

A Synthesis of Evaluation Results from ILO Projects to Strengthen Labor Administration and Improve Working Conditions in Armenia, Guatemala, and Vietnam

Evaluation Contractor: Sistemas, Familia y Sociedad Limited (SFS)



ILO Project Descriptions

Helping Protect Armenians' Rights Together (HPART)

The project aims to support greater compliance with labor law and increase access to judicial and non-judicial remedies.

Supporting Respect for the Working Conditions of Workers in the Agro-Export Sector in Guatemala

The project aims to improve the enforcement of acceptable conditions of work in the agricultural export sector.

Improving Labor Laws and Labor Administration within the New Industrial Relations Framework in Vietnam (NIRF)

The NIRF project aims to strengthen the industrial relations framework.



Country & ILO Grant #	Funding	Period of Performance
ARMENIA IL 356312075K	\$2,000,000 Interim Evaluation	November 2020 – May 2024
GUATEMALA IL 325211875K	\$3,075,653 Final Evaluation	October 2018 – December 2023
VIETNAM IL 296901675K11	\$6,250,000 2 nd Interim Evaluation	October 2016 – April 2026



Key Leverage Points relevant to each Project

Leverage Points are places to intervene in a system to bring about change. High-leverage points bring about lasting, system-wide change; low-leverage points bring about limited, temporary change. It is more effective and sustainable to act on system structures than respond to events or symptoms.

Read more [here](#).

LEVERAGE POINT	Armenia	Guatemala	Vietnam
Enactment of national labor laws and/or regulatory reform	✓		✓
Labor policy development		✓	✓
Electronic Case Management Systems (ECMS), claims tracking or data sharing processes	✓	✓	✓
Collective Bargaining mechanisms			✓
Union registration structures/processes			✓
Labor inspection structures/processes		✓	✓
Labor Court administration		✓	✓
Labor Dispute Resolution (LDR) structures/processes	✓		✓
Social dialogue mechanisms	✓		✓

Projects' Target Sectors and Regions

ARMENIA	GUATEMALA	VIETNAM
 <p>National scope, with pilot interventions in the mining and services sectors.</p>	 <p>National scope, with focus on the agricultural export sector with pilot of ECMS at municipal level (Escuintla*).</p>	 <p>National scope, with focus on the industrial sector with pilot ECMS and LDR at provincial level (HCMC, Binh Duong, and Dong Nai*).</p>

Institutions Strengthened by the Three Projects

- **HLIB** – Health and Labor Inspection Body
- **MLSA** – Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs
- **CTUA** – Confederation of Trade Unions of Armenia
- **RUEA** – Republican Union of Employers of Armenia
- **Sectoral associations and unions**
- **Academy of Justice**

- **MOL** – Ministry of Labor / GLI - General Labor Inspectorate
- **Judiciary**
- **CACIF** – Coordinating Committee of Agricultural, Business, Industrial and Financial Associations

- **MoLISA** – Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs
- **DoLISA** – Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (provincial entities of MoLISA)
- **DIRWA** – Department of Industrial Relations and Wages
- **VCCI** – Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- **VGCL** – Vietnam General Confederation of Labor



“The project gives us a good basis (to use) our capacity and find solutions to the problems we identify.”

- Trade union representative (HPART Armenia)

Specific Accomplishments in each Project/ Country

Enactment of laws and regulations	In Vietnam, the project contributed to the ratification of Labor Code 2019 revision.
Labor/Alternative Dispute Resolution (LDR/ADR)	In Armenia, the MLSA acquired ownership over the ADR and in mapping HLIB workflows for the ECMS. In Vietnam, an LDR system was established by the government, and communication and networking were improved.
Labor Court Administration	In Guatemala, the Supreme Court approved harmonized criteria for enhanced enforcement of labor regulations.
Labor policy development	In Guatemala, the employers' association developed five Human Rights policies in different economic sectors, advancing the respect of labor laws and standards.
Improved labor inspection	368 Labor Inspectors increased capacity across the three projects (61 in Vietnam, 217 in Guatemala and 90 in Armenia) for more effective enforcement of labor laws.



