



# ILO EVALUATION

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  - **Evaluation Manager:** Ippei Tsuruga
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This evaluation has been conducted according to ILO's evaluation policies and procedures.

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## List of acronyms

ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BKK	Bangkok
DEVCO	International Cooperation and Development (EU)
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
DWT	Decent Work Team
ILO	International Labour Organization
PRODOC	Project Document
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
ToC	Theory of Change
UI	Unemployment insurance
UNCT	UN Country Team

## Executive Summary

### Project background

The long-term impact of the project is intended to be ‘enhanced income security and employability for targeted beneficiaries / workers benefiting from the establishment of the UI system, as well as a successful transition to a more robust and crisis-resistant social protection system’.

The project, as adjusted after military takeover of power and delivered, had one outcome and three outputs:

Outcome 1: National capacity and knowledge improved towards strengthening the existing employment insurance system	
Output 1.1	Comprehensive knowledge base built for the design of improved income protection against unemployment, in line with international labour standards
Output 1.3	Feasibility of policy options assessed for strengthening the legally, institutionally and financially sustainable unemployment insurance system
Output 1.4	Communication capacity strengthened to raise awareness on unemployment insurance

### Evaluation background & methodology

The evaluation adopts the ILO’s Evaluation Guidelines as the basic evaluation framework and addresses the following criteria adopted by OECD: relevance, validity, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability in addition to cross-cutting issues. It was carried out in accordance with ILO standard policies and procedures, and complied with evaluation norms and followed ethical safeguards.

The evaluation methodology included:

- Desk review and analysis of documents related to the project.
- Desk review of other relevant documents such as the DWCP for Myanmar, etc.
- Online semi-structured interviews (Zoom & Teams) with key informants including project team and key ILO Specialists
- Online Stakeholder validation workshop/presentation on preliminary findings of the evaluation

The evaluation was carried out entirely remotely.

### Evaluation findings

#### Relevance and strategic fit of the project

At the time of its design and approval, the project was very much in line with national priorities, those of ILO and the donor. The project was also very relevant to the ILO’s programme and policy frameworks at the national and global levels and the Decent Work Country Programme. Obviously, unemployment remains a very important topic in

Myanmar and the issue remains highly relevant to the ILO and donor. However, it is not possible to comment on relevance to national priorities in the particular circumstances (post military takeover).

#### Validity of intervention logic

The Project (as originally planned) adopted a fairly standard design involving a combination of studies and capacity building. In principle, the intervention strategies, outcomes and assumption appear to have been appropriate to achieve the planned results within the given timeframe, the resources available and the social, economic and political environment. The assumption that the risk of political stability was low, of course, turned out not to be correct and clearly one would not have planned to implement the project in the climate of lacking of social justice and transparency and governance accountability which is the case after the Coup. This view is supported by the UNCT guiding of engagement and the ILO GB decisions on Myanmar. However, the military coup was outside the control of the ILO and the project team and the political risk, when it occurred, had to be duly registered.

#### Coherence

The Project did work very closely with the EU-funded ILO project *Building a sustainable Social Protection Response to the Covid-19 crisis in Myanmar* particularly in relation to its component concerning UI. In practice, the personnel involved in both projects were the same and outputs were badged with the logos of both projects. In practice, two projects combined to achieve the same objectives. The project also drew on the expertise of social protection specialists in ILO BKK, in particular the Regional Actuarial Unit and also, to a more limited extent, on the expertise in Geneva. It was also able to draw on the experience of working on UI in other countries in the region, e.g. in Indonesia where ILO supported the introduction of a UI scheme. Conversely, it was reported that some of the work developed on this project, e.g. on shock responsiveness, will help to inform other work in the region. In addition, it is anticipated that some of the outputs, e.g. the survey on termination of employment, may help to inform other work in Myanmar.

#### Project effectiveness

The Project has made significant progress towards achieving its planned objectives in those areas where this was possible without engagement with national stakeholders. As set out in chapters 3 and 4 (and see Appendix 1 for more detail), the project was able to implement most activities in relation to outputs 1.1, 1.3 and 1.4. Outputs 1.2 and 1.5 were not covered by this evaluation. The main factor which has contributed to not achieving intended results has been the coup and the resultant limitation on project activities. Great tribute must be paid to all those involved in the project, in particular ILO liaison office management and local project staff, who worked to implement this project in conditions of considerable personal insecurity.

#### Efficiency of resource use

It would appear that resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes and have been used efficiently. Activities supporting the project implementation have, in general, been cost-effective. No examples of wasted or misused resources were identified during the course of the evaluation.

## Impact and Sustainability

The Project has certainly succeeded in building a knowledge base for the design of improved income protection against unemployment, in line with international labour standards. The work done here (e.g. on shock responsiveness) will be able to assist ILO work in other countries. If and when, political stability returns to Myanmar, these materials can be used to support capacity building and policy discussions with the Myanmar tripartite partners.

The Project has also, to a considerable extent, been able to assess the feasibility of policy options for a legally, institutionally and financially sustainable unemployment insurance system. Of course, it was difficult to do this given data limitations and without being able to discuss findings with national counterparts. However, to the extent possible, the project has achieved this objective.

Given the limitations, the project had not really been able to raise awareness on unemployment insurance to the extent originally planned. As will be clear, this was the outcome of the political situation and was unavoidable.

