BUREAU OF INTERNATIONAL LABOR AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

FINAL EVALUATION

PROJECT TO REDUCE CHILD LABOR AND IMPROVE WORKING CONDITIONS IN AGRICULTURE IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (FORMITRA)

November 2023

Grantee: International Labor Organization (ILO)

Project Duration: December 2017–December 2023

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FINAL EVALUATION OF FORMITRA

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

Acronym	Description
CASC	*Confederación Autónoma de Sindicatos Clasistas*
CDL	Local Steering Committee
CDN	National Steering Committee
CMEP	Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
CNTD	*Confederación Nacional de Trabajadores Dominicanos* (labor union, acronym in Spanish)
CNUS	*Confederación Nacional de Unidad Sindical* (labor union, acronym in Spanish)
CONANI	National Council for Children and Adolescents
COPARDOM	*Confederación Patronal de la República Dominicana* (employers' association, acronym in Spanish)
DAJ	Department of Judicial Assistance
DAR-CE	Child Labor Reduction Methodology
DGHS	General Directorate of Hygiene and Safety
DGE	General Directorate of Employment
DR	Dominican Republic
DTI	General Directorate of Labor Inspection
ECMS	Electronic Case Monitoring System (SICIT in Spanish)
FEDODIM	Federation of Municipal Districts
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FORMITRA	Project to Reduce Child Labor and Improve Working Conditions in Agriculture in the Dominican Republic
ILAB	Bureau of International Labor Affairs

Acronym	Description
ILO	International Labor Organization
INFOTEP	National Institute for Technical Professional Training (acronym in Spanish)
IT	Information Technology
ISA	Agricultural Superior Institute (acronym in Spanish)
JAD	Dominican Agribusiness Board
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOL	Ministry of Labor of the Dominican Republic
OCFT	Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
PROSOLI	*Programa Progresando con Solidaridad*
RLT	Ministry of Labor Local Representations (acronym in Spanish)
RNC	National Taxpayer Registry
RQ	Research Question
SCORE	Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (ILO) Program
SIRLA	*Sistema Integrado de Registros Laborales* (Integrated Labor Records System)
TPR	Technical Progress Report
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
USG	United States Government

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the results of the final performance evaluation of the "Project to Reduce Child Labor and Improve Working Conditions in Agriculture in the Dominican Republic" (FORMITRA). DevTech Systems conducted this evaluation under contract 1605C2-23-F-00017 with the United States Department of Labor (USDOL)/Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB).

ILAB awarded a USD 5,150,000 grant to the International Labor Organization (ILO) to implement FORMITRA from December 2017 to December 2023. The project's primary objective was to strengthen the capacities of the Ministry of Labor (MOL) to comply with labor regulations and improve working conditions in the agricultural sector in the Dominican Republic. Through capacity-building activities, FORMITRA supported strengthening intra- and inter-institutional coordination and the relationships between the Labor Inspections Directorate and Ministry directorates. FORMITRA undertook activities in the Greater Santo Domingo area (metropolitan zone of Santo Domingo) and 10 provinces, including Barahona, Sánchez Ramirez, Azua, María Trinidad Sanchez, San Juan, San José de Ocoa, Santiago, La Vega, Monseñor Nouel, and Duarte. These provinces all have a notable level of agricultural activity, local MOL representation, and a Local Development Child Labor Committee.

This evaluation will provide ILAB/Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT), the grantee, participants, and other project stakeholders or actors who have a concern, interest, and/or influence on working to combat child labor more broadly an assessment of the project's performance, its effects on project participants, and an understanding of the factors driving project results. The evaluation results, conclusions, and recommendations will inform stakeholders in the design and implementation of subsequent phases or future labor rights projects as appropriate.

This evaluation responds to nine research questions (RQs) designed to assess FORMITRA's design, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability after completion. To answer the RQs, the evaluation team used a mixed-methods approach: a case study design employing outcome harvesting techniques, quantitative analysis of non-random survey data, and secondary data review. The evaluation drew on a purposive sample of stakeholders provided mainly by ILO. The team collected data using a survey sent to 149 labor inspectors that received 75 respondents, 19 key informant interviews with 37 participants, and 8 focus group discussions with 77 participants. Overall, DevTech consulted with USDOL and U.S. Embassy officials; host country government officials from the MOL at the national, regional, and local levels; ILO country office representatives; and a series of stakeholders fully described in the methods section.

To rate the level of achievement and sustainability of the project's outcomes, the evaluation team developed a performance rating rubric and used the four-point scale ILAB provided: low, moderate, above-moderate, and high. The rubric details can be found in the methods section. The ratings, results, and conclusions are presented in Table 1.[1]

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[1] Section 1.2 provides a detailed description of how the team developed the ratings.

1. KEY EVALUATION RESULTS

Table 1: Performance Summary

Performance Summary	Rating
SO1.1 Improved systems, tools, and instruments adopted by MO	
Achievement of this component scores "above moderate." The MOL developed protocols, manuals, and action guides in support of labor inspectors' work in the agricultural sector (Output 1.1.1.). Specifically, the MOL adopted a Labor Inspection Manual with updated protocols to streamline and consolidate information. Inspectors affirmed that having physical copies of the manual shows credibility and integrity to promote compliance with the law. The MOL also made the Electronic Case Monitoring System (ECMS) operational for the agricultural sector (O1.1.2.). The MOL had yet to launch the legal case management system at the time of fieldwork for this evaluation. The ECMS allows real-time labor data verification through the access and download of supporting documentation, providing inspectors with instantaneous feedback and improving inspection transparency, times, and precision. The ECMS enables inspectors to draft and store reports on the system and allows supervisors to review inspection reports under development, streamlining supervision. Inspectors also noted the system reduces repetitive and manual activities. The MOL completed outputs related to the design of a conceptual and technical system of administrative registers (O1.1.3.), the launching of a campaign for the dissemination of resolutions on minimum wage in the agricultural sector (O1.1.4.), and the setup of a platform for managing free-of-charge Legal Aid cases (O1.1.5.). Yet, by the time of this evaluation's fieldwork, the system had not been launched, nor had the training been implemented. Despite the advancements, the system presents important challenges. Inspectors reported the system is often not available when attempting to access it, including during the weekends when the system is down, and users are accessing remotely. They mentioned the timeframe the system allots to work on orders is tight, leading to rushed inspection processes. Moreover, inspectors pointed out inefficiencies in password recovery, resulting in significant time losses. This outcome scores "high" on sustainability. The Manual is available in a digital and physical format, and the project has trained MOL personnel on its use, fostering a foundation for its long-term use. The MOL committed to carry out an annual protocol revision as part of the project's sustainability plan, ensuring it is regularly updated. They have also formulated a plan and budget to provide Ministry of Labor Local Representations (RLT) offices with information technology (IT) equipment to facilitate system use. The Ministry possesses ECMS source codes and the technical manual, enabling them to customize updates tailored to their needs.	**Achievement:** Above moderate **Sustainability:** High

Performance Summary	Rating
SO1.2 Improved knowledge to enforce the legal framework with emphasis in the agricultural sector demonstrated by MOL	
Achievement of this component scores "above moderate." FORMITRA provided a specialized training program for labor inspectors and MOL officers (O1.2.1.). The project trained 225 MOL officials and analysts and strengthened their knowledge of labor rights, child labor prevention, mediation, and occupational safety and health. FORMITRA also implemented the program to strengthen the MOL's Directorate of Labor Health and Safety (O1.2.2.), and a specialized program to strengthen the Directorate of Policy for Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor (O1.2.3.). Despite general satisfaction with the skills development and soft skills training sessions, stakeholders expressed a desire for more in-depth, specialized training tailored to their specific work demands rather than the broad overviews provided. Stakeholders noted the need for advanced-level content, particularly in legal areas and in occupational safety and health in the agricultural sector. The evaluation rates the sustainability of the outcome as "high." Within the sustainability plan is a provision for migrating the Labor Law and Child Labor Prevention training programs to a virtual format. Additionally, the MOL is developing an online training program to thoroughly prepare new inspectors, which will be accessible to the staff through their intranet platform.	**Achievement:** Above Moderate **Sustainability:** High
SO1.3 Improved implementation of institutional initiatives related to acceptable conditions of work and child labor by key actors	
Achievement of this component scores "high." FORMITRA implemented awareness-raising campaigns on labor rights, including child labor and other related topics (O1.3.1.). CDL members affirm that the implementation of training programs and educational campaigns have helped make the problem visible and civil society to become more involved in its prevention and eradication. The Child Labor Reduction Methodology (DAR-CE) program and educational campaigns have been instrumental in spreading knowledge and raising awareness surrounding child labor. The project has also invigorated inter-institutional collaboration and developed strategic alliances among government institutions, employers' and workers' organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and other key stakeholders (O1.3.2.). The National Steering Committee (CDN) and Local Steering Committees (CDLs) have been trained to identify violations of labor regulations, including child labor in the agricultural sector (O1.3.3.). The project exceeded its training targets, with 689 members from CDN and CDL institutions trained in labor rights and child labor prevention. CDL also created a joint action plan with 72 percent of member institutions incorporating this agenda to improve child labor prevention into their institutional plans. This outcome scores "above moderate" in sustainability. The project's efforts promoted collaboration among CDL members; however, the planning processes are only guaranteed for one year. While the DAR-CE program	**Achievement:** High **Sustainability:** Above Moderate

Performance Summary	Rating
equipped the CDL with methodologies and materials to educate institutional actors and communities in child labor prevention, replicating this methodology and sustaining implementation hinges on the availability of financial resources. Certain CDL members have secured funds to produce training material, and communities are more equipped to replicate the program through a knowledge-multiplication methodology, but constrained budgets may prevent government institutions involved in child labor prevention from sustaining activities in the long run.	
SO1.4 Innovative strategies for improving work opportunities, work conditions, and productivity piloted	
Achievement of this component scores "moderate." FORMITRA piloted a program on promoting employment and job insertion for vulnerable families in the agricultural sector (O1.4.1.). Stakeholders reported that the pilot equipped them with the skills needed for job interviews and creating their resumes. Nonetheless, there were indications that certain training areas did not align with labor market demands, with a noted absence of IT training. The feedback points toward the necessity of post-training evaluation mechanisms that could enhance employment prospects for participants. Additionally, the suggestion by participants to incorporate an internship component within the program was recurrent, as it could provide essential workplace experience, potentially serving as a steppingstone to full-time employment. FORMITRA also piloted the Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) methodology to build the capacity of local staff and strengthen small and medium enterprises (O1.4.2.). Respondents identified the SCORE program as an innovative strategy for labor improvements within the agricultural sector of the Dominican Republic. Trainers from the National Institute for Technical Professional Training (INFOTEP) perceive that the SCORE program stands out from other methodologies by its holistic approach that extends beyond training to include support during the implementation phase and actively involving management and workforce personnel. Similarly, it assesses the goals and aspirations of the employees. INFOTEP acknowledges that such support is critical for small and medium-sized enterprises, often requiring additional guidance to integrate new learnings effectively into their business processes. The sustainability of this component scores "moderate." The project has built capacities to continue implementing the SCORE methodology in the Dominican Republic by certifying five trainers of trainers at INFOTEP. The program's integration into the institution's curriculum signals its potential for sustainability. The labor insertion training program has equipped the MOL with a methodology to pinpoint labor supply and demand gaps, slated for replication in 10 additional provinces; however, efforts to continue the program beyond its systematization are not evident in the sustainability plan.	**Achievement:** Moderate **Sustainability:** Moderate

2. LESSONS LEARNED

Respondents identified three key lessons from FORMITRA: 1) enabling consultation with all actors prior to project design helps identify priorities and streamline the project's focus, scope, and objectives; 2) involvement of relevant actors right from the project's inception facilitates implementation; and 3) commitment of MOL's management is crucial for effective implementation. Stakeholder narratives reveal that the engagement and dedication of leaders are indispensable for the successful execution of project initiatives.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS PER INTENDED AUDIENCE

Bureau of International Labor Affairs – U.S. Government

1. **Conduct targeted needs assessments** in critical areas requiring intervention, engage stakeholders and institutions with specialized expertise, and ensure these occur prior to the initiation of the design phase of future projects.

2. **Ensure timely midterm evaluations.** FORMITRA was still in its early stages at the time of the midterm evaluation due to delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, changes in government administration, and the project's redesign phase that occurred in its first year of implementation. As a result, the midterm evaluation could not adequately gauge the project's progress. It is advisable to review and adapt project plans well in advance to accommodate schedule changes.

International Labor Organization – Grantee

1. **Ensure instructors possess in-depth knowledge of the specific project domain.** Training should be technical and detailed to the project's focus area.

2. **Ensure the availability of staff with realistic expectations about labor market conditions** and salaries. Be prepared to recruit talent from outside the local market if necessary.

3. **Improve evaluation methods** by implementing pre- and post-training tests and baseline surveys to quantify improvements, and facilitate more effective impact assessments.

MOL of the Dominican Republic – Host country government

1. **Tailor the ECMS system to the complexities of agricultural work environments,** ensuring that inspections are thorough, frequent, and adapted to the sector's unique challenges, e.g., reporting without connectivity, suitable and resistant vehicles, and training programs focused on agricultural labor laws and the rights of workers in this sector.

2. **Address structural challenges,** including the high incidence of undocumented laborers and the lack of an appropriate registry of companies working in the field.

3. **Enhance case management system efficacy.** Conduct an immediate comprehensive survey among inspectors to identify recurring issues within the case management system and prioritize addressing the most frequent problems.

4. **Establish an ongoing training program for MOL staff** focusing on inspectors and encompassing critical areas, such as occupational health, safety, and hygiene. This initiative should consider structured developmental pathways, including advanced degrees, professional certifications, and structured induction programs tailored for specific domains (mediation, inspection, etc.).

5. **Update national child labor data and ensure systematic integration** within the MOL's systems. Currently, the data is outdated, with the latest figures only available up to 2019. The MOL should collaborate with the National Statistics Office to collect and produce child labor data. Furthermore, the MOL should establish a connection between the child labor inspection processes and the general inspection system, a link that, as the Vice Minister of Labor noted, is currently missing.

6. **Adjust the pilot program targeting vulnerable families** to facilitate more effective labor market integration and enhance the project's overall impact. This could include structured internship programs to strengthen compliance with the participation criteria.

7. **Design flexible project frameworks** to effectively handle unforeseen challenges such as public health crises or bureaucratic changes. Central to this is fostering robust IT skills among team members to ensure the adaptability and continuity of operations.

8. **Elaborate on an Equity and Inclusion Plan.** The Directorate of Equity and Inclusion from the MOL, alongside the Planning Directorate and alliances with other relevant institutions, should take the lead in developing a plan during project design that considers tackling disparities based on territory, gender, and disabilities.