ILO HPART Project – ARMENIA: Long-Term Outcomes (LTO) and Ratings at Year 2 (Budget: USD 2 m)

LTO	Description	Achievement	Sustainability
LTO1	Improved systems in the appropriate government institutions for enforcing and promoting labor laws and standards in the mining and services sectors.	● ——— ● ——— ○ ——— ● ———	● ——— ○ ——— ● ——— ● ———
LTO2	Increased access to judicial and non-judicial remedies related to labor laws and standards.	● ——— ○ ——— ● ——— ● ———	○ ——— ● ——— ● ——— ● ———
LTO3	Active participation of social partners in the promotion of compliance and access to remedies.	○ ——— ● ——— ● ——— ● ———	○ ——— ● ——— ● ——— ● ———

ILO AGROEXPORT Project – GUATEMALA: Long-Term Outcomes (LTO) and Ratings at Year 4 (Budget: USD 3.1 m)

LTO	Description	Achievement	Sustainability
LTO1	Increased effectiveness of labor inspections related to acceptable conditions of work.	● ——— ○ ——— ● ——— ● ———	○ ——— ● ——— ● ——— ● ———
LTO2	Judges uphold appropriate administrative sanction resolutions for violations of acceptable conditions of work.	● ——— ○ ——— ● ——— ● ———	● ——— ○ ——— ● ——— ● ———

ILO NIRF Project – VIETNAM: Long-Term Outcomes (LTO) and Ratings at Year 6 (Budget: USD 6.25 m)

LTO	Description	Achievement	Sustainability
LTO1	National labor laws and legal instruments are revised to be compatible with the ILO Declaration on FPRW in full consideration of the socio-economic conditions of the country.	● ——— ● ——— ● ——— ● ——— ○ ———	● ——— ● ——— ● ——— ● ——— ○ ———
LTO2	Labor administration develops effective national IRs policy.	● ——— ● ——— ● ——— ○ ——— ● ———	● ——— ○ ——— ● ——— ● ——— ● ———
LTO3	The labor inspectorate effectively enforces and promotes compliance with national labor laws in IRs.	● ——— ● ——— ● ——— ○ ——— ● ———	● ——— ○ ——— ● ——— ● ——— ● ———



Training Labor Inspectors in Guatemala
PHOTO CREDIT: ILO

“The system (ECMS) is very practical and easy to use.”
- Departmental Delegate (AGROEXPORT, Guatemala)

RELEVANCE AND DESIGN

✓ Results:

Projects in all three countries aligned with the priorities and mandates of social partners and governments:

- **ECMS:** In Guatemala, the project demonstrated flexibility by adapting and responding to changes in the context and needs of project partners.
- **ADR structures:** In Armenia, MLSA officials appreciated the ADR component.
- **LDR and ECMS:** In Vietnam, the project's focus on these two drivers was viewed as a sound approach by stakeholders that aligned well with government priorities.

✓ Lessons Learned:

Sound risk assessments and mitigation measures need to be established at the project's design stage. These should both be updated during project implementation.

✓ Implications for ILAB's Theory of Sustained Change (TOsC) and Procedures:

As part of a pre-situational analysis, the dimensions of **linkages, motivation, capacity, resources** and GESI should be assessed in each country / sector during the design stage or initial stage of a project.

COHERENCE

✓ Results:

- **Social Dialogue:** In Vietnam, the project's Long-Term Outcomes and intervention logic are in line with social partners' (VCCI and VGCL) stated priorities and objectives regarding industrial relations.
- **ECMS:** In Guatemala, there was continued support and commitment of the Government to the project, despite changing priorities. In Armenia, the project is consistent with the Government's digitization agenda.

✓ Lessons Learned:

Developing partnerships and coordinating with other relevant projects is vital, particularly where similar objectives and activities are shared. Networking can help increase project coherence and effectiveness. Such linkages should be ongoing throughout the life of the project.

✓ Implications for ILAB's TOsC and Procedures:

Mapping other organizations' similar interventions and establishing close communication and collaboration among USDOL-sponsored projects and with those funded by other donors, should become common practice for implementing organizations.

EFFECTIVENESS

✓ Results:

- **Enactment of laws and regulations consistent with ILS:** In Vietnam, the enacting of the Labor Code 2019 revision into law is considered a fundamental result.
- **Labor inspection processes and ECMS:** In Guatemala, the capacities of the Labor Inspectorate to manage worker complaints using an Electronic Case Management System (ECMS) have been strengthened. In Armenia, internal review processes have stalled the implementation of ECMS. In Vietnam, notable progress has been achieved through piloting of the ECMS.
- **LDR structures:** In Vietnam, progress and "proof of concept" have been achieved through the launching of pilots at provincial level for labor dispute resolution.
- **Labor Court Administration:** In Guatemala, knowledge of labor legislation has been strengthened among the judiciary and the jurisprudence has been harmonized, despite limited evidence of judges upholding sanctions for violations.
- **Social Dialogue:** In Armenia, differences between the Government and the private sector have slowed progress.