It is frankly difficult to predict to what extent the results of the Project will continue after the Project has ceased. While normally, the evaluation would make some assessment of strategies the Project has put in place to ensure continuation of actions initiated after the Project support ends, in this case with the sudden and ongoing political turmoil there would appear to be very little the Project can do to ensure the continuity or plan a definitive forward outlook. It has been suggested that there is some possibility of continuing work with (some of) the social partners and other actors but this is really a political issue where the Liaison Office is best placed to advise.

## Cross-cutting issues

The Project was very relevant to gender issues and there have been a number of specific areas where gender issues were taken into account in project outputs. However, one could not say that gender equality has been mainstreamed in the Project design and implementation or that the Project integrated gender equality as a cross-cutting concern throughout its methodology and deliverables. The Project has integrated international labour standards into its work.

# 1. Project background

## Introduction

In March 2021 the Government of Japan and the International Labour Organization (ILO) signed a cooperation agreement in which the Government of Japan provided US\$ 636,373 to the ILO to implement the Project “Building Resilience for the Future of Work and the Post COVID-19: Bolstering Unemployment Insurance and Labour Market Policy Development in Myanmar (BUILD)”. The Project has been implemented since 17 March 2021, and is expected to finish in December 2022 (the end date of the Project has been extended from March 2022 on a no additional cost basis).

## Objectives

The long-term impact of the Project is intended to be ‘enhanced income security and employability for targeted beneficiaries / workers benefiting from the establishment of the UI system, as well as a successful transition to a more robust and crisis-resistant social protection system’.

The original outcome and outputs were as follows:

Outcome 1: National capacity and knowledge improved towards strengthening the existing employment insurance system	
Output 1.1	Comprehensive knowledge base built for the design of improved income protection against unemployment, in line with international labour standards
Output 1.2	<i>Tripartite dialogue facilitated to determine desirable policy options for strengthening the unemployment insurance and unemployment protection system and its linkages to ALMPs</i>
Output 1.3	Feasibility of policy options assessed for strengthening the legally, institutionally and financially sustainable unemployment insurance system
Output 1.4	Communication capacity strengthened to raise awareness on unemployment insurance
Output 1.5	<i>Capacities of Government agencies and SSB in selected municipalities on job matching, implementing labour market programmes, and collection, analysis and dissemination of labour market information are strengthened in particular in the context of pandemics such as COVID-19</i>

However, the approval of the Project and its commencement coincided with the military takeover of power in Myanmar (the Coup) which took place on 1 February 2021. Following the military coup, the UNCT of Myanmar, with support and endorsement from the UN in New York, developed a Guideline on principles of engagement to ensure that programmes and activities carried out by UN agencies do not in any way lend legitimacy to the military regime. In addition, workers organisations announced they would not take part in any tripartite forum where the military appointed or endorsed personnel would represent the government.



It was, therefore, necessary for the Project team to consider options and it was proposed, in effect, to implement those parts of the Project which were possible in compliance with the UNCT Guidelines, i.e. those which did not require engagement with the tripartite partners. The Project implementation, therefore, focused on (parts of) outputs 1.1, 1.3 and 1.4 and outputs 1.2 and 1.5 do not form part of the evaluation. This revised approach was agreed by the donor although there was not a formal revision of the PRODOC as this was seen as a partial implementation rather than an amendment.

### Key collaborators

The Project was implemented by the ILO. The original stakeholders of the Project were intended to include the tripartite constituents including the Social Security Board, trade unions and employers. However, as noted, the Project implementation did not include these groups after the military coup in February 2021. The project worked closely with the EU DEVCO-funded ILO Project *Building a sustainable Social Protection Response to the Covid-19 crisis in Myanmar* which had similar objectives and ran from October 2020 to March 2022.<sup>1</sup> Survey on unemployment protection during the time of crisis was carried in mid-2022 with the support of a local survey company, Myanmar Survey Research (MSR), and 1500 unemployed workers were interviewed in the survey by MSR. Though the project was not able to involve tripartite members in the project implementation due to political constraints and sensitivities, the project will involve workers and employers in the presentations of survey findings when the studies are finalized.

### Management set-up

The Project operates under the ILO Liaison Office for Myanmar with technical backstopping support from the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team for East and South East Asia and the Pacific (based in Bangkok and Jakarta). The detailed operation of project management is discussed in chapter 3.

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<sup>1</sup> See [https://www.ilo.org/yangon/projects/WCMS\\_816975/lang--en/index.htm](https://www.ilo.org/yangon/projects/WCMS_816975/lang--en/index.htm)

## 2. Evaluation Background & Methodology

### Background

The main purposes of this final evaluation are to fulfil the accountability to the donor, to serve an internal organisational learning purpose and to contribute to the improvement of similar projects in the future. The evaluation assesses the extent to which the Project has achieved its expected objectives, and the effectiveness and efficiency of the implementation. The evaluation integrates the gender dimension and International Labour Standards as cross-cutting concerns throughout the methodology, deliverables, and this final report.

The primary clients of this final evaluation include ILO project management based in Jakarta, Yangon and management of the ILO/Japan Multi-bilateral Programme. The secondary clients are the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), relevant technical units at the ILO HQ, and the Government of Japan.

The final internal evaluation examines the period of project implementation from project inception in March 2021 until the time of evaluation. It covers the activities under Outcome (1) National capacity and knowledge improved towards strengthening the existing employment insurance system in Myanmar with the exception of Output 1.2 and 1.5.

The other three Outputs of the Project are addressed in this evaluation, i.e. Output 1.1: Comprehensive knowledge base built for the design of improved income protection against unemployment, in line with international labour standards; Output 1.3: Feasibility of policy options assessed for strengthening the legally, institutionally and financially sustainable unemployment insurance system, and Output 1.4: Communication capacity strengthened to raise awareness on unemployment insurance. However, as will be discussed in more detail below, it was also not possible to implement some of the activities under these outputs as they would have involved engagement with the Myanmar authorities, e.g. study tours (product 1.1.5).