9. **Strengthen local representation and supervision to promote sustainability.** Integrate a component to reinforce CDLs and supervision techniques nationwide.

1. EVALUATION OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 EVALUATION OBJECTIVES

The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) and the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) tasked DevTech Systems, Inc. with conducting a comprehensive final performance evaluation of the "Project to Reduce Child Labor and Improve Working Conditions in Agriculture in the Dominican Republic" (FORMITRA), examining its design, relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability after its completion. This evaluation delved into whether FORMITRA had achieved its intended objectives, identifying the challenges and factors influencing these outcomes, with a focus on equity and inclusion. It also sought to understand both the intended and unintended effects of the project, to distill key lessons and emerging best practices, to evaluate the sustainability of the project's outputs, and to examine how project management integrated the recommendations from the midterm evaluation.

The evaluation was intended for stakeholders involved in efforts against child labor, such as ILAB/the Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT), grantees, participants, and others, with the findings set to inform necessary adjustments and to guide future technical assistance projects. The assessment addressed the alignment of the project's design with the needs of the Dominican Republic's agricultural sector, scrutinized the progress toward the project's goals, and evaluated the Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan's (CMEP) utility in informing management decisions. Ultimately, the evaluation team structured the evaluation around a series of carefully crafted questions designed to dissect and assess various aspects of the project's execution. The evaluation will contribute to understanding the project's role in advancing the United States Government's (USG) policy objectives related to equity for historically underserved groups.

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Development Assistance Committee criteria, and ILAB learning priorities guided the FORMITRA project's final performance evaluation. These were pivotal in gauging the project's relevancy, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. Below are the specific evaluation questions that formed the backbone of this thorough analysis.

Relevance and Coherence of Project Design

1. To what extent is the project design, theory of change, and intervention logic relevant to improving working conditions in the agricultural sector of the Dominican Republic?

2. To what extent are the project strategies relevant to the specific needs of project participants, communities, and other key stakeholders?

Effectiveness and Efficiency

3. To what extent is the project making progress toward its planned outcomes and sub-outcomes? What are the key results achieved so far, specifically regarding:

    i. Improving strategic enforcement of labor laws with an emphasis on the agricultural sector by the Ministry of Labor of the Dominican Republic (MOL) – OTC 1

  ii. Improving systems, tools, and instruments adopted by the MOL with an emphasis on the Electronic Case Monitoring System (ECMS) – SO 1.1

  iii. Improving knowledge to enforce the legal framework with emphasis on the agricultural sector – SO 1.2

  iv. Improving implementation of institutional initiatives related to acceptable conditions of work and child labor by key actors – SO 1.3

  v. Innovative strategies for improving work opportunities, working conditions, and productivity through the pilot program – SO 1.4

4. What are the key internal or external factors that affected the achievement of project outcomes?

5. How effective and efficient are the project's intervention and management strategies? What are the key strengths and weaknesses in project implementation and management? What areas need improvement?

6. To what extent were the midterm evaluation's recommendations adopted by the project management?

7. Does the project's CMEP provide a valid means to monitor project progress and achievements, and to what extent has the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system been effectively used by the project to inform management decision-making?

8. To what extent is the project contributing toward the USG policy objective of advancing equity for all, including groups who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality?

Sustainability

9. To what extent are the project's plans for sustainability adapted to the local level, national level, and capacity of implementing partners? What steps have been taken to ensure sustainability?

1.2 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The evaluation team adopted a mixed-methods comprehensive and participatory approach to evaluate FORMITRA's performance. Specifically, the evaluation used a case-study approach aligned with outcome harvesting and utilization-focused evaluation principles. The evaluation team employed this strategy to capture the project's effectiveness and improvements from start to finish, emphasizing qualitative insights from those most involved with and affected by the program.

In practice, this approach entailed a detailed collection of qualitative and quantitative data. The evaluators distributed a non-random survey to all labor inspectors and collected 75 responses out of 149 inspectors (a 50.3 percent response rate), providing a quantitative perspective on the project's impact. Qualitatively, from August 21 to September 8, 2023, the team facilitated 19 semi-structured interviews using a standard questionnaire to ensure consistency. Additionally, the team convened eight focus group discussions in various regions of the Dominican Republic, including the North, South, and Metropolitan

zones. The evaluation team designed these discussions to engage a range of stakeholders and harvest diverse viewpoints and experiences related to the project's implementation and effects.

The evaluation team traced and reconstructed the sequence of events leading to both expected and unexpected outcomes by integrating outcome harvesting with utilization-focused evaluation techniques. The evaluation team gathered data through direct surveys to MOL inspectors, in-depth interviews, and focus groups; subjects of the evaluation actively detailed outcomes and their linkage to program outputs. This participatory dimension not only yielded richer data but also fostered a sense of ownership among stakeholders. Table 2 summarizes all the fieldwork conducted for the evaluation.

Table 2: Distribution of Participants by Fieldwork Instrument

Date	Type of instrument	Number of events	Number of Participants
22/08/2023–05/09/2023	Survey	1	75
21/08/2023–08/09/2023	Key Informant Interviews	19	37
29/08/2023–07/09/2023	Focus Group Discussions	8	77

The evaluation placed a significant emphasis on stakeholder engagement throughout the research process. The team initiated collaborative interactions with institutional entities, such as the ILO and the MOL, to derive valuable insights. While the team executed the primary survey online to maximize outreach, it conducted key informant interviews (KIIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) both in-person and online, facilitating in-depth and comprehensive discussions. Interviewed stakeholders were high-level officials from the MOL and project-related institutions, such as vice ministers and directors from the different departments, management leaders from the ILO, and executives from the National Institute for Technical Professional Training (INFOTEP), ILAB, and the U.S. Embassy. Focus group informants were technical personnel from different sectors of the MOL, as well as partner institutions, such as lawyers of the Department of Judicial Assistance (DAJ), analysts from the General Directorate of Hygiene and Safety (DGHS), inspectors from the General Directorate of Labor Inspection (DTI), and representatives from the Local Steering Committees (CDLs). The fieldwork took place in four locations to gauge potential regional disparities: Greater Santo Domingo—which includes the National District, Santiago de Los Caballeros, and María Trinidad Sánchez in the north region of the country—and San Juan de la Maguana, located in the south region.

On September 20, 2023, DevTech's local evaluation team held a stakeholder validation workshop at the Sheraton Hotel in Santo Domingo as a key component of the participatory evaluation process. The evaluation team shared preliminary findings on the FORMITRA project's relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness in meeting strategic objectives. Stakeholders provided further input to enhance the clarity and precision of the evaluation results.

The workshop was well attended, with 19 participants on-site and four joining via Zoom, representing a range of stakeholders, including the MOL, National Council for Children and Adolescents (CONANI), and Supérate. The gender distribution among attendees, particularly from the MOL, included both female and male participants. This workshop played a critical role in validating the accuracy and utility of the evaluation findings by fostering an inclusive environment for discussion and feedback.

Table 3: Distribution of Participants in the Validation Workshop

	Quantity	Female	Male
Ministry of Labor	21	9	12
CONANI	1	1	0
Supérate	1	1	0

The workshop's agenda included the presentation of preliminary findings on the project's relevance, efficiency, and effectiveness and reviewing the evaluation objectives, methodology, and data collection process. The workshop gave stakeholders the opportunity to discuss and provide feedback on these initial results to refine and validate the evaluation's conclusions.

Performance Rating Scoring Guide

The final step of the evaluation team's methodological approach was to rate the project's performance in achieving its set objectives within the Dominican Republic's agricultural sector. The team used two ratings for each project outcome: one for its **level of achievement** and one for its **sustainability**. To calculate the ratings, the team followed the following three steps.

First, to use a standardized performance scale, the team calculated an aggregate outcome score by rating performance for each of the outputs linked to an outcome and then creating an arithmetic average. For example, Outcome 1.1, "Improved systems, tools, and instruments adopted by MOL labor inspectors," is linked to five outputs: 1.1.1, 1.1.2, 1.1.3, 1.1.4, and 1.1.5. The score for Outcome 1.1 is then calculated as the average of the scores for outputs 1.1.1 through 1.1.5.

Second, to calculate the **level of achievement score** for each output, the team used the following criteria with two sub-factors (completion and perceived satisfaction):

Level of completion:

- Activity completed = 1 point
- Activity partially completed = 0.5 points
- Activity not completed = 0 points

Level of satisfaction:

- Quality targets or satisfaction level met = 1 point
- Quality targets or satisfaction level partially met (equal or more than 50 percent if numerical) = 0.5 points
- Quality targets or satisfaction level unmet = 0 points

To determine the performance in achievement, the team added both scores.

To calculate **the level of sustainability score,** the team used the following scoring structure:

- Actions included in the plan and already taken by MOL, point to long run = 2 points
- Actions included in the plan, point to long run = 1.5 points
- Actions included in the plan but only for short-term sustainability = 1 point
- Actions included in the plan but seem insufficient either short- or long-run sustainability = 0.5 point
- No actions included in the plan or carried out by the MOL = 0 points

Third, the team categorized the scores for the achievement and sustainability factors using the following four-point scale to rate the project implementation and sustainability against each of the outcomes:

- **A score from 0 to 0.74 is considered low.**[2] A "low" rating indicates that the project outcomes have not sufficiently met the intended objectives, revealing areas that necessitate substantial improvement.

- **A score from 0.75 to 1.25 is considered moderate.** A "moderate" rating suggests that the project has made acceptable progress, albeit with significant room for growth and further action required.

- **A score from 1.26 to 1.8 is considered above moderate.** An "above-moderate" rating denotes that the project has achieved notable success in its endeavors, having made a significant impact while recognizing the potential for further strategic enhancement.

- **A score from 1.81 to 2 is considered high.** A "high" rating is indicative of exemplary performance, where the project's outcomes have not only been realized but are sustainable and demonstrate best practice implementation.

The Conclusions section of this report presents the score based on the criteria outlined above, offering the evaluation team's judgment on the project's overall performance and its impact on labor conditions within the targeted sector.

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[2] The names for the categories (i.e., low, moderate, above moderate, and high) are based on the categories established by ILAB.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The "Project to Reduce Child Labor and Improve Working Conditions in Agriculture in the Dominican Republic," known as FORMITRA, represented a significant effort by ILAB to assist the Dominican Republic in enhancing labor conditions, particularly in its agricultural sector. Initiated with a USD 5 million grant awarded by ILAB to the ILO on December 8, 2017, FORMITRA was a targeted, multi-year initiative to bolster the enforcement of labor regulations and advance working conditions within the nation.

The FORMITRA project, with the financial backing of USDOL and the technical support of the ILO, was established with the primary goal of strengthening the capacities of the MOL's compliance with labor regulations and improving working conditions in the agricultural sector of the Dominican Republic. With an approved extension that both extended the project's duration and increased its budget to USD 5.15 million, FORMITRA looked to align its objectives with the government's national policies to significantly reduce child labor and fortify compliance with labor laws.

The overall goal of the project intervention was to enhance working conditions in the agricultural sector of the Dominican Republic. It is imperative to bolster the MOL departments directly linked to the oversight of labor law compliance (outcome), including the Directorate of Inspection, DAJ, DTI, DGHS, and the General Directorate of Employment (DGE).

To reinforce these departments in upholding labor regulations, the project suggested enhancing, modernizing, and optimizing the technical systems, tools, and instruments used by the MOL (Intermediate Outcome 1.1) and improving the knowledge of its officials regarding regulations and protocols for enforcing the legal framework. This included enhancing their abilities in planning inspections, conducting interviews, sampling, and handling cases (Intermediate Outcome 1.2). To achieve this, the plan also included improving collaboration between the MOL and other national and local institutions. This collaboration was based on strengthening the capacities of these institutions, forming strategic partnerships, and launching joint initiatives to prevent and eliminate child labor (Intermediate Outcome 1.3).

Furthermore, the project was intended to enhance the capacity of the MOL and, particularly, INFOTEP to manage the provision of technical training and job placement services for vulnerable families. It also sought to promote a culture of cooperation in small and medium-sized enterprises to boost their productivity and, consequently, improve working conditions for employees (Intermediate Outcome 1.4).

The project's theory of change was developed based on the idea that to improve working conditions in agriculture in the Dominican Republic, the MOL, the body responsible for enforcing labor laws and the main project participants, needed training and guidance related to applying and enforcing labor regulations.

FORMITRA's strategy set forth a comprehensive set of objectives, including conducting a thorough assessment of labor inspection needs and devising a detailed work plan to bolster labor inspection procedures. The intention was to equip inspectors with enhanced training programs and to establish a set of unified technical criteria to conduct inspections to address the significant challenges within the agricultural sector, notably the high rates of informal employment and child labor. Moreover, FORMITRA aimed to augment the

capabilities for effective data collection, research, and the dissemination of labor rights. Another key objective was to carry out a diagnostic assessment of the Ministry of Labor's ECMS to better monitor compliance and advance the improvement of working conditions in the sector.

The project was designed to achieve the following outputs:

a. Develop and update protocols, manuals, and action guides for labor inspectors in the agricultural sector and supply chains. These were planned based on a comprehensive labor inspection needs assessment to fill identified gaps and improve inspection practices.

b. Create specialized training programs for labor inspectors and MOL officials to enhance their knowledge in the areas of acceptable working conditions, labor regulations, fundamental rights at work, and occupational safety and health in agriculture. Awareness campaigns for employers and workers about labor laws and safe work practices were also intended. Training for mediators and conciliators to handle labor disputes was anticipated as well.

c. Improve the operational functionality for the ECMS, especially for the agricultural sector. The system was expected to become efficient across local labor representations, with the upgrade addressing issues like stable electricity, adequate computing equipment, and internet connectivity. This system was designed to facilitate labor inspection processes and generate statistical reports.

d. Design and implement an Institutional Statistical System for the agricultural sector. This was to support public policy decisions with accurate data and involved integrating existing systems to generate standardized labor statistics and capturing data disaggregated by various socio-demographic variables.

e. Assist in enhancing the MOL's capacity to develop occupational risk prevention programs in agriculture. Considering the high risk of occupational hazards in this sector, the initiative would contribute to drafting a National Policy on the Prevention of Occupational Injuries and Diseases and update the necessary standards and guidelines.

f. Implement a plan for ensuring adherence to minimum wage standards in the agricultural sector, targeting the sector's unique challenges stemming from workers' vulnerability. Activities would include the design of strategies and campaigns to enforce minimum wages and raise awareness about labor rights.

g. Upgrade the MOL's legal aid services for those in the agricultural sector, developing a system to track labor violation cases in court. An evaluation of the current legal aid services, updates to the platform, and the creation of relevant guides and protocols were also part of the activities.

h. Contemplate developing a diagnostic assessment for the Child Labor Directorate to identify its strengths and needs, including training sessions and creating manuals on child labor prevention. Developing an Integrated Child Labor Information System and an updated list of hazardous occupations for minors through tripartite consultation were also among the anticipated activities.

i.   Enhance public awareness of child labor prevention and reinforce labor rights. This involved partnerships with various stakeholders and mobilization campaigns for the wider society, aligning with national anti-poverty efforts for sustained impact.

j.   Upgrade the CDN's and CDLs' capabilities to effectively prevent and eradicate child labor in agriculture, with training and improved coordination protocols.

k.   Support vulnerable families with employment opportunities to deter child labor. This strategy was to include coordinated social services referrals and an integrated training program for the employability of at-risk populations.

