



# Evaluation Summary



International  
Labour  
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Office

## *Support for the implementation of the Decent Work Country Programme in Uzbekistan – Midterm independent evaluation*

### Quick Facts

**Countries:** *Uzbekistan*

**Mid-Term Evaluation:** *March 2017*

**Evaluation Mode:** *Independent*

**Administrative Office:** *DWT/CO-Moscow*

**Technical Office:** *GOVERNANCE*

**Evaluation Manager:** *Irina Sinelina*

**Evaluation Consultant(s):** *Lotta Nycander*

**Project Code:** *UZB/14/01/USA*

**Donor(s) & Budget:** *USDOL (US\$ 6,000,000)*

**Keywords:** *fundamental principles and rights at work, decent work, child labour, forced labour*

### Background & Context

#### Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

The Support Project is designed and operated within the framework of the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP), signed in 2014 with an extension signed by the ILO and tripartite constituents on February 28, 2017, valid up to 2020. The Project mirrors the priorities of the DWCP which has three priorities, identified as a result of consultations with the national constituents: 1) Strengthening social

partnerships to realize fundamental principles and rights at work; 2) Fostering decent employment opportunities; and 3) Improving working conditions and social protection.

The Project goal stated in the Project's Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (CMEP) is "To promote decent work in Uzbekistan, with a focus on the prevention and reduction of child and forced labour, by building the knowledge, technical and institutional capacities of the constituents to monitor and promote decent working conditions, employment opportunities and a minimum social protection floor." The Project's objectives as per the Project Document are:

- Intermediate Objective (IO)1. Capacity strengthened in Uzbekistan for the realization of fundamental principles and rights at work (FPRW);
- IO2. Decent employment opportunities promoted: Institutional supports for decent employment opportunities enhanced; and
- IO3. Improved working conditions and social protection: Strengthened law and policy on working conditions and social protection in Uzbekistan.

The project is implemented by the ILO DWT/CO Moscow. Four ILO staff members run the day-to-day operations of the DWCP Support Project; Chief Technical Adviser (CTA); Technical and Monitoring and Evaluation Officer; Project Assistant; and Finance and Administration Assistant - the latter is based at ILO Moscow office, providing assistance on a regular basis. ILO specialists (employers, workers, OSH, standards)

are also available to provide technical support on a needs basis.

### **Present Situation of the Project**

The core activities are technical assistance to monitor child labour and forced labour in the cotton harvest involving activities such as producing materials and publications; providing advice in relation to ratification of the ILO conventions; reviewing relevant laws, policies and practices; organizing capacity development (e.g. Training of Trainers) and undertaking surveys. The strategy to reach the above-mentioned objectives and outcomes is to promote FPRW and decent work so as to be able to address, in particular, the root causes of – and existing - forced labour and child labour. It is based on the goals for the DWCP for Uzbekistan, which was developed with the national constituents. Attention is placed on addressing gaps in knowledge and capacities among key stakeholders, identifying gaps in law and practice, supporting improved reporting processes and further ratifications of key conventions.

### **Purpose, scope and clients of the evaluation**

The overall purpose of the mid-term evaluation is to review the progress made towards the achievement of project outcomes, provide advice on how to improve programming and implementation for the remaining duration of the project as appropriate.

The scope of the evaluation is the entire project, on how it has progressed so far in achieving its stated outcomes, including how it has dealt with its priorities, work areas, cross-cutting themes, e.g. gender equality and non-discrimination - from its start in December 2014.

The clients of the evaluation are the ILO tripartite constituents and project partners at the national and local level; ILO management and technical specialists (in the ILO DWT/CO Moscow, Regional Office for Europe and cooperating departments at the Headquarters); Project staff; USDOL; ultimate beneficiaries – children and adults who have been involved in, or at-risk of becoming involved in child labour and forced labour.

### **Methodology of evaluation**

The evaluation has applied standard OECD-DAC evaluation criteria namely relevance; effectiveness; efficiency; and likelihood, or orientation, of sustainability. The evaluation instrument has consisted of a set of questions that were posed to the interviewees.

The evaluation has used qualitative methods to gather both qualitative and quantitative data and information. In processing and analyzing the collected qualitative information, elements of thematic analysis and content analysis, process tracing and outcome mapping (and combinations of these) were used in arriving at evaluation conclusions. Quantitative data was drawn from secondary sources only, as there was no scope to carry out a survey to gather quantitative data. Methodological triangulation was used, involving more than one data gathering method, i.e. interviews, observations, brief written questions to selected respondents and document review. Emphasis on triangulation was not only made to increase the credibility and validity of the results, and cross-check information to minimize any bias – but also to deepen the evaluator’s understanding. Qualitative content analysis was used to analyze the gathered information and “rival” explanations.

The data collection process was participatory to enable, and encourage, all key actors to share their information, experiences and knowledge – thus contributing to the findings. The evaluator adhered to ethical standards in the analysis of gathered/processed data and in the reporting and paid attention to avoid conclusions to be influenced by statements or views by any particular party.

Regarding gender equality being part of cross-cutting issues, the evaluation paid attention to UNEG’s Norm 8, on human rights and gender equality and gender-related aspects in terms of gender integration (mainstreaming) were identified in the process of data collection, analysis and report writing.

No major limitations were faced in the evaluation study. A minor limitation was the fact that some of the Project’s research was not published at the time of the writing of the draft report.