### Evaluation Criteria and Questions

The conceptual framework used in this evaluation is one that is consistent with Results-based Management (RBM) and addresses the following criteria proposed by OECD: relevance, validity, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability in addition to cross-cutting issues (as specified in the ToRs).

The following evaluation criteria and questions were addressed in the evaluation:

Criteria	Questions
RELEVANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is the Project in line with national priorities, those of ILO and the donor?</li><li>• How relevant is the Project to the ILO's programme and policy frameworks at the national and global levels and the Decent Work Country Programme?</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well did the Project adapt its interventions to the changing context to address priority needs?</li> </ul>
<b>VALIDITY OF INTERVENTION LOGIC</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the intervention strategies, outcomes and assumptions appropriate for achieving the planned results and the stated purpose within the given timeframe, resources available and the social, economic and political environment?</li> <li>• Were the risks and assumptions to achieve project objectives properly identified, assessed and managed?</li> </ul>
<b>COHERENCE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How well did other interventions and policies support or undermine the Project interventions, and vice versa?</li> <li>• How well has the Project have complemented and/or harmonized or well-coordinated with other actors and their interventions on social protection and security in Myanmar?</li> </ul>
<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What progress has the Project made towards achieving its planned objectives?</li> <li>• What factors have contributed to achieving or not achieving intended results?</li> </ul>
<b>EFFICIENCY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have resources (financial, human, technical support, etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve the Project outputs and outcomes and overall objectives?</li> <li>• Were the Project's activities operationalization in line with the work plan? If not, what factors hindered timely delivery and what counter measures were taken?</li> <li>• To what extent has the Project has leveraged resources with other projects within the country programme or partnerships with other organizations to enhance the Project impact and efficiency?</li> </ul>
<b>IMPACT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the both intended and unintended impacts of the Project?</li> <li>• To what extent has the Project supported building a knowledge base for the design of improved income protection against unemployment, in line with international labour standards?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent has the Project been able to assess the feasibility of policy options for a legally, institutionally and financially sustainable unemployment insurance system?</li> <li>• To what extent has the Project been able to raise awareness on unemployment insurance?</li> </ul>
<b>SUSTAINABILITY</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent will the results of the Project continue after the project has ceased?</li> <li>• What strategies has the Project put in place to ensure continuation of actions initiated after the project support ends?</li> </ul>
<b>CROSS-CUTTING</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent has gender equality has been mainstreamed in the Project design and implementation?</li> <li>• To what extent did the Project effectively mainstream international labour standards in project strategies and interventions?</li> </ul>

## Methodology

The evaluation adopts the ILO’s Evaluation Guidelines as the basic evaluation framework.<sup>2</sup> It was carried out in accordance with ILO standard policies and procedures, and complied with evaluation norms and followed ethical safeguards.

The evaluation methodology included:

- Desk review and analysis of documents related to the Project (Appendix 4).
- Desk review of other relevant documents such as the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP), etc. (Appendix 4).
- Online semi-structured interviews<sup>3</sup> (Zoom and Teams) with key informants including project team and ILO Specialists (see attached list of stakeholders in Appendix 3)
- Online Stakeholder validation workshop/presentation on preliminary findings of the evaluation (October 2022).

Due to the ongoing political situation in Myanmar following the military coup and in line with UNCT policy and ILO GB decision on Myanmar, there were no interviews with the Myanmar tripartite constituents. This is an obvious but unavoidable constraint on the evaluation.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/lang--en/index.htm>

<sup>3</sup> A semi-structured interview is a qualitative data collection strategy in which the evaluator asks informants a series of predetermined but open-ended questions. The evaluator used the evaluation questions (above) as a basis for the interviews, adapted to the knowledge and participation of the stakeholder.

The evaluation approach in relation to issues such as effectiveness, impact and sustainability is primarily qualitative drawing on key stakeholders' informed opinions (in response to the questions listed above).

### Evaluation limitations and biases

This is a standard end-of-project evaluation. As such, the evaluation consultant was not previously involved in the Project and had no control over the availability of data. Given these constraints, the evaluation relies on interviews and existing available documents. As noted above, in this case neither the Project nor the evaluator were able to engage with the tripartite stakeholders which is an obvious constraint on both project implementation and evaluation. It is noted that at the time the evaluation take place, most projects outputs have yet to be published and the evaluator was not able to review them.

In general, it is also difficult to measure efficiency in a concrete manner as ILO does not have any specific measure of efficiency and, even if it did, there is often a lack of comprehensive data in relation to inputs and outputs. The main available data is the overall budget and the evaluator does not have comprehensive data as to human resource inputs. However, this is a general constraint and an assessment has been made on the basis of the available data.

### 3. Project implementation

This chapter describes the implementation of the Project at country and regional level. It encompasses the outcomes, outputs and activities of the Project. A detailed assessment of the current state of implementation, based on the M&E framework, is set out at Appendix 1 while full details of outputs, reports, etc, are set out in Appendix. An assessment of the Project activities under the evaluation criteria is contained in chapter 4.

#### Project background

This section sets out the original rationale for the Project based on the PRODOC. This was based on the understanding that unemployment protection provides income support over a determined period, as well as facilitates access to skills development and job placement services for unemployed workers or people who are looking for a new job. It is estimated that 98% of the population in Myanmar does not have access to adequate social protection. Unemployment protection schemes are essential to ensure income security for workers while alleviating the financial burden of enterprises. Although unemployment insurance is a key component of improving Myanmar's social protection as covered under the 2012 Social Security Law, the unemployment social insurance scheme is not implemented, yet is not funded.