Lastly, the project was intended to enhance productivity and working conditions within the agricultural sector by fostering bipartite collaboration between enterprises and their workforce. This initiative was intended to expand the International Labor Organization (ILO) Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) program alongside INFOTEP. The expansion would involve the transfer and execution of SCORE's training modules focused on workplace cooperation, clean production, and occupational safety and health to INFOTEP. A pilot program was planned to be developed using the SCORE methodology in strategically chosen agricultural sectors and regions.

FORMITRA undertook activities in the Greater Santo Domingo area (metropolitan zone of Santo Domingo) and 10 specific provinces: Barahona, Sánchez Ramirez, Azua, María Trinidad Sanchez, San Juan, San José de Ocoa, Santiago, La Vega, Monseñor Nouel, and Duarte. These provinces were selected based on:

1.   A notable level of agricultural activity within the region.
2.   The presence of local MOL representation offering the services outlined by the project.
3.   The existence of a Local Development Child Labor Committee.

3. EVALUATION RESULTS

The evaluation team specified three dimensions of analysis at the onset of this assessment: relevance, efficiency and effectiveness, and sustainability. To present the results in a clearer manner, the dimension of efficiency and effectiveness was further divided, resulting in a total of seven dimensions of analysis (in addition to the four dimensions referenced above, it also includes internal and external factors, management strategies, and M&E). Each subsection of this chapter presents the results of the evaluation questions pertaining to one of these seven dimensions. Additionally, this chapter includes a subsection that summarizes unintended project results. Findings are based on analyzing the information gathered through FGDs and KIIs. Where feasible, the team triangulated the statements with quantitative data extracted from the labor inspector surveys, official statistics provided by the MOL, project performance indicators (refer to Annex A – Data Reporting Form within ILO Technical Progress Report [TPR] to ILAB), and documentary evidence gathered during the desk research process, such as policies, guidelines, and protocols, among others.

3.1 RELEVANCE

1. To what extent is the project design, theory of change, and intervention logic relevant to improve working conditions in the agricultural sector of the Dominican Republic?

The project's design and its underlying theory of change have been generally well-received in the context of the Dominican Republic's agricultural sector. Inspectors and CDL members received positive feedback from various stakeholders, including employers, parents, and community members, suggesting that the project has made strides in raising awareness about labor issues, particularly concerning child labor. The stakeholders indicated an appreciation for the skills and knowledge imparted to enforce labor laws, which aligns with the project's objective to improve working conditions.

On the other hand, the interviews and focus groups underscore the complexities associated with implementation in the diverse and multifaceted agricultural sector. With this in mind, the intervention logic aimed at changing attitudes and practices, persistent issues such as the commitment of stakeholders, the incidence of informality in the agricultural sector attributed to undocumented labor,[3] and the perceived presence of child labor in some areas suggest that the theory of change may need to be revisited.

The suggestions for improvement point to a certain level of success but also pave the way for refining the project's approach. Stakeholders perceive the project's design to be relevant and that it has initiated a positive trajectory toward better working conditions. However, the indicator that assesses progress in this regard was set to be measured in December 2023, a date following the writing of this report.

Nevertheless, the analysis suggests a need for a more nuanced application of the intervention logic, including establishing continuous measurement indicators for

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[3] According to stakeholders, most workers in the agricultural sector are Haitians or of Haitian descent and lack legal status in the country. Macías (2021), in the study "Agricultural labor market and its need for foreign workers in the DR," states that in 2017, official data shows 27 percent of workers in agriculture are Haitians. However, he argues that according to the Dominican Agribusiness Board (JAD), more than 90 percent of the operational workers in the sector are of foreign origin.

outcomes related to improving working conditions. By enhancing the evaluation methodology and adapting methodology processes to better fit the needs and challenges of each locale, the project could increase its efficacy and relevance in truly transforming the agricultural sector's working conditions.

The project's training component emerges as highly relevant in relation to the pursuit of improved working conditions within the agricultural sector of the Dominican Republic. Participants suggested that the training provided in occupational safety and health has been instrumental in equipping workers and employers with essential skills and knowledge, thereby fostering a safer and more compliant working environment. The emphasis on professional development, safety standards, and legal awareness reflects a strategic approach that aligns with the community's needs. Although the effectiveness of all[4] trainings provided through FORMITRA, including the Child Labor Reduction Methodology (DAR-CE) program and the set of trainings provided to inspectors and other MOL officials, is largely based on perceptions from participants and not measured through quantitative metrics, the recurrent mention of increased capabilities and awareness among stakeholders underscores the pivotal role the trainings have played. The project trainings not only contribute to enhancing working conditions but also set the foundation for sustaining improvements through education and empowerment, cementing their relevance in the project's overall success.

In addressing the project's relevance to improving working conditions, informants pointed to an array of factors that influenced its effectiveness across the Dominican Republic's agricultural sector. For example, cultural practices and norms vary significantly across communities and may require customized educational approaches to effectively shift traditional views on labor, particularly concerning child labor. Economic disparities add another layer of complexity, as regions with limited financial resources may struggle to implement the project's recommendations compared to more affluent areas. Similarly, varied levels of economic necessity driving families toward child labor call for a more localized approach to programming. These findings highlight the importance of a nuanced application of the intervention logic that accounts for regional, cultural, and economic differences to enhance the project's overall efficacy and sustainability.

2. To what extent are the project strategies relevant to the specific needs of project participants, communities, and other key stakeholders?

The project's strategies, as reported by participants, communities, and key stakeholders, show a keen focus on needs specific to the Dominican Republic's agricultural sector. Data from the FGDs and interviews indicate that stakeholders generally held a positive perception of the strategies employed by the project, considering them to be relevant and appropriately targeted with project initiatives, such as training and education, and aligned closely with stakeholder priorities. Terms like "focused" and "relevant" were recurrent across the interviews and focus groups, suggesting that the project's design and implementation have been sensitive to the nuances of local conditions and the expressed needs of those the project aims to benefit.

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[4] Effectiveness was only assessed in one FORMITRA training related to the elaboration of inspection reports (see indicator SO1.1.1 in Annex A). The rest of the indicators used measure completion rates but not the level of new knowledge or increased capabilities acquired.

Stakeholders appeared to appreciate the groundwork laid by the project but consistently noted opportunities for enhancement. The recurring feedback that the project's initiatives "could have been more" suggests that stakeholders perceive the relevance of the strategies as somewhat limited, indicating that broadening the project's scope might enhance the pertinence and efficacy of its interventions. Specific recommendations for improvement included creating a data management system for child labor prevention and more specialized training in the legal and occupational safety and health areas.

The relevance of the project's strategies to participants is a multifaceted issue, with feedback indicating that, while the initiatives were aligned with some of the participants' core needs, there were areas where they felt the project could have been more attuned to their specific circumstances. Importantly, however, stakeholders recognized the project's importance in its efforts to tackle pressing issues, such as gaining a better understanding of labor conditions and rights.

The detailed feedback suggests that a more granular understanding of the participant's environments could have increased the project's relevance. For instance, agricultural workers in areas prone to specific occupational hazards might have benefited from more specialized safety training, while stakeholders in regions with higher rates of child labor showed interest in more robust interventions focused on education and legal enforcement. Additionally, the project's relevance for participants might have been improved by considering the varied socioeconomic backgrounds of the stakeholders, that is, by creating more customized solutions that consider local economic realities and cultural nuances. Additionally, it should be noted that the project did not pursue initiatives aimed at worker organizations as originally conceived.

3.2   EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS

3. To what extent is the project making progress toward its planned outcomes and sub-outcomes? What are the key results achieved so far, specifically regarding:

OTC 1 – IMPROVING STRATEGIC ENFORCEMENT OF LABOR LAWS WITH AN EMPHASIS ON THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR BY MOL

Consulted stakeholders reported that the FORMITRA project has improved the enforcement of labor laws in several ways. First, the tools and capacity-building activities that have contributed to streamlining and expediting labor inspections have supported improved labor law enforcement. Inspectors and analysts from the MOL indicated that the Inspection Protocol has been critical in facilitating the application of labor laws, providing guidelines for enforcing the law and reducing the amount of time invested in the process by combining all regulations into one document. MOL personnel also stated that the project's various trainings have helped them refresh their knowledge of labor standards, resulting in faster and more precise inspections.

Figure 1: Responses to the survey question, "How many training hours did you receive in the following areas?" Average of all respondents.
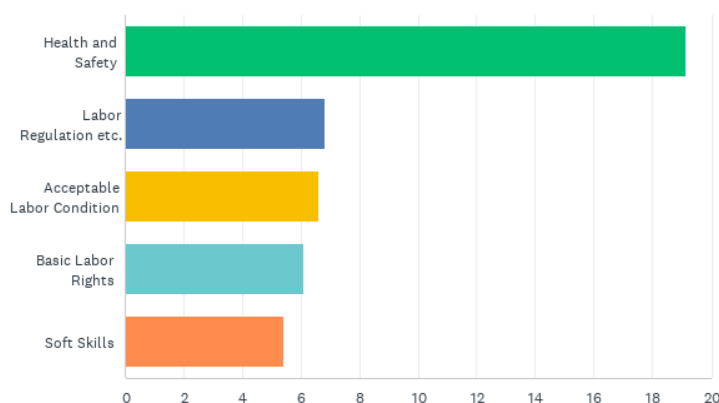
Another area of improvement, as cited by inspectors, is the efficiency gained as a result of the automation of inspection reports and readily available supporting documents (*planillas* and *formularios* in Spanish, with business information such as name, address, phone number, and documentation) provided by the ECMS; however, there are still persistent challenges that must be addressed in relation to implementing the ECMS, particularly regarding access and functionality. These challenges are listed in Section SO1.1.

Second, stakeholders observed improvements in applying occupational safety and health practices by workers and employers trained through the project. The training on the "Guidelines for the use of pesticides" provided 373 participants from nine provinces (ILO TPR April–September 2022), including MOL analysts and members from the Mixed Committees of Occupational Safety and Health, with increased knowledge about the appropriate use of pesticides and equipped them to raise awareness about the dangers these substances can present, acting as multipliers of this training.[5] Following these trainings, DGHS analysts stated they have observed progress in relation to the adoption of safe practices by workers when performing supervisory visits. Such practices include using protective personal equipment when applying pesticides, spraying downwind, and properly disposing of chemical products. DGHS personnel also reported that the Inspection Manual and Occupational Safety and Health Guidelines have facilitated inspection processes by providing guidance and knowledge to enforce safe work practices.

Third, stakeholders reported an expansion and improvement of the conflict resolution services provided by the MOL. Mediator training provided by the project increased the availability of knowledgeable personnel and facilitated MOL's plan to open new mediation rooms. Training in soft skills has developed interpersonal abilities among MOL personnel, allowing them to interact effectively and respectfully with citizens and providing them with tools to improve the quality of services rendered.

Lastly, the benefit of FORMITRA most highlighted by respondents was the improvement of the MOL's processes, plans, and policies. Through the project, the DGHS created a National Occupational Safety and Health Policy proposal, which includes updated regulations and new dispositions outlined by ILO conventions. This policy will serve as a base document to engage in tripartite discussion and develop a joint proposal. The

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[5] The Mixed Committees of Occupational Health and Safety is a body made up of an equal number of worker and employer representatives where decisions are made consensually or by vote. The Committee is in charge of addressing matters of risk prevention and promoting actions to tackle them. In institutions with fewer than 15 employees, an Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator assumes the functions of the Committee. For more details, refer to the *Manual para Comités Mixtos de Seguridad y Salud en el Trabajo* (the Manual for Mixed Committees of Health and Safety).

reactivation and planning of the CDL's work has strengthened the Ministry's role as the leader of child labor prevention efforts. New guidelines and protocols have helped standardize processes and the application of labor standards; examples of such guidelines and protocols include the protocol to address cases of child labor, the guideline to implement regulations on the use of chemical products in the agricultural sector, and a guideline listing hazardous work for children. Stakeholders generally considered that the project has positively affected the improvement of documentation and procedural arrangements related to applying labor laws.

SO1.1 – IMPROVED SYSTEMS, TOOLS, AND INSTRUMENTS ADOPTED BY THE MOL

Improvements observed following the introduction of systems and manuals

The project has promoted creating and utilizing an inspection manual, which has been vital to supporting inspections. The manual consolidates a set of previously diffused information, ensuring a streamlined process for labor inspection. Inspectors stated that before this manual existed, the legal basis was dispersed across several outdated protocols. Stakeholders reported that now all relevant information is centralized in a single accessible document, which provides them with concise guidance for the application of labor standards. Overall, most inspectors (63 percent of survey respondents) reported they are better equipped to complete labor inspections as a result of this project.

Figure 2: Responses to the survey question, "With this project, do you feel better, less, or equally equipped to complete your labor inspection?"
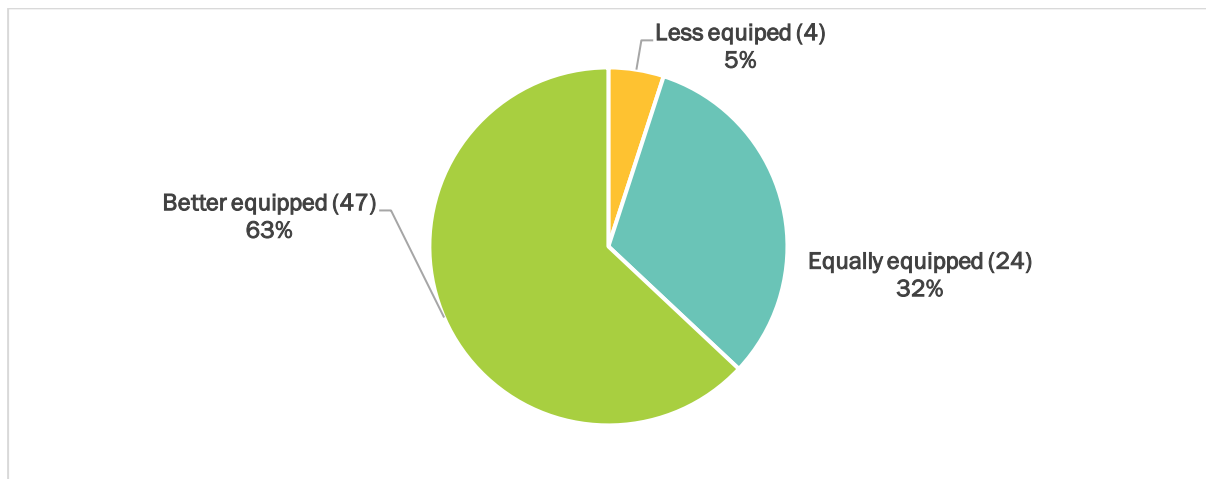
Inspectors also affirmed that having physical copies of the manual has been beneficial. They reported that the credibility and integrity of the information they provide to inspected individuals when enforcing the law have improved since they have been given physical material to showcase as evidence of non-compliance. Additionally, they noted that having a tool at hand to continuously refresh their knowledge of labor laws has been helpful. Finally, the clear format of the manual facilitates accessing specific information, making labor inspections more efficient.