✓ Lessons Learned:

- Online capacity building events may be effective in contributing toward individual learning, however, in-person events are vital for engaging in advocacy and attaining buy-in for institutional change.
- Mainstreaming gender into strategies and activities require understanding of the cultural context and careful consideration of effective approaches. It would be useful to carry out an analysis, informed by the project's objectives, to identify opportunities for promoting greater gender awareness and mainstreaming at all levels. Projects should consider drafting a gender strategy, together with gender specialists.

✓ Implications for Project Design:

Interventions aimed at promoting compliance/adherence to regulations on working conditions usually require a significant amount of time and resources for implementation, as they call for transformative and systemic changes.



EFFICIENCY

✓ Results:

- **Projects' efficiency** differed among countries.
- **ECMS:** High competency of project and contractor staff was observed in Guatemala despite limited staff numbers and weak monitoring.
- **Tracking of expenditures:** In **Armenia**, expenditures appear appropriate and balanced, however, the project only recently began to track actual versus outcome costs. In **Guatemala**, despite efficient use of limited resources, planned vs. actual costs per outcome were not accurately tracked due to a misalignment with ILO's finance system (IRIS). Information on budget per activity was not tracked. Extensions helped the compensate for initial delays to and deliver on key outputs.
- **Resources:** In **Vietnam**, ILO constituents' technical, financial, and human resource challenges remain for the full attainment of LTO 2 and LTO 3.

✓ Lessons Learned:

- **Significant time and resources** are needed for developing and institutionalizing **ECMS**.
- **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) approach:** There is a need to formalize the projects' Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) systems, and to ensure that information about results is used in real time, to improve decision-making.

✓ Implications for Project Design and Monitoring:

- ILAB M&E staff should more closely oversee how grantees implement their **MEL plans** and support local organizations with data use, management, and information sharing.
- **Greater clarity on process, costs, and desired outcomes** with regards to host countries' institutions can better facilitate communication, collaboration and establishing common expectations.

SUSTAINABILITY

✓ Results:

- **Sustainability Strategies:** In **Vietnam**, the project created a sustainability strategy in 2018. An updated comprehensive sustainability strategy is now required. In **Guatemala** there is a lack of a clear exit strategy. However, despite weaknesses, there is an updated sustainability plan. In **Armenia**, the sustainability plan identifies potential risks and strategies for supporting sustained outcomes. While outputs under LTO 1 are likely to be sustainable, the long-term sustainability of the HPART Armenia project's outcomes remains unclear.
- **ECMS and LDR:** In **Vietnam**, the availability of sufficient financial and well-trained human resources remains a critical issue for the successful rollout and continued implementation of ECMS and LDR at a national level. ECMS roll-out faces challenges in simplifying its use for labor inspectors. LDR and ECMS pilots have potential to be scaled up and replicated. In **Guatemala**, the MOL lacks necessary technical capacities and financial resources to ensure ECMS deployment.
- **Labor Court administration:** In **Guatemala**, additional support is required to improve quality of judicial processes in labor courts.

✓ Lessons Learned:

- In **Armenia**, passing the Labor Code and ensuring its conformity with ILS is paramount for project sustainability. The larger legislative framework is vital for long-term sustainability. The extent to which ILS are integrated into the law, and particularly the ability of labor inspectors to go into a workplace unannounced, will either help sustain the project outcomes or undermine them.
- Likewise, in **Vietnam**, passing a decree on worker representative organizations (WROs) and collective bargaining may impact the effectiveness of LTO 2 and LTO 3.

✓ Implications for Project Design and Sustainability:

The legislative framework/reform in a country is key to help achieve and sustain project outcomes. ILAB should take this in account within project design and scope.

"The adoption of the Labor Code 2019 is a massive step."

- FGD respondent
(NIRF Vietnam)



Vietnamese workers in the textile industry
PHOTO CREDIT: ILO

Leverage Points	Promising Practices	
Social Dialogue Mechanisms	<p>✔ Access: Expanding membership of the Project Advisory Committee (PAC) and changing quorum rules is an adequate strategy to continue project activities and counter low trust between social partners and the Government (Armenia).</p>	<p>✔ Linkages: The engagement of local stakeholders is a useful means in the context of improving IR (Vietnam).</p>
Labor Policies and LDR	<p>✔ Organizational Capacity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on both mining and services sectors contributes to tripartite partners' application of their respective mandates and improves greater organizational learning (Armenia). • Using indicators during training can act as a means for the social partners to collectively define and explore the meaning of a standard for labor protection. This helps facilitate effective learning and promote agency mandates (Armenia). 	<p>✔ Linkages: Identifying and effectively engaging with the appropriate senior national stakeholders is an effective means to acquire the necessary political access and influence to promote compliance with IR standards (Vietnam).</p>
ECMS	<p>✔ Replacement Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting qualified staff with sound knowledge of labor inspection and labor law, and strong management, communication and coordination skills is key to providing adequate technical assistance (Guatemala and Vietnam). • Combining expertise from diverse fields is useful to deliver a high-quality ECMS and respond to clients' standards and needs (Guatemala). 	<p>✔ Linkages: A participatory approach is effective in helping develop ECMS, allowing for users' ownership and a better alignment with the needs of the Government (Guatemala).</p>
Cross-cutting	<p>✔ Flexibility / Adaptive Management: The capacity to adapt to evolving clients' needs and maintain sustained engagement with project partners are instrumental for effective project implementation (Guatemala).</p>	