The PRODOC argued that how well Myanmar would withstand any turmoil in future labour markets – due to technological changes, future pandemics, climate change or other causes – would largely depend on the strength of the country's labour market institutions and the degree of investment in active labour market policies (ALMPs), including activities linked to retraining. In order to meet challenges such as the COVID 19 pandemic, Myanmar would require new, comprehensive and integrated policy interventions in the labour market. Employment services and skills development, as major conduits for implementing government employment and labour market policies, must gear up their effectiveness to achieve a better matching of the labour demand and supply.

The PRODOC envisaged that strengthening of the existing unemployment protection scheme by the ILO-Japan BUILD Project would follow a phased approach, with the first phase focusing on the creation of a common knowledge ground among the various stakeholders that will participate in the discussion. A review of the legal framework, labour market and the existing institutions and arrangements should take place to inform this discussion.

The second phase would focus on the development of feasibility studies to define the parameters for unemployment protection, such as benefit rate and benefit duration. The studies should include actuarial and legal assessments, and detailed recommendations for the institutional set-up and linkages with active labour market policies, in particular with regard to the requirement for the unemployed to register with the local labour exchange offices and Social Security Board (SSB) offices.

Finally, to complement the income security function of the unemployment protection system, the Project planned to support the strengthening of the ALMP. The Project follows the strategy to generate synergies among policy interventions by forging effective linkages

among unemployment insurance, skills development, as well as public employment services.

In response to the military takeover of power on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021, under the ILO Myanmar office’s guidance and in compliance with UNCT’s principle of engagement with the de facto military authorities, the project postponed all activities that required engagement with authorities including social security board (SSB) of Myanmar that was under the management of military state administrative council (SAC) until further notice. The project prioritized desk-reviews, analysis and the development of training materials to prepare for tripartite consultations and capacity building to be organised in the future.

Hence, in practice, the Project was able to implement the planned first and second phases albeit with significant limitations due to the coup.

### Outcome and outputs

The Project had one outcome which was ‘National capacity and knowledge improved towards strengthening the existing employment insurance system’. There were then (as implemented) three outputs:

Output 1.1	Comprehensive knowledge base built for the design of improved income protection against unemployment, in line with international labour standards
Output 1.3	Feasibility of policy options assessed for strengthening the legally, institutionally and financially sustainable unemployment insurance system
Output 1.4	Communication capacity strengthened to raise awareness on unemployment insurance

These three outputs are obviously inter-related. Each output had a number of specific products (see Appendix 1) but there are considerable interlinkages between them and they will be discussed together here.

The study focused on the production of research reports and studies (which covered both the planned first and second phase research) including (sample outputs in brackets)

- analysing the existing social protection system and its ability to respond to shocks (e.g. Current social protection provision in Myanmar, the impact of the crisis and recommendations to improve shock responsiveness);
- specific studies of the current protection in relation to unemployment in Myanmar (e.g. Policy design of unemployment benefits in Myanmar - Social Security Law 2012 and Social Security Rules 2014);
- examination of UI schemes in other relevant jurisdictions (i.e. International Comparative Study; Institutional set-up and operations of unemployment protection (ongoing)); and
- a detailed actuarial costing of possible options in relation to the introduction of a UI scheme in Myanmar (i.e. Cost assessment of unemployment insurance scheme

in Myanmar as at 1 October 2022 ).<sup>4</sup>

The actuarial costing sets out costing estimates for a proposed UI scheme in Myanmar on different policy scenarios as well as under different assumptions and parameters. The report also sets out the cost implications of alternative scheme designs and analyse the impact of the external environment (economic, labour market and demographic) on the cost of the scheme and level of benefits. It also highlights extensive international experience and practice in respect of UI schemes as well as related labour market, management, and administrative issues.

The Project has also commissioned a study on Gender Outcomes in Labour Market and Social Security in Myanmar. This ongoing study explores the job type, income level, labour environment and social protection from a gender perspective by screening Myanmar in domestic, regional and global contexts. This is achieved by text analysis based on the information obtained through web scraping (web data extraction). The study will highlight gender outcomes in the labour market and social security from several perspectives.

In addition to the work originally planned, the Project has also been able to carry out a detailed survey (1,500 respondents) of unemployment protection in time of crisis in Myanmar. This survey is intended to record the experience of workers concerning termination of their employment, temporary work stoppage and income security and to assess the effectiveness of the existing mechanism to protect workers against unemployment and income security during the crisis. The fieldwork in relation to this survey has been completed and analysis of the data is ongoing at the time of writing.

The Project has held a number of internal technical workshops to discuss the findings of studies. The full list of outputs is set out in Appendix 2.

In terms of communications, the Project has translated a video (subtitled) on UI into Burmese and has also published two initial reports. Other reports are currently embargoed given the ongoing political situation.

Thus, the Project has focused on conducting a series of technical studies, assessments and policy reviews which would be essential for the future design and implementation of unemployment insurance scheme in Myanmar.

### Project management and reporting

In terms of project implementation, the Project was implemented by staff from other ILO offices in the region (including the Regional Actuarial Unit) and by national staff under the supervision of the Myanmar Liaison Office. In practice, both national and the non-national staff were not able to travel to Myanmar during the implementation and all communication was done online. It was not initially possible to recruit national consultants due to the security situation caused by coup and this meant that most of the work (with the exception of the national survey) had to be implemented by ILO staff.