The ECMS stands out as a useful digital platform with innovative features that have improved certain aspects of the inspection process. Inspectors noted that the ECMS allows for real-time labor data verification, giving them the ability to visualize and download supporting documentation. They also stated that this facilitates obtaining instantaneous feedback and improves inspection transparency and precision. Furthermore, the ECMS stores progress on inspection reports drafted using the system, allowing inspectors to start completing the report during inspections and resume filling the form at a later time. This

supports increased efficiency. Supervisors can view and edit the reports under development in real-time, which speeds up the revision process. The system also facilitates supervision by providing the capability to visualize all inspection cases at once. Inspectors and the Inspection Directorate highlighted that the geo-location functionality embedded in the system also supports increased efficiency as it simplifies the process of identifying and attending to inspection locations.

The ECMS has contributed to reducing repetitive and manual activities. The ECMS automatically fills in inspection orders by pulling data from the SIRLA (Integrated Labor Records System).[6] This reduces the amount of manual data entry undertaken by inspectors, which speeds up reporting. By simply entering a company's identifier (National Taxpayer Registry [RNC]), inspectors can access basic company information. The system also helps with data management and visualization, reducing inspectors' workload by allowing for the generation of automatic reports that feature key inspection statistics and graphics.

Inspectors also highlighted improvements in system access. Inspectors stated that to use the ECMS, the MOL provided them with a username and password linked to their work account and email, facilitating access to the system. The previous system required a personal username and password not linked to an official Ministry account. Therefore, inspectors without a system account had to borrow their colleagues' or supervisors' usernames and passwords. According to the IT Directorate, this practice is no longer taking place. Thus, with the introduction of the ECMS, the MOL has enhanced system security. More specifically, the MOL is closely adhering to clearer security procedures that only grant system access to MOL employees after their usernames have been validated by Human Resources in accordance with official Ministry records. The project also provided technological equipment to selected MOL representatives in project provinces, improving their access to the ECMS.

ECMS main challenges

Despite the benefits of the ECMS, the system presents important challenges. Survey results show that the ECMS achieved a 3.5 out of 5 score in ease of use, which suggests room for improvement. Inspectors cited issues related to accessibility as a major concern. Inspectors reported that the system is often unavailable, or they are confronted with errors when attempting to access it. This appears to particularly affect weekends when the system is down. They also noted that remote access is sometimes difficult, forcing them to be present at their MOL offices to complete their work. These difficulties with access have led inspectors to register inspection information manually and then upload this information when the system becomes available, resulting in time loss.

The MOL's IT Directorate's oversight of password management has further complicated access; when inspectors forget their usernames or passwords, they must contact IT to recover them. Because inspectors do not necessarily use their usernames and passwords daily to access computers, forgetting credentials is not uncommon. The system also requires password changes every 45 days, making remembering credentials more difficult. According to the IT Directorate, the MOL's IT Directorate's overseeing of password

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[6] SIRLA, also known as *Sistema Integrado de Registros Laborales* in Spanish, which translates to Integrated Labor Records System, is a database containing all information on registered companies in the Dominican Republic. The SIRLA sources data from the Dominican Internal Revenue Office, the Social Security Office, and MOL's internal data.

management especially affects the RLT because its computer domain is outside the MOL's domain.

In addition, limited system functionalities and unfriendly navigation hinder the flexibility and efficiency of inspections. Inspectors reported that the process of filling out inspection orders can be cumbersome because it is repetitive and disorganized, with the system requiring that information be completed at different stages of the form.[7] Searching existing orders is complex in comparison to the previous system; they cannot be searched by date and locating them by order number requires inputting long identifiers, which often leads to mistakes.

Additionally, the text entry box used by inspectors to describe cases does not provide formatting options, meaning that inspectors print orders directly from the platform in a standard format. According to inspectors, this inflexibility affects the reports' presentation, clarity, and formality. On the other hand, the Inspection Directorate noted that this design choice helps ensure that reports have a standardized format.

Figure 3: Response to the survey question, "On a scale of 1--5, 5 being 'Totally Agree' and 1 being 'Totally Disagree,' indicate level of agreement."
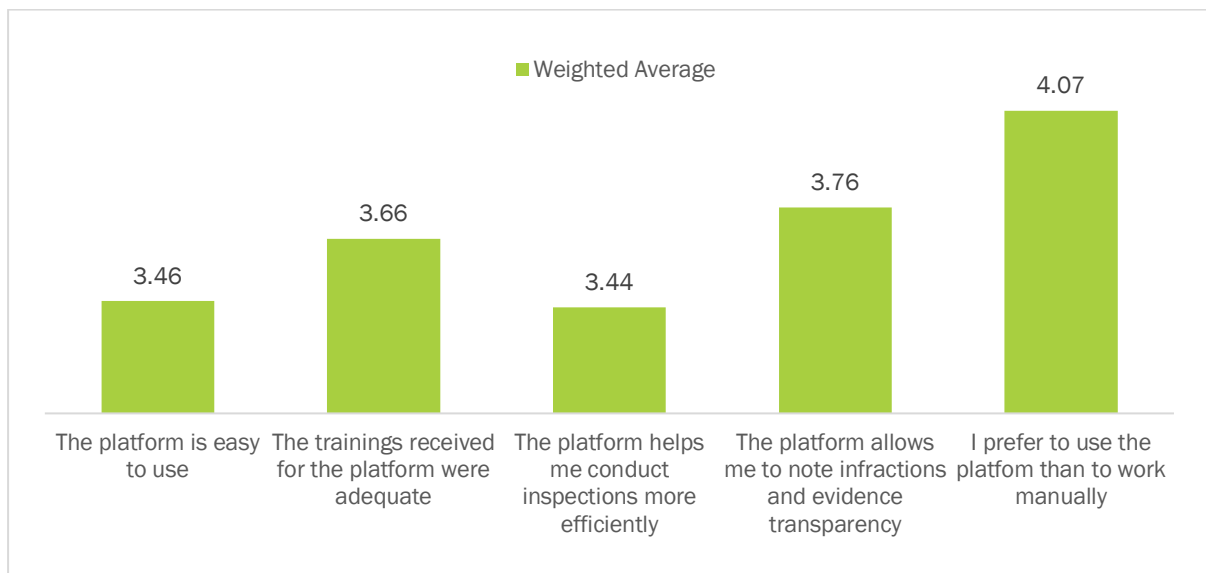
Inspectors also reported information duplication or loss. Some inspectors mentioned that, on occasion, their orders are duplicated or disappear from the ECMS due to system errors. They also stated the data inputted into the system is not always stored correctly or at all. Inspectors expressed that the ECMS does not allow them to view or retrieve closed orders, preventing them from consulting important information when working on new orders related to these closed cases. The Inspection Directorate confirmed that closed orders cannot be retrieved unless necessary due to an error. In this case, inspectors must initiate a process to reopen the order, which requires following a specific protocol and requesting access from the IT Directorate. Because of concerns related to being able to access orders in the ECMS, some inspectors have resorted to storing copies of their reports in Microsoft Word formats and/or on external hard drives.

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[7] An inspection order is the document associated with a specific case in the ECMS.

Inspectors also reported that deadlines are inflexible. They argued that the system does not consider the specificities of each case to assign deadlines. Inspectors mentioned having to continuously request deadline extensions from their supervisors to complete orders and sometimes having to close orders even if the irregularities identified had not been addressed. According to consulted inspectors, this situation leads to some businesses unfairly receiving infractions, damaging relationships with them and preventing their future formalization or compliance with labor standards.

However, executives from the Inspection Directorate have argued that the deadlines are based on the law and that the system is flexible enough to allow inspectors to close an order and open a new one if unaddressed irregularities persist. Meanwhile, the Directorate reasoned that sustained complaints around this issue may be related to the continuous monitoring to which inspectors are now subject, which demands greater compliance. Given that reporting time on the ECMS was a persistent complaint by inspectors, the evaluation team suggests that the MOL Inspection Directorate analyze this issue in detail.

During the ECMS design phase, the MOL Inspection Directorate and IT Directorate consulted with inspectors to ensure their needs were reflected in the newly designed system. However, inspectors reported that although these consultations were helpful to a certain extent, many of the suggestions they provided during the discussions were not included in the final version of the system. In particular, inspectors mentioned the visual design of the system, the requirement to fill out certain pieces of information multiple times, and the need to make the system available on weekends as key issues that have not been addressed. According to inspectors, personnel who do not engage directly with the system made final decisions concerning the system's design.

Inspectors also stated that the system trial period was not long enough to clearly identify and address system issues. The software development company delivered the ECMS to the MOL in August 2022, accompanied by a six-month guarantee, during which the MOL could request changes to the system from the software development company. However, as a result of disruptions in international supply chains following the COVID-19 pandemic, the MOL encountered delays in receiving the server needed to host the system. Thus, the deployment of the ECMS was delayed and coincided with the Christmas holidays, meaning that the MOL's testing of the ECMS commenced in late January, shortly before the guarantee period expired. This left only a couple of weeks to test the system and provide feedback to its developers. Consequently, most of the improvements undertaken during the trial period were in response to issues identified by the IT Directorate.

Overall, while inspectors have not observed notable efficiency gains through the platform, they still prefer using it over manual methods. The survey statement, "the platform helps me perform inspections more efficiently," received an average score of 3.4 out of 5, suggesting there are some opportunities for improvement. However, the statement, "I prefer to use the system than to work manually," achieved an average score of 4.07 out of 5, reflecting the preference to work with the platform despite its weaknesses.

Training on the use of digital platforms

The MOL provided training sessions on the ECMS, but according to MOL officials, these were not sufficient to enable adequate usage of the system. A total of 175 MOL officials, out of the 200 planned, received training (Annex A. Data Reporting Form). The Director of Inspections noted that inspectors underwent several training sessions to use the ECMS adequately. He stated that these trainings were focused on both the system's basic and advanced functionalities and were deployed for inspectors from all provinces. However, inspectors' feedback suggests areas for potential improvement, particularly concerning

the frequency, length, and depth of trainings, and the functionality of devices used for the training. In fact, surveyed inspectors did not rate these trainings as very effective, providing an average rating of 3.6 out of 5, according to the inspector survey. During fieldwork, stakeholders frequently informed the evaluation team that there was a need for ongoing trainings and for regular system updates to address existing issues.

While the team was conducting fieldwork, the project had not yet deployed the legal case management system. Expectations regarding the benefits of it are positive; however, it was not possible to assess whether the use of this system or the related trainings are appropriate, given that both were still pending implementation during data collection.

SO1.2 – IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE TO ENFORCE THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK WITH EMPHASIS ON THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR DEMONSTRATED BY MOL

Training program for inspectors and MOL officers

Legal department personnel, inspectors, and DGHS analysts have undergone various training sessions, reinforcing their knowledge in a wide variety of areas. Specifically, training on labor laws, child labor prevention, mediation, and occupational safety and health have equipped incoming personnel and served as a refresher for longer-term employees. Stakeholders agreed that these trainings' practical and interactive components have helped solidify learning by highlighting the helpfulness of discussions and the exchanging of good practices and experiences.

MOL officials also noted that through FORMITRA, they have accessed a wider variety of trainings than usual. The project trained a total of 59 inspectors in labor-related issues, 25 DGHS officers in research methodologies for potential exposure to hazardous chemicals, and 141 National Steering Committee (CDN) members in child labor prevention and labor perspective. According to project indicators, after receiving training, 70 percent of inspectors and other MOL officers had enhanced knowledge related to applying labor regulations, particularly in the agricultural sector (Annex A. Data Reporting Form).

Inspectors and MOL officials highlighted skills-development training sessions as particularly beneficial. They noted the training in report writing as one of the most helpful. In addition to supporting improved written expression and emphasizing the importance of succinct technical report generation, the training helped facilitate a standardized approach to writing, ensuring consistency and thoroughness. They also deemed the soft skills training as particularly valuable in improving customer service quality and providing best practices on leading friendly and expedited mediations.

In addition, stakeholders reported that the project has been beneficial in changing the mentality of MOL collaborators, raising awareness, and empowering the team to share their knowledge with peers and promote the application of labor laws. They noted a greater orientation toward efficiency, specifically regarding child labor prevention and promoting occupational safety and health practices. The personnel described being more aware of child labor and risk prevention and bringing this mindset shift to the agricultural sector.

Health and security regulations and awareness

The project held training sessions on the use of pesticides and their potential risks, emphasizing health and security regulations. Inspectors and analysts from the DGHS attended these trainings. MOL officials learned specific techniques to assess health and safety risks in the workplace. This is particularly relevant given the diverse backgrounds of the inspectors, some of whom might not have technical expertise in certain areas. Training

participants affirmed that, as a result of the training, they are better equipped to guide and orient workers in the agricultural sector, specifically regarding the safe use of pesticides, ultimately supporting their health and well-being. However, as with other trainings, participants stated that given its complexity, more in-depth and lengthier trainings regarding occupational safety and health would be beneficial.

The project also implemented workshops on occupational safety and health. As the field is continuously evolving with new prevention methods and challenges, the project designed these workshops to ensure that inspectors were provided with updates on the latest innovations and best practices in the field. The project's efforts to train MOL representatives in agricultural sector-specific content are noteworthy. Inspectors have been trained in how to navigate this sector, especially in relation to the use of pesticides. According to DGHS analysts, this training helped provide workers with the skills to safeguard themselves from potential health risks, ensuring their well-being and compliance with occupational safety and health guidelines developed under the project.

