



## Governing Body

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Committee on Sectoral and Technical Meetings and Related Issues

**STM**

# FOR DEBATE AND GUIDANCE

FIFTH ITEM ON THE AGENDA

## Evaluation of the action programmes on health services, public services, telecommunication services and utilities

### Overview

**Issues covered**

Implementation of sectoral action programmes in four sectors from 2006–10; the self-evaluation process.

**Policy implications**

Any guidance given by the Governing Body will have to be considered in the planning and design of future sectoral action programmes, for example those proposed in GB.310/STM/1.

**Legal implications**

None.

**Financial implications**

None.

**Action/Decision required**

None.

**References to other Governing Body documents and ILO instruments**

GB.310/STM/1; GB.310/STM/3/4; GB.301/STM/2(Rev.).

## Executive summary

This paper summarizes the key findings of a self-evaluation of four sectoral action programmes (APs) implemented in 2006–09 and the lessons learned from them, in order to provide guidance on how to implement and evaluate such activities in future. These APs sought to stimulate change through various steps ranging from developing social dialogue to replication and dissemination. Sectoral specialists gathered information on the APs using questionnaires, telephone interviews, document reviews and one country visit. Qualitative data extracted from the survey results were used to deduce findings, conclusions and recommendations. The number of activities developed for the pathway to change met the expectations established in 2005. The qualitative data indicate that APs remain a relevant tool for the Sectoral Activities Programme to implement its work on the ground. Indications of the level of satisfaction of the intended beneficiaries are generally encouraging. The survey found that a two-year timescale is very short to create and nurture contacts in countries, and that a better balance is needed between the time and resources spent in designing APs and the actual AP implementation. Also, mandates of multi-regional coverage were difficult to achieve and did not provide tangible advantages. Future decisions could distinguish between “fully-fledged” APs (which would promote social dialogue to the level of policy change, with a four-year minimum time horizon) and “regular” APs (which would have less funding). Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) should continue to serve as the initial basis for a country’s selection for APs, to ensure coherence. Application of monitoring and evaluation tools should be an important element of AP implementation.

## Introduction

1. This report summarizes the findings of a self-evaluation by the Sectoral Activities Department (SECTOR) of the abovementioned action programmes (APs), using the methodology outlined in a paper presented to the March 2008 session of the Governing Body on APs implemented in 2006–07 and on a framework for evaluating future APs.<sup>1</sup> It is intended to provide guidance on how to implement and evaluate future sectoral action programmes.
2. The foregoing paper included the following statement, which is considered the basis of the APs hereby evaluated:

The assumption behind the design and implementation of action programmes is to stimulate change ... [A] change pathway has been constructed retrospectively, endorsing key elements of the evaluation framework. The steps in this change pathway are: developing social dialogue, assessments or reports serving as a baseline, establishment of an action plan, development up to adoption of new measures, follow-up, replication and dissemination.<sup>2</sup>

3. Three main evaluation questions are considered in this report:
  - (a) The rationale for the intervention, the relevance of the intervention and the satisfaction of intended beneficiaries.
  - (b) Effectiveness in achieving expected results, and efficiency in the use of inputs to yield results.
  - (c) Alternative ways of achieving the same results. This relates to what has been learned and identifies good practice for future application.

## Implementation of sectoral action programmes

### *Health services*

4. The health services AP sought to develop and disseminate strategies and good practices for the management of health-care worker migration from the supplying nations' perspective. In the initial phase of this AP, five health-care worker supplying countries were identified with a view to exploring the effects of health-care worker migration on these countries, analysing their existing migration policies and practices and identifying the lessons learned and best practices from each, such as ethical recruitment guidelines, pre-departure briefings, monitoring of employment placement, and mutual recognition agreements. The countries selected were Costa Rica, Kenya, Romania, Senegal and Trinidad and Tobago.
5. In the second phase, the findings from the selected countries were compared, contrasted and analysed so as to develop strategies and good practices that could be shared with other supplying countries. In the action programme 2006–07, national tripartite steering committees were established in the participating countries to facilitate social dialogue on

<sup>1</sup> *Interim report on action programmes in 2006–07 in the health services, public services and telecommunication services sectors*, GB.301/STM/2(Rev.). Part 1 summarized the implementation of action programmes in 2006–07, while Part 2 proposed a conceptual framework for monitoring and evaluating future action programmes, aimed at improving their implementation.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, para. 33.

the migration of health workers. Basic research was conducted on data and assessment of existing policies to inform policy formulation in at least four of the countries (Costa Rica, Kenya, Romania and Senegal). The AP ended in December 2009.

### **Public services**

6. The AP was designed to strengthen social dialogue in public services. Participating countries were invited to focus either on social dialogue mechanisms and stakeholders' capacity to engage in meaningful dialogue, or on human resource strategies to respond to the impact of HIV/AIDS on public services. Jamaica, Ukraine and, in 2007–08, Sri Lanka (replacing Malaysia), participated in the AP on the subject of public service reforms; the United Republic of Tanzania chose the subject of HIV/AIDS.
7. The purpose of the action programme was to enable public services to contribute to sustainable development and poverty alleviation through social dialogue and human resources development. Activities aimed at strengthening social dialogue in public services and developing human resource strategies. Participating countries aimed to establish or strengthen national social dialogue mechanisms for public services and improve capacity for social dialogue of the stakeholders concerned. SECTOR supported the research and publication of baseline studies, and organized and facilitated workshops that allowed the constituents to advance these aims. The AP ended in December 2009.