Recommendations

I. RECOMMENDATIONS ON PROJECT DESIGN, MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING		USDOL	ILO	Government Agencies
1	Ensure that sufficient human resources are available for project implementation: In future Funding Opportunity Announcements USDOL should ensure that staffing provisions (for both “technical” and M&E personnel) are at an appropriate level to carry out and monitor complex interventions with maximum effectiveness and promote learning.	✔ USDOL		
2	As required in the MPG, in future projects grantees must develop sound MEL strategies to improve project performance and financial monitoring. These should include a robust PMP, necessary baseline and monitoring data, and a regularly updated outcome-based budget. MEL frameworks should also be enhanced to identify, follow up, and report on risk mitigation implementation.	✔ USDOL	✔ ILO	
3	Review monitoring plans and progress during implementation. OTLA MEL team and project managers should closely review the implementation of monitoring, evaluation, and learning plans by grantees.	✔ USDOL		
II. RECOMMENDATIONS ON ENACTMENT OF LAWS AND REGULATIONS CONSISTENT WITH ILS		USDOL	ILO	Government Agencies
4	Promote approval and implementation of regulatory reform in target countries (Labor Code in Armenia, decrees on WRO and CB in Vietnam), as delays in enacting legislation may potentially delay/impede achievement of project outcomes. Consider a coordinated advocacy strategy to address these issues.	✔ USDOL	✔ ILO	
5	Ensure International Labor Standards are reflected in the Labor Code reform and pass a decree on worker representative organizations (WROs) and collective bargaining.			GOVN

<p>6 Instead of the Law on Inspection Bodies, consider developing a new and separate law specific to the labor inspection body as a specific labor inspection agency that includes social partners as members of the Management Board.</p>			GOA
<p>III. RECOMMENDATION ON INCREASING IN-COUNTRY COOPERATION AMONG IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES</p>			
<p>7 Strengthen in-country cooperation within and among implementers by a) Mapping related projects and analyze coordination opportunities; b) Enhancing UN system collaboration; c) Improving coordination with ILO's technical and support units to enhance design, monitoring, and evaluation.</p>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ILO	Government Agencies
<p>IV. RECOMMENDATION ON ECMS AND ON ENHANCING PROJECTS' SUSTAINABILITY</p>			
<p>8 Revise the sustainability plan and develop an exit strategy, addressing: i) inspectors, mediators, and arbitrators; ii) ECMS technical hardware costs; iii) ECMS officers; iv) advocacy and communication strategy; v) a realistic ECMS roll-out timeline; vi) a timeline for project support withdrawal. For more information on ECMS, find the ECMS Thematic Evaluation here.</p>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ILO	Government Agencies
<p>9 Request that the MOL provides timely information related to labor inspections to the ILO Guatemala project team to support sustainability efforts.</p>			GOG
<p>V. RECOMMENDATIONS ON ADDRESSING GENDER EQUALITY AND DISCRIMINATION OF VULNERABLE GROUPS</p>			
<p>10 Gender mainstreaming. In future projects, USDOL and the ILO (and/or other grantees) should design gender equality and social inclusion strategies (GESI) aimed at promoting equal protection of labor rights for women and minorities in the workplace, by analyzing at the beginning of project implementation the causes of gender inequality and identifying the specific needs of women and underserved or historically marginalized groups.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> USDOL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ILO	Government Agencies
<p>11 Develop a gender equality and social inclusion strategy (GESI) for each of the three projects under implementation, that may serve as a living document for reflection and revision. Design strategies to increase the number of female inspectors, mediators, and arbitrators.</p>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ILO	GOA, GOVN, GOG
<p>VI. RECOMMENDATION ON SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND TRIPARTISM</p>			
<p>12 Promote good practices of social dialogue and tripartism. It is recommended for Ministries of Labor to formulate a workplan to strengthen linkages among employers and workers' organizations and promote tripartism.</p>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ILO	GOA, GOVN, GOG



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