Project staff appeared to meet regularly with daily communication between staff inside and outside Myanmar and a team meeting every 1-2 weeks. No issues were recorded in

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<sup>4</sup> Interviewees noted that it would obviously have been preferable to have access to official data and feedback in the completion of the actuarial study and indeed the same point applies to all studies completed on legal and financial aspects of UI.



this regard. Staff working on other projects were also positive about the level of interaction and discussion in relation to project outputs.

However, Myanmar Liaison Office management felt that they were not sufficiently consulted and engaged in project decisions and implementation. The fact that work was done at a distance may have contributed to this narrative.

It should be noted that considerable credit is due to all those involved and, in particular, to national staff and project management in the Liaison Office for implementing the Project under very difficult circumstances both professionally and personally.

From the donor perspective, the donor was kept informed as to the progress of the Project and this was reported to bilateral meetings of ILO and the donor on a regular basis.

## 4. Main evaluation findings

This chapter of the report sets out the main findings in relation to the evaluation questions set out in chapter 2 under the headings of validity, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability in addition to cross-cutting issues (as specified in the ToRs).

### Relevance and strategic fit of the Project

In terms of relevance, at the time of its design and approval, the Project was very much in line with national priorities, those of ILO and the donor. The Project was also very relevant to the ILO's programme and policy frameworks at the national and global levels and the Decent Work Country Programme. From an ILO perspective, the Project was in line with the DWCP 2018-2022 for Myanmar, in particular priority 3: 'social protection cover is progressively extended'.<sup>5</sup> The Project was very relevant to the Social Security (Minimum Standards) Convention, 1952 (No. 102), Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention, 1988 (No. 168) and the ILO Social Protection Floor Recommendation, No. 202 (2012). It is also clearly in line with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development goals, in particular SDG Target 1.3 and Indicator 1.3.1.<sup>6</sup> It is also in line with the priorities of the donor (the ILO/Japan Partnership Programme) which has a long history of working with ILO in south-east Asia on social protection projects.

Obviously, unemployment remains a very important topic in Myanmar and the issue remains highly relevant to the ILO and donor. It is not possible to comment on relevance to national priorities in the particular circumstances post military Coup.

In this case, the Project had to adapt its interventions to the changing context arising from the coup to address priority needs. The decision was taken to implement the Project insofar as possible and in line with UNCT guidelines, i.e. without engagement with the national stakeholders. Given the agreed PRODOC, it is difficult to see what other option would have been open to the Project team other than not to proceed at all. Clearly, in addition to the merits of the Project itself, there were institutional arguments for continued ILO engagement in Myanmar and, at the time, the future outcome of the coup was unclear.

The Project was very relevant to gender and many workers affected by unemployment in Myanmar would be women. Gender issues are explicitly identified in the PRODOC. However, the PRODOC arguably does not address gender issues with the necessary specificity, e.g. by designing specific gender-relevant activities or gender-based results. The approach to gender in the Project is discussed in more detail below under the Cross-cutting issues heading.

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<sup>5</sup> Originally 2018-2021 but extended for a year to 2022.

<sup>6</sup> Target 1.3: Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable. Indicator 1.3.1: Proportion of population covered by social protection floors/systems, by sex, distinguishing children, unemployed persons, older persons, persons with disabilities, pregnant women, newborns, work-injury victims and the poor and the vulnerable

## Validity of intervention logic

The Project (as originally planned) adopted a fairly standard design involving a combination of studies and capacity building. In principle, the intervention strategies, outcomes and assumption appear to have been appropriate to achieve the planned results within the given timeframe, the resources available and the social, economic and political environment. The assumption that the risk of political stability was low, of course, turned out not to be correct and clearly one would not have planned to implement the Project in the partial manner which occurred. However, this was outside the control of the ILO and the Project team and the political risk, when it occurred, had to be accepted.

The Project effectively mainstreamed international labour standards in its consideration of the policy options for a UI scheme. In addition, the ILO is currently commencing a review of the overall social protection system to assess compatibility with ILO Convention 102.

The PRODOC included a basic Theory of Change. This was:

The Theory of Change of this project is that the provision of technical assistance and the promotion of knowledge sharing will lead to improved capacity of government agencies, in particular SSB, and social partners to implement the unemployment insurance scheme as foreseen under the 2012 Social Security Act and establish ALMPs appropriate for the national context.

In the event, the changed circumstances meant that this ToC was not fully relevant as it was not possible to work with government agencies and social partners.

## Coherence

The Project did work very closely with the EU-funded ILO Project *Building a sustainable Social Protection Response to the Covid-19 crisis in Myanmar* particularly in relation to its component concerning UI. In practice, the personnel involved in both projects were the same and outputs were badged with the logos of both projects. In practice, two projects combined to achieve the same objectives.

As this Project is designed to be part of the Myanmar DWCP, it was planned to work closely with other ILO projects in Myanmar including projects on Occupational safety and health in Myanmar and Labour Law. However, the implementation of all projects was limited by the UNCT guidelines and so co-operation was less extensive than originally planned. Nonetheless, staff of the other projects were involved in internal discussion of outputs and were very positive about the sharing of information and consultation by the BUILD team.