Training specificity

Consulted stakeholders agreed that the training was of good quality and helpful and yielded the depth and length they felt would support an adequate upgrading of their skills. The set of trainings that FORMITRA provided inspectors and MOL officials on labor rights, labor conditions, and occupational safety and health were delivered in formats of approximately 20 hours. MOL officers highlighted that some trainings were mostly general, noting that sessions provided a landscape overview of topics rather than focusing on specific subject areas. For instance, the report writing workshop provided important tools to enhance writing but was focused on general communication instead of legal report writing, an important aspect of the daily work of Judicial Assistance Department lawyers. While training on labor laws, child labor prevention, and occupational safety and health served to refresh the existing knowledge of those who have worked for several years at the MOL, MOL analysts and officials articulated that providing specific examples and case studies related to the areas receiving the training could be more useful in improving their knowledge base.

SO1.3 – IMPROVED IMPLEMENTATION OF INSTITUTIONAL INITIATIVES RELATED TO ACCEPTABLE CONDITIONS OF WORK AND CHILD LABOR BY KEY ACTORS

DAR-CE workshop sessions and educational campaigns

The DAR-CE program has been crucial in spreading knowledge and raising awareness on child labor prevention. These workshops aimed to enhance community stakeholders' and the Government of the Dominican Republic officers' understanding of child labor, equip other community members with knowledge of child labor, and contribute to improving local oversight of child labor. According to CDL members, DAR-CE workshops and awareness-raising sessions have played a pivotal role in disseminating knowledge. They noted they have observed mindset shifts about child labor and acceptable working conditions among DAR-CE participants. According to DAR-CE participants, trainings have helped address deep-rooted cultural patterns and behaviors that participants had deemed as normal. For instance, CDL members reported that when starting the DAR-CE course, community members believed children's unpaid work or working with family did not qualify as child labor.

CDL members and MOL officers stated that the interactive methodology of DAR-CE and the availability of materials facilitated understanding and promoted engagement in child prevention efforts. Actors can absorb the information shared during the workshops

because the methodology caters to different learning styles, educational levels, and ages. The training includes testimonial videos, stories, dramatizations, role-playing, and games. As a result, these activities have effectively reached both children and parents. The project has also introduced educational materials, such as awareness-raising booklets, which serve as handy references for stakeholders when educating about child labor.

Furthermore, the DAR-CE's multiplier methodology allowed for greater territorial reach and community closeness. According to consulted stakeholders, former training modalities focused on targeting institutions rather than reaching the population directly. They noted that the DAR-CE workshops have more effectively raised awareness of child labor issues. CDL actors believed that the "multiplication" system, or the training-of-trainers methodology, would contribute to the program reaching locations nationwide, given that the knowledge transmitted by DAR-CE is not centralized in specific institutions but rather embedded in local communities. In addition, stakeholders demonstrated a tangible commitment to promoting child labor prevention. This was true for the Ministry of Education, CONANI, and Supérate, all of which have allocated resources within their operational plans to reproduce program materials.

CDL members affirmed that the implementation of training programs and educational campaigns have helped make the problem of child labor visible. Additionally, they have contributed to civil society becoming more involved in child labor prevention and eradication. The availability of promotional materials provided by the project, such as posters, brochures, and banners, has helped participants share knowledge and create awareness in their communities. CDL members highlight that training sessions have facilitated information exchange among their institutions and community participants, equipping them with more tools to address instances of child labor. MOL personnel and CDL members affirmed the feeling that they are now more empowered and knowledgeable in such a way that will help them tackle child labor. However, there is no official and recent data to assess how child labor has evolved in the country since the latest available dates are from 2019 and prior to project-start.

Inter-institutional alliances for child labor prevention

FORMITRA also contributed to strengthening the institutional coordination of actors involved in child labor prevention. According to CDL stakeholders, the reactivation of activities in collaboration with MOL's leadership has helped improve communication between institutions and facilitated identifying and addressing cases of child labor.[8] CDL members reported an increase in the frequency of their meetings, resulting in a greater exchange of information to tackle child labor. Also, these interactions have helped address irregularities since all relevant stakeholders responsible for acting on child labor can coordinate more efficiently.

As of October 2023, the project had trained 689 members from institutions involved in the CDN and CDL on labor rights and child labor prevention, surpassing the initial target of 490 (Annex A. Data Reporting Form).[9] CDL members noted that new institutions have

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[8] The CDN is a discussion space where actors from the government and communities evaluate situations on child labor and promote an agenda for its prevention.
[9] Please note this indicator also includes results for training on labor rights.

joined efforts against child labor and that supervisory visits to address this issue, such as to neighbors' associations, unions, and city councils, have increased.

The reactivation of the CDL came with improvements in its monitoring and planning processes. The project supported the development of a joint strategic plan for CDL member institutions. Also, as of April 2023, 72 percent of CDN and CDL members in target provinces had incorporated the common agenda against child labor prevention and eradication in their institutional plans (Annex A. Data Reporting Form). This joint planning process has allowed them to better coordinate meetings and activities, including trainings and supervisory visits. This initiative is expected to foster increased commitment among stakeholders and drive more effective monitoring and implementation of child prevention activities.

SO1.4 – INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING WORK OPPORTUNITIES, WORK CONDITIONS, AND PRODUCTIVITY PILOTED

Program to improve productivity (SCORE)

The SCORE methodology is a global ILO program that seeks to improve workers' productivity and working conditions in small and medium-sized enterprises by implementing a system of sustainable business management based on cooperation in the workplace. The methodology was first implemented in the Dominican Republic's agricultural sector in 2017 by the ILO in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Between 2019 and 2020, the ILO, in collaboration with USDOL, furthered implementation through the FORMITRA project. The methodology is based on a modular training package developed by the ILO SCORE Program. The stakeholders believe the variety of these modules allows for a holistic approach, covering the different challenges and opportunities that small and medium-sized enterprises can encounter.

INFOTEP instructors have reported that the SCORE program distinguishes itself from comparable methodologies by actively engaging both managerial and employee groups. This involvement is realized through two days of hands-on classroom training conducted jointly for these groups and is complemented by a technical assistance phase provided directly to the enterprises participating in the program. It begins by identifying the specific objectives and needs of the management team, including the higher executives' vision for the company. Similarly, it assesses the goals and aspirations of the employees. Following this dual assessment, the program then focuses on aligning these two perspectives, fostering a synergy between the managerial and operational levels of the company.

According to stakeholders, SCORE program participants saw clear advancements in less than seven weeks after taking the courses. The implementers of the SCORE methodology indicated that they observed improvements in work conditions, productivity, and work opportunities, stating that they saw improvements in the majority of the 25 firms that received the SCORE methodology training under FORMITRA. This contrasts with the changes in productivity and working conditions. As highlighted in Annex A, 44 percent of businesses experienced productivity gains. Additionally, 32 percent of businesses saw improvements in working conditions. These results fall below the project's set target of 80 percent for both indicators (Annex A. Data Reporting Form).

Additionally, prioritizing capacity building, especially for trainers, played a significant role in effectively implementing the SCORE methodology. The support from FORMITRA enabled a comprehensive knowledge transfer of the methodology to INFOTEP. This led to the certification of 15 business advisors in the methodology, along with the certification of five

additional individuals as "trainers of trainers," which surpassed the initial project target of certifying three individuals (ILO TPR April–September 2022).

The methodology of the SCORE program garnered interest from INFOTEP stakeholders due to its comprehensive design that extends beyond training to include support during the technical assistance phase of the modules. INFOTEP acknowledges that such support is critical for small and medium-sized enterprises, often requiring additional guidance to integrate new learnings into their business processes effectively.

Labor insertion training

The program's participants reported recognizing the value of the trainings in enhancing their knowledge and skills, with many applying what they learned in their current employment and academic endeavors. The trainings also served an educational purpose in informing them about their rights and responsibilities within the workplace. Furthermore, they appreciated the practical benefits of the training, particularly with regard to how it equipped them with the skills needed for job interviews and writing their resumes. Nonetheless, trainees indicated that certain areas of the training did not align with labor market demands, and they noted an absence of IT training, a skill they deem relevant in today's job market.

A total of 462 participants enrolled in the program, and 435 completed it, translating to a completion rate of 94 percent. This number exceeds the project's set goal of reaching 400 participants (Annex A. Data Reporting Form). Participants stated that the teaching quality and economic support provided contributed to their completion of the course. Participants described the school environment as dynamic and teachers as patient and of good quality. They highlighted that the follow-up provided also motivated them to continue their studies. Additionally, the available financial support, specifically covering meals and transportation costs, allowed them to focus on their studies.

An aspect worth reviewing is the extent to which the program effectively included vulnerable profiles in the technical training programs. Most of the participants consulted during the fieldwork did not exhibit a distinctive vulnerability profile. The majority of them were either studying at university or pursuing technical training in other areas or schools. Participants noted that the program was not sufficiently advertised, which could have affected its ability to reach vulnerable populations.

Participants' experiences with job placement after the training were varied. While most consulted youth reported challenges in obtaining employment, others were able to secure job offers. Respondents noted a lack of adequate follow-up by Universidad ISA to help them secure labor market insertion. For example, participants mentioned that even two months after completing the program, they had still not received their certificates, which they intended to use as evidence of program completion when applying to potential employers. Some participants could not take advantage of job placement opportunities due to logistical issues, such as transportation difficulties and scheduling conflicts with their educational commitments. However, the MOL and program implementing partner (Universidad ISA) did not collect data on job market insertion results. The available data highlights the number of individuals who completed the program that were linked with Job Centers (*Bolsas de Empleo*), with 315 youth registering as available to work. The ILO stated that delays in program implementation affected job placement. Typically, courses take up to three months to complete. Part of these courses took place during the second quarter of 2023, leaving little time for job placement between the courses and project completion.

This feedback indicates the need to implement post-training follow-up mechanisms to assist participants in the job placement process. Additionally, the suggestion by

participants to incorporate an internship component within the program was recurrent; they stated this could provide essential workplace experience, potentially serving as a steppingstone to full-time employment.

3.3   INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS

4. What are the key internal or external factors that affected the achievement of project outcomes?

External factors

Stakeholders highlighted how both external and internal factors affected the achievement of project outcomes. The COVID-19 pandemic and government changes caused delays in both the project's commencement and progression. The national lockdown, implemented as a preventive measure against COVID-19, compelled project management to adapt activity formats and schedules, transitioning training modules to virtual platforms and rearranging the size and organization of sessions to prioritize participant safety. Simultaneously, the arrival of new government officials slowed down internal processes within the MOL since they invested time in reviewing the project.

The ILO and stakeholders from the CDL and the MOL highlighted government bureaucracy as an external factor impeding the project's progress. Implementing certain programs and activities required coordinating between multiple institutions for approval, navigating layers of decision-makers within the different public entities involved, and following administrative procedures that resulted in long waiting periods and an excessive workload. However, this was perceived as an inevitable part of public administration.

Stakeholders highlighted the lack of appropriate conditions and external resources to carry out project training, particularly the DAR-CE program. This included, for instance, the lack of internet, electricity, and suitable spaces to undertake trainings, particularly outside of Santo Domingo. The lack of electricity especially affected the province of Elías Piña and was also noted in other regions, such as San Juan, Azua, and Jimaní. These situations sometimes prevented the use of audiovisual resources and resulted in reduced attention by participants due to poor ventilation and discomfort. Additionally, personnel from collaborating government institutions lacked the resources to effectively deploy logistics, such as transportation and the financial means to cover travel expenses. These challenges affected staff mobility and their participation in the project, necessitating increased coordination and team efforts to find solutions to these limitations.

Climatic events also affected the project, albeit to a lesser extent. Hurricanes, tropical storms, and heavy rains made it difficult to access remote locations. Activities related to child labor awareness, prevention training, and the agricultural sector were particularly susceptible to these natural phenomena.

Positive internal factors

As reported by stakeholders, the buy-in from the highest levels of the MOL was significantly positive for project implementation. The involvement of MOL representatives and support from the Minister and his team from the early stages of the project facilitated implementation. The Ministry's directive team, who were responsible for most activities, unanimously accepted FORMITRA, resulting in the team's proactive engagement in timely project execution.

The high levels of motivation among MOL team members have also helped drive the achievement of project goals. A unified, collaborative environment and the team's commitment and enthusiasm strengthened project implementation, resulting in team members feeling empowered to take active roles and better enforce labor laws.

Stakeholders reported that proper coordination among the involved parties significantly contributed to the implementation of the FORMITRA project. Synergies and effective collaboration between the government and partner institutions with support from the ILO were fundamental to the project's success. The MOL highlighted the work carried out by Universidad ISA involving local committees in identifying job insertion pilot program participants. This strengthened institutional unity and contributed to the effective dissemination of activities, particularly in relation to the child labor prevention component, positively affecting community participation and commitment.

The availability and adequacy of project resources also enriched FORMITRA's implementation. Financial resources provided through the project enabled training and awareness sessions, allowing participants to focus on activities rather than logistical concerns, especially with regard to the DAR-CE program. This support was valuable, especially in vulnerable sectors, since providing meals facilitated participant commitment. The availability of program resources helped mitigate the lack of external resources, such as issues with electricity and connectivity in remote areas, and supported the transportation of collaborators from other institutions.

Additionally, the availability and quality of training materials were essential aspects of FORMITRA's success. Stakeholders highlighted the effectiveness of three types of materials in particular: 1) training materials facilitated reflection, challenging harmful practices; 2) videos created strong emotional connections, communicating the project's message effectively and fostering an understanding of child labor issues; and 3) educational materials helped debunk myths about child labor and were especially valuable in rural areas with limited information access since printed materials allowed for later consultation.

Stakeholders mentioned that ILO's constant support was key to achieving the project's results. ILO's involvement added legitimacy to the project and contributed to its reliability. This, in turn, fostered public acceptance and the perception that the project was an institutional initiative with a long-term vision for development. Moreover, ILO's support facilitated the international exchange of experiences and best practices.

Finally, the high quality of teachers and specialists involved was vital for the project's success. Stakeholders highlighted the profound knowledge and skills of the professionals who provided their support throughout the project, with the ILO providing access to international actors with expertise in critical areas, ensuring state-of-the-art knowledge for the MOL.

Negative internal factors

FORMITRA stakeholders raised concerns about the excessive bureaucracy within the MOL and tight project deadlines, which became impediments to the efficiency and workflow of tasks. The process of securing final approvals from the Ministry before moving forward with project trainings and producing communication materials (brochures, documents, and booklets) made adhering to project deadlines difficult. The DAJ stated that since the

implementation of the legal case management system was taking place close to the project end date, this would probably affect the system's revision.