### **Telecommunications**

8. The AP on skills and employability in telecommunication services in Africa (2006–07) was intended to help constituents in member States to promote training for employability in the sector, in the context of major changes in the telecommunications market and its technological infrastructure in the region. In the initial phase, a regional workshop for stakeholders from 11 African countries was held in 2006 in the United Republic of Tanzania, to agree on objectives and assist in country selection. Follow-up activities to this workshop included the provision in 2007 of assistance for training activities on employability in telecommunication services in French-speaking Central Africa, held in Cameroon (for Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad and Gabon) and in English-speaking Central and Southern Africa, held in Zambia (for Malawi, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe), with the aim of improving prospects for employment, equal opportunities and growth in the telecommunications industry in these countries. In Uganda, research was undertaken in 2007 to assess issues of child labour in the telecommunications sector, with a validation workshop in December 2007. The AP ended in December 2007.
9. Follow-up activities in 2008–09 included a National Seminar on Skills and Employability in Telecommunications Services in Central Africa, Yaoundé, 2009; awareness-raising activities in 2008–09 on child labour in the Ugandan telecommunications sector; and a mini-project in 2009 on assisting child labourers from the sector to go back to school and on providing skills training for their future.

### **Utilities**

10. The overall aim of the AP, which began in 2008–09 and is due to end in 2011, is to assist governments and the social partners, through ILO expertise in social dialogue, in developing joint strategies and actions to extend and improve the efficiency of these fundamental services. To ensure sufficient technical and financial resources to achieve the aim, the programme was limited to Malawi, Nigeria and Peru. Experiences from these countries are expected to serve as good practice examples for future action. The AP follows on from the Tripartite Meeting on Challenges and Opportunities Facing Public

Utilities (2003) through capacity building to strengthen social dialogue mechanisms at the enterprise level in selected developing and transition countries.

11. Activities were carried out in the three participating countries based on the specific recommendations made by national steering groups for improving social dialogue mechanisms in reforms in utilities: to improve water and electric power supply in Malawi and Nigeria, and municipal water utilities in Peru. National steering groups were established, and baseline studies performed in all three countries. In workshops organized and facilitated by SECTOR, national constituents beyond the national steering groups in all three countries discussed the studies and developed plans of action to establish permanent mechanisms of social dialogue according to their own priorities. The AP is in its follow-up stage during the 2010–11 biennium; this stage has not been evaluated.

### ***Process followed in the evaluation***

12. Sectoral specialists gathered information on the APs using questionnaires, telephone interviews, document reviews and one country visit to Peru undertaken by an AP manager as part of a scheduled mission. Separate questionnaires were designed for internal clients and external partners, based on the APs' framework for monitoring and self-evaluation. The questionnaires were tailored to each AP, translated into French, Spanish and Russian according to need and sent out to stakeholders in 14 countries. The main questions were consistent across all four versions.
13. In total, 147 stakeholders were contacted during the self-evaluation and 36 stakeholders participated in the survey, either by completing a questionnaire (26), by telephone interview (five) or by face-to-face interview conducted by an external collaborator (five ILO SECTOR staff). Qualitative data extracted from the survey results provided the main body of information to deduce findings, conclusions and recommendations. Though not statistically representative, this data allowed trends to be identified and the evaluation questions to be answered.

### ***Key findings and conclusions***

14. In November 2005, a paper on sectoral action programmes in 2006–07<sup>3</sup> established generic and sector-specific indicators<sup>4</sup> for three of the APs, which can be presented in tabular form as follows:

<sup>3</sup> GB.294/STM/2, pp. 21–23.

<sup>4</sup> The generic indicators included the establishment of national steering groups in a majority of participating countries; that 50 per cent of national steering groups in each AP produce action plans leading to proposals for change; that 25 per cent of countries in each AP adopt new or modified measures; and that programme reports measuring progress are produced within 24 months of the programme's commencement. The *sector-specific indicators* were: **Health services:** social dialogue involving the social partners with the various government agencies concerned with the migration of health-care workers results in adopted policy or administrative measures in 50 per cent of the countries within 24 months; and capacity is built in 50 per cent of the participating countries over 24 months to improve the compilation of data on the flow of migrant health-care workers. **Public services:** fifty per cent of participating countries (a) establish a national social dialogue mechanism for public service and public service reform and (b) complete detailed information collection on the impact of HIV/AIDS on the civil service and adopt HRD strategies in the light of the findings. **Telecommunications:** A majority of participating countries produce a sectoral plan to address skills and employability issues in telecommunications services.