Given the particular circumstances, the Project does not appear to have been able to work with other actors and their interventions on social protection in Myanmar.<sup>7</sup>

The Project also drew on the expertise of social protection specialists in ILO BKK, in particular the Regional Actuarial Unit and also, to a more limited extent, on the expertise in Geneva. It was also able to draw on the experience of working on UI in other countries in the region, e.g. in Indonesia where ILO supported the introduction of a UI scheme. Conversely, it was reported that some of the work developed on this project, e.g. on shock

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<sup>7</sup> Interviews did not suggest that there were many (or perhaps any) major development partner actors in this precise field.

responsiveness, will help to inform other work in the region. In addition, it is anticipated that some of the outputs, e.g. the survey on termination of employment, may help to inform other work in Myanmar.

### Project effectiveness

As set out in chapter 3, the Project has made significant progress towards achieving its planned objectives in those areas where this was possible without engagement with national stakeholders. As set out below (and see Appendix 1 for more detail), the Project was able to implement activities in the following areas.

<b>Output 1.1: Comprehensive knowledge base built for the design of an improved income protection against unemployment, in line with international labour standard</b>	
<b>Product 1.1.1:</b> Conduct comparative studies on the role of unemployment insurance schemes and ALMPs	Ongoing
<b>Product 1.1.2:</b> Conduct an in-depth analysis of legal and effective protection in the case of loss of employment under Myanmar’s current labour legislation	Studies of policy design and employment termination published
<b>Product 1.1.3:</b> Review the existing social security system in Myanmar in order to ensure harmonisation among the social security schemes pertaining to unemployment protection and employment promotion mechanisms	Studies on governance and management
<b>Product 1.1.4:</b> Prepare a comprehensive report for national policy dialogue to improve current legislation and practice.	Report on current social protection practice and recommendations to improve shock responsiveness
<b>Output 1.3: Feasibility of policy options assessed for strengthening the legally, institutionally and financially sustainable unemployment insurance system</b>	
<b>Product 1.3.1:</b> Conduct an actuarial assessment for strengthening the existing unemployment insurance system, including assessments of the financial sustainability of the reform options	Cost assessment of UI scheme in Myanmar
<b>Product 1.3.4:</b> Prepare a comprehensive report for national policy dialogues	See above
<b>Output 1.4: Communication capacity strengthened to raise awareness on unemployment insurance</b>	
<b>Product 1.4.2:</b> Develop communication tools and materials including publication of technical reports	Video on understanding UI and two reports published to date

In relation to product 1.4.1, no written project communication strategy was produced but the Project has produced various communications outputs (1.4.2) as set out in chapter 3. However, it has not been possible to implement activities 1.1.5 (study tour) and 1.3.2

(capacity building). As noted above outputs 1.2 and 1.4 were not covered by this evaluation.

The main factor which has contributed to not achieving intended results has been the coup and the resultant limitation on project activities. As noted above, considerable tribute must be paid to all those involved in the Project, in particular ILO liaison office management and local project staff, who worked to implement this project in conditions of considerable personal insecurity.

### Efficiency of resource use

The total budget of the three-year project was US\$ US\$ 636,372.57. The budget breakdown by objective as at 2 August 2022 is as follows:

Category (USD)	(a) Budget	(b) Actual	(c) Encumbrance	(d) Balance (a-b-c)	Financial delivery ((b+c)/(a)* 100)
<b>Activity</b>	57220	4474	48460	4285	<b>93%</b>
<b>Management</b>	505928	295492	191311	19125	<b>96%</b>
<b>Staff costs</b>	489280	289951	180643	18686	<b>96%</b>
<b>Operational cost</b>	6448	5541	468	439	<b>93%</b>
<b>Travel cost</b>	0	0	0	0	<b>0%</b>
<b>Monitoring and Evaluation costs</b>	10200	0	10200	0	<b>100%</b>
<b>Programme Support Costs and Provision for Contingency</b>	73225	38995	0	34230	<b>53%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>636,373</b>	<b>338961</b>	<b>239772</b>	<b>57640</b>	<b>91%</b>

As can be seen, the budget (based on data a period of time before final closure) has been largely expended. Travel was not possible during project implementation and there has been no expenditure in this area.

Based on the findings in this report in relation to the achievement of project activities, it would appear that resources (funds, human resources, time, expertise etc.) been allocated strategically to achieve outcomes and have been used efficiently. Activities supporting the Project implementation have, in general, been cost-effective. No examples of wasted or misused resources were identified during the course of the evaluation.

As discussed in relation to coherence, the Project has leveraged resources with other projects within the country programme in particular the EU DEVCO project and has worked

closely with ILO BKK to achieve its objectives. In fact, the ILO has drawn together multiple resources from different areas in order to support the Project implementation.

It does not appear that it has developed partnerships with other organizations outside of the ILO. However, it is not clear that such partnerships were possible<sup>8</sup> and the fact that such relationships were not developed has not impacted on project implementation.

### Impact and sustainability

The issues of impact and sustainability are considered together here as they are difficult to assess in the context of the very unusual project implementation. In terms of its objectives, the Project has certainly succeeded in building a knowledge base for the design of improved income protection against unemployment, in line with international labour standards. The work done here (e.g. on shock responsiveness) will be able to assist ILO work in other countries.

Of course, if and when, political stability returns to Myanmar and tripartite structure and actors are willing to cooperate, these materials can be used to support capacity building and policy discussions with the Myanmar tripartite partners.

The Project has also, to a considerable extent, been able to assess the feasibility of policy options for a legally, institutionally and financially sustainable unemployment insurance system. Of course, it was difficult to do this given data limitations and without being able to discuss findings with national counterparts. However, to the extent possible, the Project has achieved this objective.

Given the limitations, the Project not really been able to raise awareness on unemployment insurance to the extent originally planned. As will be clear, this was the outcome of the political situation and was unavoidable.