Compounding the issue of excessive bureaucracy is the staff's lack of IT proficiency, which hinders the effective utilization of the project's technological advancements. Basic IT skills, particularly in standard office software, are insufficient, and additional IT training needs to be provided. Resistance to new technology is prevalent, especially among older employees. Despite access to new tools and training, some staff exhibit a certain amount of reluctance to embrace new systems, expressing skepticism and showing disinterest in the project's potential benefits. This is particularly true for staff members with a long tenure who are accustomed to traditional working methods. Their resistance impedes the adoption of more efficient practices and leads to a dependency on younger, more tech-savvy staff or IT specialists, resulting in a significant barrier to the advancement of the project's technologically focused initiatives.

The MOL's lack of resources amplifies the challenges faced by the project. Stakeholders noted a critical shortage of personnel, particularly DAJ lawyers and DGHS analysts. They also reported a lack of vehicles, office space, and equipment. Additionally, there is a noticeable absence of robust information systems and procedural clarity, especially in the area of agricultural labor, where record-keeping is poor. The lack of specialized computer platforms impedes proper documentation and monitoring workplace conditions.

Lastly, the implementation of the FORMITRA project has been significantly hampered by time constraints. MOL stakeholders note that more time is needed to establish and internalize processes essential for staff to commit to the project's goals. The original timeline, already limited by the time invested in the revision of the project's design, was further squeezed by major disruptions like the COVID-19 pandemic and left a narrow window for implementation. Stakeholders stressed that an extended timeframe would have facilitated a more thorough development and stabilization of the project's processes, reinforcing the idea that time remains a critical factor in the successful execution and adoption of the project's initiatives.

3.4   MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

5. How effective and efficient are the project's intervention and management strategies? What are the key strengths and weaknesses in project implementation and management? What areas need improvement?

MOL stakeholders expressed appreciation for the proactive engagement and dedication of the ILO. They saw ILO's role as pivotal, with its staff maintaining a high level of attentiveness and commitment to the project's timelines and activities. The timely communication and clear expectation setting, especially regarding the DAR-CE method, were areas stakeholders identified as well executed, contributing to a cohesive and well-informed project environment.

However, the ILO's local and regional offices and ILAB identified project staffing as a significant weakness, noting that the project team was often stretched thin, affecting the timeline and quality of implementation. They pointed out that the project frequently adopted a reactive approach due to this understaffing, which was further exacerbated by the project's over-reliance on the MOL, an entity already burdened with its own commitments. Additionally, MOL stakeholders raised concerns regarding inflexibility in fund allocation, which they believed could have been managed more strategically.

Stakeholders suggested several key areas for future improvements: increasing the project team's size to avoid delays, reassessing the project's internal management and relational dynamics to improve efficiency, and refining the financial planning processes for clarity and adaptability. They also recommended a more robust planning phase to ensure a thorough opportunity assessment and the need for greater financial flexibility to allow for adjustments in response to shifting project priorities and challenges.

6. To what extent were the midterm evaluation's recommendations adopted by the project management?

According to project stakeholders, project management comprehensively adopted the recommendations presented in the midterm evaluation. Stakeholders report that project management implemented all suggestions from the evaluation, reflecting FORMITRA's commitment to refining the project's trajectory and effectiveness based on evaluative insights. The project's Technical Progress Report from October 2023 provides evidence of the implementation of all recommendations provided during the midterm evaluation (See Annex F for detailed information).

Despite the challenges that emerged during the midterm evaluation, particularly the coinciding changes in government, MOL stakeholders perceived that the ILO handled the situation with efficacy. Stakeholders observed that management's ability to maintain the project's course during such a transition period reflected both the project's robust foundation and the management team's adeptness in dealing with potential disruptions.

3.5 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

7. Does the project's Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (CMEP) provide a valid means to monitor project progress and achievements, and to what extent has the project used the M&E system effectively to inform management decision-making?

Stakeholders recognize the project CMEP as being comprehensive, a crucial factor in its validity for tracking the project's progress and achievements. They view the CMEP as integrating various performance indicators to provide a holistic view of the project's trajectory at the outcome level, capturing progress toward the project's overarching goals.

The CMEP is instrumental in ensuring that all relevant aspects of the project are under continual review, allowing for timely and data-informed adjustments. The inclusion of diverse indicators also suggests that the plan was structured to accommodate the varying needs and expectations of different stakeholder groups, thereby enhancing its relevance.

Despite the comprehensive nature of the CMEP, stakeholder feedback has also highlighted certain weaknesses, particularly in its capacity to measure project effectiveness accurately and tangibly. Indicators included in Annex A mostly assess the completion of activities rather than the effectiveness of them. For example, indicators related to the project's trainings (Outputs 1.2.1.1, 1.2.2.1, and 1.2.3.1) focus on showcasing the number of persons who have completed trainings but not the level of knowledge attained (Annex A. Data Reporting Form). Also, some activities performed throughout the project were not adequately measured, raising data quality concerns that may affect management decisions. This is the case of the DAR-CE program, whose results were measured by a joint indicator with the results of the labor rights training. Indicators related to the mediation and occupational safety and health guideline training were not included in Annex A.

Additionally, some stakeholders have pointed out that while the system may be extensive in scope, it does not necessarily translate into effective impact measurement. This gap

suggests that there might be a discrepancy between the data collected and its utility in evaluating the true progress of the project against its intended outcomes. Furthermore, there seems to be a discernible underutilization of the system by stakeholders, which could be attributed to a range of factors, from a lack of awareness or a need for training on how to use the system effectively to potential issues with the system's user-friendliness or accessibility.

While the CMEP has been designed as a comprehensive tool, feedback from key stakeholders revealed challenges regarding access to the M&E system. Key stakeholders expressed that they had little to no access to the project's M&E results. The project management team noted that stakeholders were aware of and participated in constructing these indicators but did not receive frequent feedback on them, partly because their calculation frequency was long. Some external stakeholders expressed concerns regarding the effectiveness of the M&E system. They found that the use of the system did not meet their expectations for actively tracking project progress and informing management decisions, perceiving it was mostly used to "check boxes." This sentiment suggests that, from their perspective, the system's application fell short of providing the critical oversight and actionable data necessary for strategic decision-making.

Some stakeholders stated that over time, the project team's adherence to the original monitoring plan diminished, with a noticeable shift toward less structured, meeting-based monitoring rather than systematic data collection. This led to concerns about the integrity and consistency of the M&E system's application. Traditional methods of management through emails and phone calls, while functional in the past, were perceived as now inadequate compared to the capabilities of modern project management tools, which offer comprehensive tracking and analytical features. Despite these limitations, the active use of the M&E system for regular tracking and stakeholder reporting sessions indicates its integral role in the project's operations.

3.6 EQUITY

8. To what extent is the project contributing toward the USG policy objective of advancing equity for all, including groups who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality?

The project seems to have been designed with equity in mind, according to the Planning Direction of the MOL, targeting areas with significant vulnerabilities. Selecting specific provinces like Duarte, La Vega, Santiago, San Juan de la Maguana, and Bonao suggests a strategy focusing on areas with potentially higher disparities or challenges. However, both the ILO and ILAB suggest that no explicit strategies were implemented to promote equity and inclusion in the project's design phase, beyond the job placement program that was carried out as a trial. MOL's Equal Opportunity and Non-Discrimination Department was not included as part of FORMITRA's targeted areas.

However, feedback from stakeholders suggests the project was inclusive in its implementation. Training sessions and activities were not restricted to specific groups but were made accessible to all, ensuring everyone had the same information and opportunities. The project planned sector-specific trainings for strategic reasons rather than to purposefully exclude certain groups. However, some feedback indicates that equity was not necessarily premeditated but emerged organically during implementation.

The project seems to have made efforts to be inclusive of persons with disabilities, as evidenced by the participation of visually impaired individuals in training sessions and during the case management systems revision phase. However, there were concerns about the accessibility of certain tools, especially for those with specific conditions. For

instance, visually impaired inspectors report the ECMS is inaccessible for them, presenting challenges for them to carry out their work.

MOL's inspectors and officials raised some centralization concerns. Feedback indicates potential challenges with the centralization of training activities in Santo Domingo, which could lead to uneven access or benefits. For example, there were instances where activities were assigned based on convenience rather than a structured criterion. This can lead to unintentional exclusion, especially for those located in more remote or less central areas.

3.7 SUSTAINABILITY

9. To what extent are the project's plans for sustainability adapted to the local level, national level, and capacity of implementing partners? What steps have been taken to ensure sustainability?

Ownership and commitment from MOL favors sustainability

Stakeholders collectively recognized the MOL's commitment as crucial for the sustainability of the FORMITRA project, underscoring that internal consensus on project goals correlates with successful execution and longevity. Respondents highlighted that empowering MOL's officials and providing equipment to provincial directorates as significantly bolstering the project's long-term viability. Another example is the measures taken to preserve the functionality of case management systems, whose long-term support has been ensured by acquiring system licenses and making sure that personnel are knowledgeable of these software structures. Activities such as the regular supervision, monitoring, and continuous training of staff are being employed to preserve the effectiveness of the initiatives. Also, the MOL has promoted the formation of Mixed Committees of Occupational Safety and Health to continue advancing safe work practices. Statistics from the DGHS show that in the 2020–2023 period, 7,897 Mixed Committees of Occupational Safety and Health were created. In contrast, 5,337 were created during the 2016–2019 period, representing a 48 percent increase between both periods. The number of Occupational Safety and Health Coordinators grew 113 percent between both time periods, increasing from 1,539 to 3,271. This suggests more employers are taking measures to provide secure work environments. Nonetheless, stakeholders acknowledged the risk of diminishing returns in the absence of sustained project support.

Inter-institutional coordination facilitates sustainability

Stakeholders contend that, despite fiscal constraints, considerable efforts have been made to preserve the core accomplishments of the project through the cooperative efforts of multiple institutions. Collaboration with entities such as Supérate, CONANI, and the Ministry of Education has been pivotal to the ongoing success of initiatives like the DAR-CE program and the distribution of educational materials for children. The project has actively engaged municipalities, social actors, employers, and workers via agreements to foster an inter-institutional approach essential for amplifying the reach and impact of child labor prevention activities. Respondents viewed the establishment of regular collaboration routines, exemplified by CDLs, as vital for sustaining collective efforts. Furthermore, commitment from organizations such as INFOTEP, which provides training to companies at no cost, has been acknowledged as a significant contribution to the project's longevity, ensuring ongoing access to necessary tools and resources to promote compliance with labor laws and better working conditions.

Inclusion of activities in strategic plans facilitates sustainability

Stakeholders emphasized that integrating project activities into strategic plans was crucial for sustainability. This type of integration helps maintain a clear focus on activity implementation despite internal or external challenges. The MOL has already taken steps in this regard by creating a sustainability plan that includes specific actions for each MOL directorate directly involved in the project. Recurring resource allocation in the annual budget, informed by strategic and operational plans, has also been identified as a cornerstone for the project's enduring success. Including investments in technology across various locations in the MOL's budget is evidence of this. Measures like this exemplify the strategic integration of activities to ensure ongoing training, capacity building, and resource availability for the MOL. Aspects crucial to supporting sustainability, such as computer literacy requirements in the recruitment process to ensure new employees are well-prepared for their roles, should also be considered for inclusion in strategic plans. Additionally, monitoring and resource allocation that are based on measurable outcomes of the project activities are essential for continuous improvement and efficient execution of priority interventions.

Investment in human capital and the availability of tools and knowledge favor sustainability

Stakeholders participating in the FORMITRA project evaluation indicated that the sustainability of the project's outcomes is fundamentally reliant on investments in MOL's human capital, such as ongoing training for inspectors and DGHS analysts and the provision of tools and continuous knowledge. Permanent training efforts are essential to preserve acquired skills and extend the project's benefits over time. Trained inspectors overwhelmingly believe that the project's activities will have a sustainable impact.

Figure 4: Responses to the question, "Do you consider the project's completed activities will have a sustainable impact in the agriculture labor sector?"
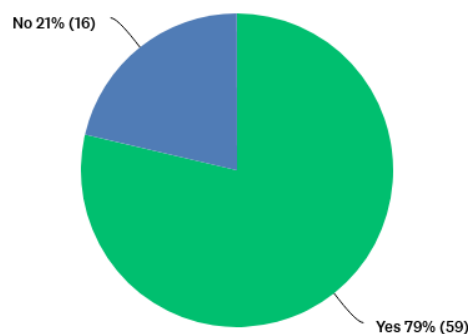
The physical and digital availability of protocols and tools, including the ECMS, with its source codes and technical manuals, is vital for maintaining the technological aspects of the project at the MOL. Stakeholders viewed retraining initiatives and the job stability of inspectors as strategic investments to bolster capacity and retain knowledge. Despite the potential for administrative or political changes, according to stakeholder assessments, integrating the project's practices into the core functions of the MOL and partnering institutions is a significant step toward ensuring the lasting impact of the FORMITRA project's achievements in the Dominican Republic.

Project sustainability plan ensures sustainability in key aspects of the intervention

The project aims to ensure the continuation of improvements through implanting a sustainability plan. This plan is a collaborative effort between the Ministry and other project stakeholders, with clear commitments from both sides to secure the longevity of project achievements. The Ministry's proactive stance on sustainability is evidenced in the letter sent by the Minister to ILAB, formally committing to comply with this plan.

The sustainability plan encompasses several key elements:[10]

- Annual updates to the manual and inspection protocols.
- Implementation of technological equipment to streamline the utilization of ECMS and legal case management systems in the Ministry of Labor Local Representations (RLT).
- Development of an online training program, accessible through the intranet, to adequately prepare new inspectors and existing staff.
- Virtualization and accessibility of Labor Law and Child Labor Prevention training programs for MOL personnel.
- Publication and handing over the updated inter-institutional coordination protocol for child labor attention and prevention, developed within the project, to the CDN for dissemination among its members.
- Deployment of the methodology employed in the supply and demand studies conducted in the three pilot provinces (Santiago, Duarte, and San Juan) across 10 provinces in 2024. The MOL has secured funding for this initiative.
- Systematization of the labor insertion pilot to assess its replicability.

These steps are viewed as pivotal for the project's efforts to have a lasting positive impact on the community.

Challenges to sustainability post-ILAB funding

Stakeholders highlighted the essential role that USDOL has played in helping maintain the sustainability of the project's achievements, expressing a strong wish for a second phase or extension that would allow for the broader population to be reached. Stakeholders have expressed concern about the capacity of local institutions to sustain such initiatives on their own, with many attributing the success of the project to the support of international agencies. The uncertainty surrounding the state's ability to independently sustain large-scale projects like FORMITRA emphasizes the necessity for continued international cooperation. In 2022, over 90 percent[11] of the MOL's budget was invested in operating expenses, leaving little room to invest in training and capital expenditures. The consensus among MOL stakeholders was that the future of such high-impact projects hinges on the MOL's capacity to provide a sustained inflow of resources and support, ensuring that pivotal interventions are maintained and also strengthened for lasting sustainability. This viewpoint is based on the understanding that interventions, particularly in training and guideline implementation, require ongoing adaptation and improvement, thus necessitating enduring support for their ultimate success and continuity. However, given

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[10] View the project sustainability plan for further details.