## Main Findings & Conclusions

It is found that the Project's overall design basically is well developed and logical. The key results framework elements (outputs and outcomes) are well designed/phrased and the majority of the outputs are tangible and concise. However, in terms of specific elements of the Project design, there is some confusion and inconsistencies in terms of the use of terminology in the result framework documents. Some of the performance indicators that are intended to measure proximity to targets at output levels seem not designed for optimal use.

The Project activities are generally relevant, which was reaffirmed through the signing of the extension of the DWCP to 2020 encompassing the Project's work areas and constituting its larger frame. Results of the upcoming pilot activities planned to start during the first/second quarter of 2017 (as follow up to the Recruitment study) ought to further prove relevance in relation to Intermediate Objective 1. Regarding the other two objectives (Intermediate objectives 2 and 3), the evaluation has found these to also be relevant, but is recommending that priorities are made among the outputs to be reached.

Through information gathered in interviews, discussions with several key stakeholders and beneficiaries, as well as through perusing available documentation, the evaluation has concluded that the Project has, alongside constituents, national and international actors, contributed and played an important role in child labour having become socially unacceptable in the country, and the phasing out of the mobilization and use of child labour in the cotton industry. The Project has been effective in contributing to the way Uzbek authorities and social partners perceive/discuss involuntary labour and forced labour in particular in view of seasonal cotton harvesting. The Government has acknowledgement that involuntary labour exists and that this is a problem that needs to be tackled. In this process ILO has, at different levels, worked quite effectively as a team with a sense of common cause and determination to assist Uzbekistan in implementing the DWCP and the Project activities. A keen interest was detected among constituents and international partners that the Project's technical assistance should

go beyond 2018 – a view that was expressed also by international partners, in reference to the positive effects it has had particularly on the authorities willingness/ability to acknowledge the workers' rights issues.

The analysis of the progress data included in the latest available Technical Progress Report (TPR) (October 2016) shows that achievement is satisfactory and has been effective regarding work under Intermediate objective 1 – although several of the outputs planned had no activities to show yet. Activities and outputs under Intermediate objective 2 and 3 are planned to start around April 2017.

In looking ahead at the remaining implementation period until December 2018 for the Project, and especially keeping in mind that the Problem Tree analysis brought to light that the institutional environment in Uzbekistan lacks mechanisms to promote decent work (OSH, Social protection, national and sectoral wage setting) it does seem as a tall order for the Project to contribute meaningfully to the outputs planned under the two remaining intermediate objectives. While the Project is building capacity through capacity building and Training of Trainers in various topics, the contributions to be made to the development of new management systems, strategic policy documents and draft national programmes (such as in the field of Occupational Safety and Health) is likely to demand substantial willingness, commitment and efforts from all constituents. It will also be important to have in place a sound exit strategy towards the end, which as yet has not been planned.

The Project efficiency is basically satisfactory and there seem to be no major issues with the allocation of resources affecting efficiency negatively, apart from the delay in endorsement of the Project's budget revision request for activities to implement the recommendations of the recruitment research in selected key provinces. The activity level was quite increased in 2016, leading also to an improved budget expenditure rate although it still is low.

The discontinuation of organized/systematic use of child labour in cotton harvesting earlier instigated through central Government, is likely to be sustained and it is clear from in-depth interviews that ILO has played a role to contribute to this situation, together

with its national partners and other organizations in particular the US Government. Regarding the ending of involuntary work in the cotton sector – it is still much too early to know what impact or sustainability effects the Project’s activities have had/or will have.

## Recommendations

### Main recommendations and follow-up

1. The donor agency should approve the Project’s budget revision request – if not yet done - which includes a budget to fully implement the recommendations of the recruitment research in selected key provinces to test their effectiveness. This is important in order for Project to go ahead and to increase effectiveness.
2. The Project should make priorities - in concurrence with the key partners - regarding the work under the outcomes IO2 and IO3 in order to make meaningful contributions in particular regarding social protection activities.
3. The Project should insist that the DWCP Steering Committee hold meetings regularly and play a guiding role vis-à-vis the Support Project implementation if possible.
4. ILO should request the donor agency to grant a no-cost extension into 2019, if funds still remain unused towards the end of 2018, to ensure implementation up to the end of the DWCP’s timeframe in 2020 and possibly longer, new proposals and funding could be solicited from EU and/or German Government/Embassy.
5. ILO should consider the feasibility of organizing an end-of-Project Seminar/Conference at the time of the closing of the Project (whether or not this happens in 2018 or later). The purpose would be to ensure that results are consolidated and shared among stakeholders - contributing to sustainability. Preparing for such an event might also help the Project to prepare an exit strategy in time.
6. The Project should, in any future qualitative study/research, continue to feature gender issues and the role of rural women in agriculture/cotton picking, as more information could be gathered to feed into policy-level discussions with the Ministry of Labour and other tripartite partners. The purpose would be to identify what support could be provided to rural women who will need to find, or develop existing, employment/self-employment as alternative income-generation, if cotton cultivation/harvesting actually will lose some of its importance in the near future, as foreseen.
7. ILO and the donor agency should ensure that the use of terminology regarding the result framework is consistent throughout the documentation and that not only performance indicators are developed but also some achievement/impact indicators at high results level.