It is frankly difficult to predict to what extent the results of the Project will continue after the Project has come to completion. While normally, the evaluation would make some assessment of strategies the Project has put in place to ensure continuation of actions initiated after the Project support ends, in this case there would appear to be very little the project can do. It has been suggested that there is some possibility of continuing work with (some of) the social partners and other actors but this is really a political issue where the Liaison Office is best placed to advise.

### Cross-cutting issues

As noted above, the Project was very relevant to gender issues and there have been a number of specific areas where gender issues were taken into account in project outputs (e.g. the gender study). However, the PRODOC does not identify any clear gender equality objectives or mainstreaming principles and while the Project has been relevant from a gender perspective,<sup>9</sup> one could not say that gender equality has been mainstreamed in the

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<sup>8</sup> No possible linkages are identified in the PRODOC.

<sup>9</sup> For example, it seems likely that the survey will reveal gender-specific issues re unemployment.

Project design and implementation or that the Project integrated gender equality as a cross-cutting concern throughout its methodology and deliverables.<sup>10</sup>

The Project has been able to leverage the ILO contributions, through its comparative advantages including International Labour Standards. The Project integrated international labour standards into its work and these formed the basis for discussion of the UI scheme.

The Project has considered relevant SDG targets and indicators. For example, the design of a new UI scheme is clearly in line with SDG target 1.3.

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<sup>10</sup> As the evaluator has not been able to review most of the reports, it is not possible to say to what extent they reflect gender issues.

## 5. Conclusions

### Conclusions

Overall, it can be concluded that the Project team have successfully implemented the Project insofar as this was possible in the very difficult circumstances arising after the coup.

The Project has certainly succeeded in building a knowledge base for the design of improved income protection against unemployment, in line with international labour standards. The work done here (e.g. on shock responsiveness) will be able to assist ILO work in other countries. If and when, political stability returns to Myanmar, these materials can be used to support capacity building and policy discussions with the Myanmar tripartite partners.

The Project has also, to a considerable extent, been able to assess the feasibility of policy options for a legally, institutionally and financially sustainable unemployment insurance system. Of course, it was difficult to do this given data limitations and without being able to discuss findings with national counterparts. However, to the extent possible, the Project has achieved this objective.

Given the limitations, the Project has not really been able to raise awareness on unemployment insurance to the extent originally planned. As will be clear, this was the outcome of the political situation and was unavoidable.

It is frankly difficult to predict to what extent the results of the Project will continue after the Project has ceased. While normally, the evaluation would make some assessment of strategies the Project has put in place to ensure continuation of actions initiated after the Project support ends, in this case there would appear to be very little the Project can do. It has been suggested that there is some possibility of continuing work with (some of) the social partners and other actors but this is really a political issue where the Liaison Office is best placed to advise.

### Recommendations

While normally an evaluation would make recommendations as to follow-up for a Project, in the circumstances of Myanmar, decisions in relation to future ILO work are primarily political in nature and beyond the competence of the evaluator.

However, **it is recommended that the Project team and the Liaison Office management should (before the end of the Project) review the outputs and develop a publication plan, including the results of the survey.**

### Lessons learned and emerging good practice

For the same reasons, it does not appear appropriate to draw any lessons learned or emerging good practices from this project. It might be suggested that the approach adopted of partial project implementation or of carrying out an actuarial review without access to the tripartite stakeholders could be considered good practices. However, while



these were arguably the best options in the context of this specific project it is not clear that one could draw lessons learned<sup>11</sup> or good practices<sup>12</sup> from this project which would be of general benefit to ILO project implementation.

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<sup>11</sup> Defined as an observation from project or programme experience which can be translated into relevant, beneficial knowledge by establishing clear causal factors and effects.

<sup>12</sup> A lesson learned which shows proven marked results or benefits and which is determined by the evaluator to be considered for replication or up-scaling to other ILO projects

## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Activities and outcomes assessed against original plan (output 1.1, 1.3 and 1.4)<sup>13</sup>

	Indicators	Target	Outcome
<b>Output 1.1: Comprehensive knowledge base built for the design of an improved income protection against unemployment, in line with international labour standards</b>			
<b>Product 1.1.1:</b> Conduct comparative studies on the role of unemployment insurance schemes and ALMPs	Number of international unemployment insurance practices reviewed	3	Ongoing
<b>Product 1.1.2:</b> Conduct an in-depth analysis of legal and effective protection in the case of loss of employment under Myanmar's current labour legislation	Number of reports	1	2
<b>Product 1.1.3:</b> Review the existing social security system in Myanmar in order to ensure harmonisation among the social security schemes pertaining to unemployment protection and employment promotion mechanisms	Number of reports	1	2
<b>Product 1.1.4:</b> Prepare a comprehensive report for national policy dialogue to improve current legislation and practice.	Number of reports	1	1
<b>Product 1.1.5:</b> Undertake study visits to a selected number of ASEAN countries to learn about unemployment insurance and ALMP in these countries	Number of study visits	2	0
<b>Output 1.3: Feasibility of policy options assessed for strengthening the legally, institutionally and financially sustainable unemployment insurance system</b>			
<b>Product 1.3.1:</b> Conduct an actuarial assessment for strengthening the existing unemployment insurance system, including assessments of the financial	Number of assessments	1	1

<sup>13</sup> Does not include ongoing studies at the time of writing.