[11] MOL's budget execution data. For more information see: Ejecución Del Presupuesto

MOL's current budget limitations, stakeholders note that ensuring sustainability for all project components will be challenging.

3.8   UNEXPECTED RESULTS

Project stakeholders highlighted three results that exceeded original project impact expectations. These include:

Greater integration and empowerment within the MOL

MOL stakeholders reported a significant enhancement in the integration and empowerment of the team, noting that joint training initiatives have substantially bolstered the synergies between different MOL departments. Introducing new systems and virtual technologies has bridged the gap between officials in various provinces, fostering a sense of unity and cooperation evident in their daily activities. This increased cohesion has led to a collective approach to addressing challenges and streamlining processes, boosting operational efficiency. The training and courses provided by the project are credited with enhancing professional competencies and fostering personal empowerment among officials, aiding them in overcoming ingrained habits and embracing new technologies—a critical advantage in the digital age. This dual aspect of professional and personal growth highlights the comprehensive impact of the project, surpassing initial expectations and contributing to a more holistic development of the workforce.

Promotion of complementary and peer-to-peer training

Stakeholders pointed out that while the project initially planned for a limited number of training sessions, the Ministry proactively matched the effort by internally organizing additional training sessions, demonstrating its commitment to its staff's continuous improvement and skill enhancement. This dedication to ongoing education is not confined to the project scope; training was also carried out in other areas, reflecting the Ministry's efforts to keep its workforce competently trained in diverse fields, including in the area of system management. Also, knowledge transfer among peers, motivated by MOL officers, has taken place in an effort to level team capacities and promote efficiency across various departments. This broader focus on capacity building suggests the Ministry prioritizes comprehensive training as key to organizational development.

Emergence of initiatives for better law enforcement

The FORMITRA project's activities have led to the development of new initiatives to enhance law enforcement. These efforts are symbolic of the efficacy of a collaborative approach and the project's responsiveness to evolving requirements. Notably, with the ILO's technical support, the MOL's initiative to establish a labor mediation school marks a significant leap in national labor mediation capacity building. The project's influence is further evidenced by unexpected outcomes like the bilateral collaboration with Costa Rica on child labor issues to improve its procedures, governance, and work plans, underscoring its potential for generating valuable synergies. The impact of a perception study on child labor within trade unions has sparked the creation of educational materials, while efforts to standardize inspection report quality demonstrate an emphasis on information accuracy. Furthermore, the MOL's identification of additional commitments, including expanding labor market studies, reflects the project's ability to shape the Ministry's agenda and catalyze notable operational enhancements.

4.   LESSONS LEARNED AND EMERGING GOOD PRACTICES

Among the lessons learned highlighted by stakeholders, three stand out:

- **Enabling consultation with all actors prior to project design helps identify priorities and streamline the project's focus, scope, and objectives.** ILO management and MOL's Vice Ministry of Mediation underscore the importance of engaging all relevant actors in consultations before project design as a cornerstone of initiative formulation and development. This engagement strategy is credited with enhancing active stakeholder participation and incorporating their feedback from the program's onset. Recognizing that creativity is critical for effective participation, stakeholders advocated for a flexible approach to accommodate all parties' evolving needs and priorities. Stakeholders deemed starting with a thorough diagnosis that captures a comprehensive range of priorities as essential, particularly given that needs may shift with changes in administration. They also recommended conducting preliminary activities, such as consultations, interviews, and meetings, to foster a deeper understanding of stakeholders' needs and priorities, thereby informing more effective project designs. Stakeholders highlighted the importance of clear, priority-driven planning in specialized fields like mediation, with prior consultation and identification of training preferences as key to achieving broader acceptance and success in projects.

- **Involvement of actors starting from project design facilitates implementation.** The ILO's management in the Dominican Republic emphasizes the pivotal role of active and committed engagement from relevant stakeholders right from the project's inception, as this collaboration is seen as a key facilitator of the project's implementation and eventual success. Stakeholders noted that early involvement of key actors fosters a deeper understanding and sense of ownership of the project, leading to a more streamlined process and stronger commitment from all parties. A prime example of this approach's efficacy is the Ministry's initiative to define the logical framework and contribute to developing indicators, a strategy that has leveraged the case management system effectively. Despite initial unfamiliarity, these indicators have become instrumental in driving critical processes that have underpinned the project's successful execution; examples of these efforts include signing agreements and the system's adoption by inspectors.

- **Commitment of the MOL's management is crucial for effective implementation.** Stakeholder narratives revealed that the engagement and dedication of leaders are indispensable for the successful execution of project initiatives. Stakeholders underscored the importance of leaders and implementing agencies undertaking proactive measures from the project's commencement. They highlighted the conduct of a leader who set aside their directorial role to partake as a regular participant in the project, a decision stakeholders cited as an example of the profound commitment required for the project's success.

5. LIMITATIONS

The evaluation team identified limitations and the strategies it implemented to address or mitigate them. These include time and resource constraints, potential biases, and the scope of the evaluation.

1. **Time constraints.** In-country fieldwork for the evaluation lasted approximately three weeks, which was insufficient to visit all project sites and stakeholders.
2. **Selection bias.** Stakeholders who agreed to participate in the KIIs and FGDs may have a more positive view of the project, which could have affected the accuracy of the evaluation findings. The team used a sampling approach identified in coordination with ILO.
3. **Recall bias.** Key informants constitute a crucial source to obtain insights around the evaluation questions. Still, interview data is prone to cognitive biases, including recall bias and social desirability. Recall bias is a potential limitation as KII and FGD participants may have had difficulty accurately recalling and reporting past events or experiences for a specific period; this may lead to distorted or incomplete information that may affect the validity and reliability of the evaluation results.
4. **Social desirability bias.** Participants of KIIs and FGDs may have provided responses that they believe will be viewed favorably by the evaluation team or society, particularly when discussing sensitive topics such as child labor.

To mitigate the potential cognitive bias, the evaluation team began each KII and FGD with a protocol that reviewed the project's objectives, explained the evaluation's purpose and how the data would be used, and ensured confidentiality. The evaluation team created a comfortable, private, and safe environment for participants to share their thoughts and experiences, explained the purpose and uses of the interview material, and used an anonymous online survey to allow for candid responses without fear of judgment or repercussions.

To ensure the evaluation's validity and reliability, the team systematically triangulated data across respondent groups and data-collection methods, using multiple data sources to identify alignment or divergence in findings and to generate actionable conclusions and recommendations. Additionally, the primary data collected was triangulated with secondary data sources whenever possible.

Importantly, **this was not an impact evaluation**; therefore, no causality between the intervention and the outcomes was established. The evaluation team made a point of highlighting this when providing **effective** policy-level recommendations. Results for the evaluation were based on information collected from background documents, insights, and perceptions from interviews with stakeholders, such as project staff and project participants. The team determined the accuracy of the evaluation results by the integrity of the information provided to the evaluator from these sources.

The amount of financial data available limited the evaluator's ability to determine **efficiency**. A **cost-efficiency analysis is not included** because it would require impact data that is not available.

6. CONCLUSIONS

This section outlines the conclusions for the four outcomes, covering their achievement status and sustainability ratings. Furthermore, it presents overarching conclusions for the remaining evaluation questions addressed.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

1. To what extent is the project making progress toward its planned outcomes and sub-outcomes? What are the key results achieved so far, specifically regarding:

    a. Improving strategic enforcement of labor laws with an emphasis in the agricultural sector by MOL – OTC 1

The project has promoted actions to improve the enforcement of labor laws, including increasing child labor awareness, training on applying occupational safety and health practices, and enhancing the MOL's processes, plans, and policies in the Dominican Republic. Improvements in occupational safety and health practices reflect a positive trend toward better working conditions and dispute management. Most notably, the project's influence on the MOL's institutional improvements has been widely acknowledged, particularly with the advancement of a National Occupational Safety and Health Policy, the creation of guidelines for the use of pesticides, and the enhancement of child labor prevention frameworks.

The indicator on the improvement of working conditions in the agricultural sector has yet to be published by the project's M&E team. However, taking into account the above-mentioned achievements, the project is awarded an "above-moderate" score. This reflects significant progress in multiple areas of labor reform and management, signaling a positive effect on the MOL's capabilities for labor law enforcement and promoting worker welfare. The score is not the highest possible due to existing improvement opportunities within the ECMS and addressing remaining institutional challenges.

    b. Improving systems, tools, and instruments adopted by the MOL with an emphasis on the ECMS – SO 1.1

The FORMITRA project's integration of a streamlined inspection manual and the ECMS system has yielded efficiencies in enforcing labor laws by centralizing legal guidelines and enhancing data management. However, this success is tempered by significant challenges, including system accessibility issues, inflexible functionalities, and information handling problems that have necessitated continued reliance on manual processes and have undermined the system's efficiency. Although inspectors prefer the digital platform over entirely manual methods, the effectiveness of training and the system's design shortcomings highlight a moderate achievement level. This suggests that while the project has made strides in modernizing the inspection process, there is considerable room for improvement to fully realize the intended benefits.

The improvements with introducing systems and manuals warrant an "above-moderate" score considering the achievements and challenges in implementation. While the creation and usage of manuals and the ECMS system have introduced efficiencies and enhanced the procedural aspects of inspections, the tangible benefits have been somewhat offset by technical challenges and user experience issues. The score reflects both the progress made in digitizing and organizing the inspection process and the clear areas for improvement, particularly in system reliability and user training.

The outcome shows a "high" sustainability rating. The manual is accessible digitally and physically, and the project trained MOL personnel for long-term utilization. A commitment

to annual protocol revisions by MOL ensures continuous updates and the planned IT equipment provision for RLT offices facilitates system use. The possession of ECMS source codes enables tailored updates to fit Ministry needs, enhancing sustainability and adaptability.

c. Improving knowledge to enforce the legal framework with emphasis on the agricultural sector – SO 1.2

The FORMITRA project's training initiatives for MOL personnel have broadly strengthened their legal, child labor prevention, mediation, and occupational safety and health competencies. The project directly trained a total of 225 MOL officials and analysts. Despite general satisfaction with the skills development and soft skills training sessions, stakeholders expressed a desire for more in-depth, specialized training tailored to their specific work demands rather than the broad overviews provided. Given these perspectives, the training program, though constructive, has room for improvement to better cater to the diverse expertise levels within the MOL.

The evaluation team scored the achievement level for this project component as "above moderate." The score recognizes the progress made within the outcome but notes significant room for growth in training specificity and advancement. The outcome has a "high" sustainability rating, as it features plans to shift training programs to a virtual format and develop online sessions for new inspectors. These virtual training resources will be conveniently accessible via the staff intranet platform.

d. Improving implementation of institutional initiatives related to acceptable conditions of work and child labor by key actors – SO 1.3

The DAR-CE workshops and educational campaigns have heightened awareness and reshaped cultural norms surrounding child labor, using interactive methodologies that resonate across demographics and facilitate hands-on community involvement. CDL members noted observing an increased commitment by community members in raising awareness of child labor occurrences. Similarly, the FORMITRA project has invigorated inter-institutional collaboration, notably enhancing MOL's lead in the CDL and streamlining case management and effective joint strategic planning to tackle child labor. The synergistic alliances with local bodies and international organizations like the ILO have expanded the project's influence and efficiency. These comprehensive efforts in education and coordination merit a "high" rating on the achievement scale, reflecting advancement in raising awareness of child labor practices.

The outcome scores an "above moderate" sustainability rating, showcasing enhanced collaboration among CDL members. However, planning processes are secured for only a year, necessitating new planning based on evolving circumstances. The DAR-CE program equipped CDL with methodologies for child labor prevention, yet sustainability depends on available financial resources. While some CDL members secured funds for training materials and communities are better equipped, government institutions may struggle with sustaining activities due to limited budgets in the long run.

e. Innovative strategies for improving work opportunities, working conditions, and productivity through the pilot program – SO 1.4

The SCORE program has reportedly made strides in enhancing labor conditions (32 percent of businesses) and productivity (44 percent of businesses) in the agricultural, agro-industrial, and textile sectors of the Dominican Republic. Stakeholders recognized the SCORE program's holistic approach and rapid implementation as key factors in its success. The program's dual focus on aligning management objectives with employee aspirations,

along with INFOTEP's support during the implementation phase, further underscores its effectiveness. Meanwhile, the labor insertion training has been largely appreciated by participants for the practical skills it imparts and the educational insight into workplace rights, despite gaps in IT training and alignment with labor market demands. The high completion rate (94 percent) suggests that the training quality and support mechanisms are effective. Still, the lack of a labor insertion survey and difficulty in reaching the most vulnerable populations highlight areas for improvement.

Considering the apparent success in training outcomes, the strategic emphasis on practical skills, and the need for more robust employment tracking, the SCORE program and labor insertion training collectively score "moderate" on the achievement scale. This reflects significant accomplishments coupled with room for enhancement, particularly in terms of results M&E, and post-training employment support and inclusivity. The outcome also scores as "moderate" in sustainability. The project has built capacities to continue implementing the SCORE methodology in the Dominican Republic with five certified trainers at INFOTEP. The labor insertion training program has equipped the MOL with a methodology to pinpoint labor supply and demand gaps, slated for replication in 10 additional provinces; however, efforts to continue the program beyond its systematization are not evident in the sustainability plan.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

2. To what extent is the project design, theory of change, and intervention logic relevant to improve working conditions in the agricultural sector of the Dominican Republic?

The project has demonstrated a well-received design and theory of change. The project gained traction in the Dominican Republic's agricultural sector by raising awareness of labor issues and child labor and promoting safe working practices; however, persistent challenges, such as the incidence of informality in the sector, suggest a necessity to refine the approach and to establish robust mechanisms for stakeholder engagement and outcome monitoring. This reflects the project's effectiveness in raising awareness and imparting valuable training, alongside recognition of the areas needing improvement—specifically, the need for periodic and timely measurement of outcomes and a tailored approach to accommodate nuances of the agricultural sector.

The relevance dimension lands at an "above-moderate" level of achievement. This rating signifies that the project has gone beyond basic expectations in its strategizing and effectiveness, successfully identifying and working within the local context to some degree. The suggestions for a more expansive and tailored approach imply there is room for the project to evolve and potentially reach a "high" level of achievement with further refinement.

3. To what extent are the project strategies relevant to the specific needs of project participants, communities, and other key stakeholders?