Outcome	Health	Public services	Telecommunications	[Utilities] <sup>1</sup>
National steering committee established	All 6 countries	1 out of 4 countries	0 out of 4 countries	50%
Key objectives agreed or addressed	All 6 countries	All 4 countries	3 out of 4 countries	50%
Baseline report	All 6 countries	2 out of 4 countries	0 out of 4 countries	50%
Programme report measuring progress	All 6 countries	All 4 countries	All 4 countries	100%
Plan of action established	All 6 countries	All 4 countries	2 out of 4 countries	50%
Capacity building	All 6 countries	2 out of 4 countries	All 4 countries	50%
New measures developed	All 6 countries	3 out of 4 countries	1 out of 4 countries	50%
New measures adopted	All 6 countries	0 out of 4 countries	0 out of 4 countries	25%

<sup>1</sup> As the utilities AP was not approved until 2008, no sector-specific indicators were provided.

15. The following table shows the action taken during each of the APs:

Outcome	Health	Public services	Telecommunications	Utilities
National steering committee established	5 out of 6 countries	1 out of 4 countries	1 out of 4 countries, but regional meetings for 11 countries	All 3 countries
Key objectives agreed or addressed	5 out of 6 countries	3 out of 4 countries	All 4 countries	All 3 countries
Baseline report	5 out of 6 countries	2 out of 4 countries	All 4 countries	All 3 countries
Programme report measuring progress	All 6 countries	All 4 countries	All 4 countries	All 3 countries
Plan of action established	5 out of 6 countries	3 out of 4 countries	All 4 countries	All 3 countries
Research	2 out of 4 countries	0 out of 4 countries	2 out of 4 countries	
Capacity building	5 out of 6 countries	2 out of 4 countries	All 4 countries	
New measures developed	3 out of 6 countries	3 out of 4 countries	1 out of 4 countries	2010–11
New measures adopted	0 out of 6 countries	1 out of 4 countries	0 out of 4 countries	
Follow-up	0 out of 6 countries	1 out of 4 countries	2 out of 4 countries	

16. An analysis of the questionnaire responses and the other components of the self-evaluation indicates that APs remain a relevant tool for SECTOR to implement its work on the ground, especially in the light of the social tensions that have characterized the financial crisis in many member States. Indications of the level of satisfaction of the intended beneficiaries are generally encouraging, although there were some problems with unfulfilled expectations. APs are very relevant for SECTOR to connect to national priorities established in DWCPs. There was more coherence when the APs fitted well with DWCPs, which supported the country selection process but were not sufficiently specific to be the only entry point for country selection. If these programmes are not sufficiently specific about sectoral needs, early communication with ILO field presence would be required. Hence, more time is needed for additional consultations with field offices.

17. A two-year time horizon seems sufficient to establish social dialogue or a very specific element of an AP such as research or capacity building, but an outcome such as policy change remains a challenge in such a short period. A two-year timescale is very short for Geneva-based sector specialists to create and nurture contacts in a country, especially where the ILO field presence is limited. Sectoral specialists also faced competing demands

from other ILO work and could not always prioritize AP implementation nor devote sufficient time to AP management and follow-up. A better balance is needed between time and resources spent in designing APs and the actual AP implementation, including the use of the AP monitoring and evaluation framework.

18. Gender issues were also mostly addressed incidentally rather than systematically in AP implementation, although the health AP and the research on child labour in telecommunications in Uganda put gender at the centre of their work.
19. Coordination remains key for AP success. National steering committees can support the APs, including through closer coordination with the ILO country presence. However, the three APs that sought a multi-regional coverage faced challenges, while the telecommunications AP chose a subregional rather than national focus. The mandate of multi-regional coverage was difficult to achieve and did not provide tangible advantages, for example in terms of cross-regional learning.

### ***Lessons learned***

20. Future decisions to establish APs could distinguish between “fully-fledged” and “regular” APs. Fully-fledged APs would promote social dialogue to the level of policy change, and include a four-year minimum time horizon and significantly greater funding than regular APs, which would seek to provide technical assistance in furthering ILO strategic goals on a national basis, using a two-year timeframe and a budget similar to those involved in this evaluation. Regional AP coverage could be reconsidered and promote more regional or subregional coverage. Clear planning of financial and human resources is needed for AP planning and implementation. Gender issues should also be mainstreamed in the design stage of the APs.
21. DWCPs should continue to serve as the initial basis for a country’s selection for APs where available, to ensure coherence. If DWCPs are not specific enough in formulating sectoral needs, the social dialogue specialist or other relevant specialists in the field could be involved from the beginning of the AP design, and a second consultation round or regional workshop could be used to finalize country selection. Field offices should be involved from the design stage of APs, and national steering committees could support the AP implementation, as appropriate to each AP.
22. AP managers should be tasked to support implementation and follow-up on a full-time basis rather than having multiple responsibilities, and should be able to prioritize APs.
23. Application of monitoring and evaluation tools should be an important element of AP implementation.
24. The lessons learned described in paragraphs 20–23 of this document should be taken into account in the design and implementation of future action programmes.

Geneva, 26 January 2011

*Submitted for debate and guidance*