sustainability of the reform options (replacement rate, qualifying condition, payment duration, contribution rate, insurable earnings, ceilings, etc.) and of the institutional capacity and legal framework to implement the proposed reform measures (registration, contribution collection, benefit payments, counselling, job placement, re-skilling, referral etc.).	Number of policy options assessed	3	n/k
<b>Product 1.3.2:</b> Organize a capacity development training to provide government officials and social partners with better understanding of the unemployment insurance concept and the results of simulation analysis under the different scenarios	Number of sessions organized	1	0 (but 3 training manuals prepared)
	Number of representatives of national stakeholders involved	30	
<b>Product 1.3.3:</b> Provide training sessions for actuarial capacity building	Number of officials trained	3	0
<b>Product 1.3.4:</b> Prepare a comprehensive report for national policy dialogues	Number of reports	1	1
<b>Output 1.4: Communication capacity strengthened to raise awareness on unemployment insurance</b>			
<b>Product 1.4.1:</b> Elaboration of a communication strategy	Number of communication strategies elaborated	1	0
<b>Product 1.4.2:</b> Develop communication tools and materials including publication of technical reports	Number of communication tools developed	3	2 (video and 2 published reports)

## Appendix 2. Outputs

### A. Knowledge products

	<b>Title</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Status</b>
<b>1</b>	<a href="#">Policy design of unemployment benefits in Myanmar - Social Security Law 2012 and Social Security Rules 2014</a>	BUILD Paper	Published
<b>2</b>	<a href="#">Employment Termination in Myanmar: Rules and payments on separation</a>	BUILD Paper	Published
<b>3</b>	Recommended Measures to improve investment governance and management of Myanmar social security schemes in Response to Shocks and Crises	BUILD Paper	Translated/Proofread
<b>4</b>	Overview of Governance and Investment Management Structures and Processes in Myanmar and the impact of the crisis	BUILD Paper	Translated/Proofread
<b>5</b>	Cost assessment of unemployment insurance scheme in Myanmar as at 1 October 2022	BUILD Paper	Translated
<b>6</b>	Current social protection provision in Myanmar, the impact of the crisis and recommendations to improve shock responsiveness	BUILD Paper	Upcoming
<b>7</b>	Rules and Trends on Employment Termination and Dispute Resolution in Myanmar: Literature Review up to December 2020	Research paper	For internal use only
<b>8</b>	Gender Outcomes in Labour Market and Social Security in Myanmar	Report	For internal use only, Ongoing
<b>9</b>	International Comparative Study; Institutional set-up and operations of unemployment protection	Report	Ongoing
<b>10</b>	Policy Recommendation for UI/Social Security Law Paper	Report	Ongoing
<b>7</b>	Unemployment protection: A good practices guide and training package, Experiences from ASEAN	Training Manual	Translated
<b>8</b>	Case studies and exercises on unemployment protection: Based on the fictional country of Coresia	Training Manual	Translated
<b>9</b>	Practitioner's guide on employment service centres (vol 1-4)	Training Manual	In Progress
<b>10</b>	ILO convention 168: Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention	ILO legislation	Translated
<b>11</b>	ILO recommendation 176: Recommendation concerning employment promotion and protection against unemployment	ILO legislation	Translated

12	<a href="#">Producing actuarial analysis with limited data – ten lessons from Myanmar</a>	Article	Published
13	<a href="#">Understanding employment insurance and active labour market policy</a>	Video	Translated
14	Final report from of unemployment protection in time of crisis in Myanmar.	Report	Ongoing

## B. Workshops

No	Date	Purpose	Format	ILO participants	Gov participants
1	19-Jan-21	<a href="#">Internal peer-review: Policy design of unemployment benefits in Myanmar</a>	Online	8	0
2	29-Jan-21 <sup>14</sup>	<a href="#">Kick-off meeting with the Social Security Board</a>	Online	6	16
3	5-Aug-21	<a href="#">Internal peer-review: Rules of employment termination and monies on separation in Myanmar</a>	Online	8	0
4	26-Oct-21	<a href="#">Internal peer-review: Rules and trends on employment termination and dispute resolution in Myanmar</a>	Online	17	0
5	29-Aug-22	<a href="#">Internal peer-review: Who pays for unemployment?</a>	Online	n/k	0

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<sup>14</sup> Pre-coup.

### Appendix 3. List of persons interviewed

	<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>
<b>BUILD Project Team</b>	Ippei Tsuruga	Program Manager
	Simon Brimblecombe	Chief Technical Advisor and Head of Regional Actuarial Unit
	Thein Than Htay	National Project Coordinator
	Saw U Ler Moo	National Project Coordinator
<b>ILO Yangon</b>	Piyamal Pichaiwongse	Deputy Liaison Officer
	Anne Margaret Boyd	Project Manager
	Mariana Infante	Senior Technical Officer
<b>ILO Regional</b>	Markus Ruck	Senior Social Protection Specialist
	Yasuo Ariga	CTA, ILO/Japan Partnership Programme
	Haruhiro Jono	Programme and Operations Specialist, ILO/Japan Partnership Programme
<b>HQ (Geneva)</b>	Maya Stern-Plaza	Social Protection Legal and Standards Officer

## Appendix 4. Documents consulted

### Project documents

Project Document (PRODOC) including risk register and workplan

Project Position document (revising project in the light of military coup)

Justifications for continuing the programme for improving unemployment protection and social security financing in Myanmar

Highlights of the Project (Achievements in 2021)

Progress Report 1 (to 31 December 2021)

### ILO/UN documents

Decent Work Country Programme 2018-2022 Myanmar

ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation: Principles, rationale, planning and managing for evaluations, 4th ed.

ILO's Strategic Plan for 2022–25