



Evaluation Summary



International
Labour
Office

Evaluation Unit

ILO-EC joint management agreement: knowledge sharing in early identification of skills needs

Quick Facts

Countries: *Global*

Final Evaluation: *September 2011*

Mode of Evaluation: *Independent*

Technical Area: *Skills*

Evaluation Management: *EMP/SKILLS*

Evaluation Team: Achim Engelhardt, Lotus M&E Group

Project End: *September 2011*

Project Code: *GLO/0907/EEC*

Donor: **Joint Management Agreement:**
EURO 555.871 (EURO 499.998 EC contribution; EURO 55.873 ILO contribution)

Keywords: *Low carbon economy, skills needs, green building, and renewable energy*

Background & Context

Project Background

The project strategy was based on the implementation steps in two mutually supportive and integrated components:

- 1) Comparative analysis of methods of identification of skill needs on the labour market in transition to the low carbon economy;
- 2) Study of occupational and skill needs in two green sectors: renewable energy and green

building

The project's *purpose* was to evaluate both the methodological component (1) and results of the green-sector study component (2), and would produce important conclusions and recommendations on methods and approaches, their application, further research and policy recommendations.

According to the ToR of the final project evaluation, the *evaluation purpose* was to produce specific recommendations to enhance the use of the project findings by the ILO and the EC, and their constituents, and recommendation for potential forthcoming joint management agreements of the EC and the ILO with respect to their design and implementation. Those questions were addressed in addition to standard evaluation criteria.

The evaluation made use of a document review, a focus group interview and key stakeholder interviews in person in Geneva and telephone interviews

The following were key findings from this evaluation:

- All stakeholders coincided that the relevance of the research project was high. Green jobs are high on the EC's policy agenda according to the EC's

2020 strategy. For the ILO the project constituted an ideal follow-up of the 2008 Green Jobs report.

- The project was highly efficient as less money than originally agreed was used to deliver more outputs than agreed.
- The project was effective in establishing a knowledge-sharing partnership between the ILO and EC in the area of early identification of skill needs for the greening of the economy that had not existed before.
- All stakeholders acknowledged a very high utility of the research products thanks to a credible and solid research methodology.
- The likelihood of project impact is high. Without this project, front line research would have been missed, the knowledge base less advanced and the ILO less credible and visible vis-à-vis green jobs.
- In terms of sustainability, multiple use of research products undertaken or envisaged by a wide range of stakeholders including EC DG Employment, EMP/SKILLS, SECTOR, EMP/ENT, OECD, UNESCO and Cedefop.

Recommendations

1. The **ILO and EC** should embrace the good practice example constituted by the project and ground its future cooperation on clearly articulated demand from both partners.

2. **Donors in general:** Noting the difficulty of meeting deadlines and finalizing deliverables, the ILO should in future determine a practical timeframe for completion for research projects,

and should take steps to avoid start up delays due to late staffing..

EC: To increase the efficiency of the EC counterpart, it is strongly recommended that in the future projects be handled by technical services pertinent in the field of expertise. This would allow focusing of technical comments, providing comments on time and avoid contradictory messages to researchers.

3. **ILO HR, BUDGET, PARDEV, and possibly ILO Brussels:** The ILO should consider providing some practical training on how to translate EC procedures, especially financial ones, to the application of ILO's IRIS system.

4. The **ILO and EC** can capitalize on the emerging impact of the joint management agreement by: i) doing more of the same kind of interventions, ii) looking for complementary way of disseminating and applying the methods and the results, and iii) suggest the joint management agreement's approach to be retained as an emerging best practice of how fresh research findings can immediately be linked into policy review and formulation processes at country and sector level.

it is recommended to coordinate future publication processes of the project's research products very closely with the EC.

5. **ILO/EC:** it is recommended that a dissemination strategy should be outlined specifically in the project document to strategically promote the use of research results in order to ensure utilization-focused work is established early on in project implementation.

Good Practices & Lessons Learned

Ensure project relevance as the cornerstone for the use of results

1. To increase the relevance of research (and other) interventions, work should be demanded. Project designs directly responding to constituents' needs expressed during the ILC,

(but also in the ILO's P&B or DWCPs) and donor strategies can secure a sound basis to secure the project's relevance throughout the lifetime of the intervention. This will also increase the likelihood of increasing the ownership and subsequent use of results.

Consultation increased awareness and the likelihood of using results

2. The close involvement of ILO departments and key stakeholders during key stages of the research process increases the likelihood that key people will be aware of the research, and become more likely to take an interest in the results and make use of them. In-house consultations stimulate internal interest and involvement, while external peer review, for example through a validation workshop, provides further clout for the research products.

Packing results for easier use

3. The combination of producing high quality and in-depth research reports with easily digestible research briefs constitutes good practice and merits replication in other research projects.

Lessons Learned:

1. Project formulation

While negotiation of a project timeframe has clear budget implications for a donor, realism about the practicability should prevail. Less research outputs would have been more appropriate for a 18 months' project time frame and should be considered for any future research project. Alternatively a longer time frame of 24 months for the same level of research outputs could be considered

The ILO should always try to fully reflect its poverty focus in research projects, regardless of the donor. Where this is not possible, project strategies on how to make research findings relevant to LDCs should be developed and implemented

2. Project management

- The project monitoring process, including deadlines need to be clearly agreed in the project document to avoid confusion or additional late demands for reporting that was previously not agreed. Overall, deadlines help research teams to focus and ensure that progress is made. When deadlines cannot be met, the need for postponement should be communicated with some lead time.
- Project timeframes need to be realistic and at the same time geared to feeding research results into the policy making processes
- Having one technical contact point in the donor agency, as opposed to a non-technical one, would increase the efficiency of project management.
- The lead time for recruiting external researchers requires consideration so that the project timeframe can be shaped accordingly.

3. Project implementation

- The parallel implementation of 3 research studies was mutually highly beneficial in this case but not necessarily replicable as it is too time-intensive for a small research team
- The close involvement of ILO departments and key stakeholders during key stages of the research process (feedback rounds, validation meetings) increased the likelihood of awareness of the research, ownership of results and their subsequent use. This constitutes good practice and merits replication.

4. Exit strategy

- The post-research phase needs to be addressed in the project document: the specific use of research results for example leading to training or the replication of the project at field level

should be identified, even if it may appear aspirational and beyond the project's direct remit.

5. ILO – EC cooperation

- To address the fragmentation of the ILO-EC cooperation portfolio a more strategic approach would be desirable: rather than undertaking one-off initiatives, it would be better value for money to extend research in general to field level implementation or follow-up research
- For cooperative projects with the EC, the ILO liaison office in Brussels can continue to play a key facilitation role, especially during the project formulation phase