpose of establishing partnerships with operational counterparts in countries of destination (since it is still comparatively difficult for Trade Unions to do so), with a view to provide fundamental support to migrants workers there and liaise as required with Labour Wings in order to share obligations, according to the respective roles and responsibilities, and mutually reinforce efforts made.

Addressed to ILO, MEWOE and implementing partners eventually called upon to carry out project activities and produce outputs during the second phase - Medium priority - Limited financial resources required