The project's evaluation of FORMITRA reflects a conscientious attempt to address local labor working conditions through strategies to strengthen the MOL. Stakeholders, including participants and community members, acknowledged the relevance of the project's training and educational initiatives, underscoring their alignment with local needs. Despite this acknowledgment, a consensus suggests a desire for a more comprehensive approach. The feedback conveys that while the project has been effective in fostering knowledge and providing tools to enforce labor laws, a more nuanced understanding of specific regional challenges and socioeconomic dynamics could amplify its relevance.

The project lands at an "above-moderate" level of achievement, considering the scope of feedback. This rating signifies that the project has exceeded basic expectations in its strategizing and impact, successfully identifying and working within the local context to some degree. However, in-depth specialized training in crucial areas, such as occupational safety and health, and incorporating additional components to improve data management are required.

4. What are the key internal or external factors that affected the achievement of project outcomes?

The FORMITRA project faced a complex interplay of external and internal factors in its execution. Externally, the COVID-19 pandemic and government changes delayed activities, with bureaucratic and infrastructure challenges in remote areas further impeding progress. Internally, the project was buoyed by the MOL's high-level support and team motivation, sufficient materials and financial resources to implement project activities, and effective stakeholder coordination, including support from the ILO and their experts' contributions. Conversely, internal roadblocks, such as slow administrative processes, IT skill deficits, and restrictive timelines, constrained the project's reach and potential.

Considering the project's capacity to reach its intended goals, given how it dealt with the internal and external factors, the project is assessed with an "above-moderate" score. This rating reflects a nuanced recognition that, while the project navigated through and surmounted a host of challenges that led to commendable outcomes, it simultaneously encountered internal and external barriers that limited the realization of its full potential.

5. How effective and efficient are the project's intervention and management strategies? What are the key strengths and weaknesses in project implementation and management? What areas need improvement?

Stakeholders noted positive reviews regarding the project's resource management, noting the high-quality output alignment with set objectives. Feedback received has praised the proactive role of the ILO for their attentive and dedicated engagement. However, understaffing has been a point of contention that caused strain on timelines and quality, and the over-reliance on the MOL has led to a reactive project approach. Financial planning presented a lack of flexibility. Stakeholders suggested that future projects should bolster team size to prevent delays, improve internal management and financial planning for greater efficiency, and allow more financial flexibility to adapt to changing needs and priorities.

The project's resource management scores an "above-moderate" level of achievement, as the outcomes are largely positive yet with identifiable areas for improvement. The score recognizes the high-quality outputs and financial discipline, although it is tempered by staffing and planning issues.

6. To what extent were the midterm evaluation's recommendations adopted by the project management?

The project management's adoption of recommendations from the midterm evaluation was thorough and comprehensive, displaying a strong commitment to continuous improvement. Stakeholder feedback indicated that the management team acknowledged and actively implemented suggestions to enhance project operations, showcasing a proactive and collaborative approach to feedback integration. Even amid government changes, the project's management, notably the ILO, managed to navigate challenges effectively and keep the project on track, demonstrating adaptability and resilience.

This successful integration of evaluative feedback and stable management through transitional periods suggest a high level of achievement in project management practices warranting a "high" score on the four-point scale for the project's management component.

7. Does the project's CMEP provide a valid means to monitor project progress and achievements, and to what extent has the project used the M&E system effectively to inform management decision-making?

The CMEP was a thoughtfully constructed framework to capture the project's main achievement per outcome. It involved diverse performance and result indicators essential for ongoing review and timely adjustments. However, issues with its practical implementation emerged. Key stakeholders stated that access to monitoring indicators was limited, and external stakeholders questioned its effectiveness in tracking progress and informing strategic decisions. Stakeholders noted weaknesses in CMEP's effectiveness measurement, mainly in Annex A indicators focusing on activity completion rather than effectiveness. The system's scope does not ensure impact measurement, which leads to stakeholders' underutilization due to potential usability issues and lack of training.

Moreover, although the M&E system remains a core component of the project's operations, its potential is undercut by accessibility issues and a perceived shift from systematic data-driven oversight to a more checkbox-oriented approach.

The CMEP receives a score of "moderate" on the four-point scale, reflecting a solid foundation with notable areas that require attention to achieve its full potential. While the design of the CMEP is robust, the execution and inclusion in decision-making processes present significant room for improvement.

8. To what extent is the project contributing toward the USG policy objective of advancing equity for all, including groups who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality?

The project targeted regions with high vulnerabilities that reflected an implicit strategy toward equity. It facilitated inclusive access to training and opportunities while accommodating a broad spectrum of participants, including persons with disabilities. Nonetheless, there is room for improvement in accessibility tools like the ECMS system. Additionally, there is a need to address issues of centralization that might lead to unequal access or benefits, particularly for participants in less central locations, as well as to explicitly consider the equity aspect in the design phase of all components.

Considering these factors, the project earns a "moderate" score for effectively pursuing equity and inclusiveness while recognizing areas that require further refinement to enhance accessibility and equitable benefit distribution.

9. To what extent are the project's plans for sustainability adapted to the local level, national level, and the capacity of implementing partners? What steps have been taken to ensure sustainability?

The FORMITRA project's sustainability is underpinned by several critical elements, including the MOL's strong ownership and commitment. The inter-institutional coordination and inclusion of project activities in strategic plans, investment in human capital, and availability of necessary tools play pivotal roles in perpetuating the initiative's successes. The project's foresight in developing a sustainability plan, particularly for its case management system, and integrating its practices into the everyday functioning of the Ministry and partners further consolidates its potential for long-term impact. However,

the stakeholders' reliance on continued USDOL support highlights a vulnerability in local institutional capacity to sustain efforts independently.

The project is rated as "above moderate" in sustainability, given the robust structure in place while recognizing the reliance on external support. This rating reflects strong foundational practices for longevity that currently depend on sustained international cooperation.

UNEXPECTED RESULTS

The FORMITRA project has yielded unexpectedly significant results, deeply influencing the MOL beyond initial targets. There has been a remarkable improvement in integration and empowerment within the MOL, with enhanced synergy between teams and departments due to new protocols, trainings, and technologies promoting unity and operational efficiency. Additionally, the project sparked the MOL to increase the number of planned training sessions, reflecting an earnest commitment to staff development and expanding the training remit into other key competencies. These advancements, alongside proactive inter-country collaborations and a focus on education around child labor issues, underscore the project's extensive reach and dynamic adaptability.

Based on these significant, unplanned outcomes, the level of achievement can be rated as "high" in terms of impact dimensions, demonstrating a robust and pervasive influence that extends well beyond the project's original scope.

7.   KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

During field research involving key stakeholders, the team identified a variety of suggestions for project enhancements, each stemming from the unique experiences of the consulted groups and individuals and the analytical process carried out by the evaluation team. The proposed recommendations are organized based on the intended audience and evaluation questions.

ILAB

1. ### RQ1. RELEVANCE OF PROJECT DESIGN AND THEORY

    Conduct Targeted Needs Assessments: Perform detailed needs assessments in critical areas requiring intervention and engage institutions with specialized expertise to pinpoint and address these areas effectively. Needs assessments should occur prior to the design phase of future projects to help guarantee voices are heard, improve project relevance, and ensure efficient use of time upon implementation.

2. ### RQ6. ADOPTION OF MIDTERM EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS

    Guarantee Timely Midterm Evaluation: The midterm evaluation was originally planned to occur halfway through the intervention, but due to delays in the implementation of the project, it took place in the project's early stages of actual implementation and could not adequately gauge the project's progress. The COVID-19 pandemic, changes in government administration, and the project's redesign phase, which occurred in the first year of implementation, caused project delays. It is advisable to review and adapt project plans well in advance to accommodate changes in circumstances and schedules.

ILO

3. ### RQ2. PROJECT STRATEGIES' RELEVANCE FOR STAKEHOLDERS

    Enhance Training Relevance and Depth: Refine training programs to ensure instructors possess in-depth knowledge of the specific project domain. Training should be technical, detailed, and tailored to impart specialized knowledge pertinent to the project's focus area.

RQ3. Project Overall Progress

4. ### RQ3.5 IMPROVING WORK OPPORTUNITIES AND WORKING CONDITIONS

    Improve the Pilot Program for Vulnerable Families: Adjust the pilot program targeting vulnerable families to facilitate more effective labor market integration and enhance the project's overall impact. This should include structured internship programs, strengthened compliance with the criteria for participation to ensure the program's successful targeting, and adequate post-completion follow-up mechanisms to ensure the highest possible rate of job insertion.

    Account for Adequate Labor Insertion Timing: The project deployed technical training during the second quarter of 2023. Considering its duration, this afforded the ISA and the MOL less than three months for job placement after its conclusion. In future projects, it is essential to recognize that the job insertion process typically requires more time, necessitating the inclusion of such programs in earlier project phases to allow sufficient time for achieving predefined objectives. Moreover, it is

recommended to prioritize the digitization of profiles and the implementation of computerized job insertion systems to streamline matching labor supply and demand, ultimately improving efficiency.

5. RQ5. PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Ensure Appropriate Staffing and Market Understanding: Guarantee the availability of staff with realistic expectations about labor market conditions and salaries. Be prepared to recruit talent from outside the local market if necessary. This approach is crucial for conducting accurate project assessments and attributing causality effectively.

6. RQ7. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Improve Evaluation Methods: Overhaul evaluation frameworks to better measure the impact of interventions. Implement pre- and post-training tests and baseline surveys to quantify improvements and facilitate more effective impact assessments. In addition, consider better timing of the final project evaluation. The evaluation team carried out this final performance evaluation before the project achieved some important project milestones, such as the implementation of the Judicial Case Management System; therefore, the team did not consider these milestones during the consultation phase.

Boost Project Name Recognition: Work on improving or ensuring that the project's name is well-recognized and associated with its outcomes. This will streamline the evaluation process, making assessing the project's impact and success easier.

MINISTRY OF LABOR

RQ3. Project Overall Progress

7. RQ3.1 IMPROVING STRATEGIC ENFORCEMENT OF LAWS IN AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Tailor the ECMS System to Facilitate Law Enforcement in the Agricultural Sector: It is critical to tailor the ECMS system specifically for the complexities of agricultural work environments, ensuring that inspections are thorough, frequent, and adapted to the sector's unique challenges. Agricultural inspections often occur in remote and inaccessible settings. In this regard, creating a module of options in the ECMS that allows reporting without connectivity is vital. Providing the personnel in charge of on-field supervision with adequate resources, such as suitable vehicles, is also vital. This should be complemented by a robust training program for inspectors that focuses on the specificities of agricultural labor laws and the rights of workers in this sector. By concentrating on these areas, the enforcement of labor laws in agriculture can become more proactive, targeted, and effective, leading to a substantial decrease in violations and enhanced protection for agricultural workers.

Address Structural Challenges: External challenges pervade the agricultural sector. Stakeholders commonly stressed that there is a high incidence of undocumented workers and a lack of an appropriate registry of companies in the field. By collaborating with the Ministry of Agriculture, the MOL could devise a system to assign a unique identifier to these entities and employees. For locals without formalization, this identifier could be linked to their national identity document,

while foreigners could be assigned a specific alphanumeric code. To ensure greater compliance, the registry could be linked to social transfers given through Supérate in the case of Dominican nationals and through consulates or farmers' associations in the case of documented and undocumented immigrants, respectively. This practice could help track and link personnel to their respective employer and improve law enforcement.

8. RQ3.2 SYSTEMS AND PROTOCOLS

Enhance Case Management System Efficacy: Conduct an immediate comprehensive survey among inspectors to identify recurring issues within the case management system and prioritize addressing the most frequent problems to improve the system's functionality and inspection efficiency.

9. RQ3.3 IMPROVING KNOWLEDGE

Develop a Comprehensive Training Agenda: It is imperative to establish an ongoing training program for MOL staff, focusing on inspectors and encompassing critical areas such as occupational health, safety, and hygiene. This initiative should feature structured developmental pathways, including advanced degrees, professional certifications, and structured induction programs tailored for specific domains (mediation, inspection, etc.). The agenda should be designed to preserve existing knowledge and proactively anticipate and bridge any future training gaps within the MOL. This foresight will enable continuously upgrading skills to meet the labor market's evolving demands and the MOL's internal needs.

10. RQ3.4 CHILD LABOR REDUCTION

Update and Systematize Child Labor Data: It is critical to update the national child labor data and ensure its systematic integration within the MOL's systems. Currently, the data is outdated, with the latest figures available only up to 2019, rendering it inadequate for evaluating the project's recent progress. The evaluation team recommends collaborating with the National Statistics Office to collect and produce up-to-date child labor data to strengthen administrative records and enhance case monitoring and prevention efforts. Furthermore, the team suggests establishing a connection between the child labor inspection processes and the general inspection system, a link that, as noted by a high-ranking stakeholder, is currently missing.

11. RQ4. INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACTORS

Improve Resilience and Efficiency: Prioritize the development of a flexible project framework to effectively handle unforeseen challenges, such as public health crises or bureaucratic changes. Key to this is fostering robust IT skills among team members to ensure the adaptability and continuity of operations. Additionally, enhancing logistics and infrastructure, particularly in remote areas, will be critical to maintaining momentum and ensuring that project benefits reach all intended recipients.

12. RQ8. EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Elaborate on an Equity and Inclusion Plan: Perform an assessment during project design that considers tackling disparities based on territory, gender, and disabilities

within the MOL staff. The evaluation team recommends that the Directorate of Equity and Inclusion from the MOL, alongside the Planning Directorate, take the lead in this role. Also, the team suggests that the MOL seek alliances with responsible public institutions in charge of these subject matters, such as the Ministry of Economy and Planning, the Ministry of Women, and the National Disability Council, to better identify and coordinate how to serve minorities and vulnerable populations through pilot programs, such as the one on labor insertion.

13. RQ9. SUSTAINABILITY

Strengthen Local Representation and Supervision: Integrate a component to reinforce CDL's role in the nationwide oversight of labor law enforcement and supervision techniques. This component could include training on community leadership, labor legislation, decent work principles, and effective communication to ensure effective engagement at the local level. Extend resources beyond Santo Domingo to other regions, including providing essential tools like vehicles, to enhance the effectiveness of activities, improve the efficiency of the project, and guarantee longer-term sustainability.

Table 4 links each recommendation to the findings and the page number where the finding can be located.

Table 4: Recommendations and Supporting Evidence

Recommendation	Evidence	Page Numbers
Conduct targeted needs assessments.	**RQ1** While the intervention logic was aimed at changing attitudes and practices, persistent issues, such as the commitment of stakeholders and the perceived presence of child labor in some areas, suggest that the theory of change may need to be revisited.	14–15
Ensure instructors possess in-depth knowledge of the specific project domain.	**RQ2** Feedback indicated that while the initiatives were aligned with some of the core needs, participants felt the project could have been more attuned to their specific circumstances by providing more in-depth, specialized training.	15–16

Recommendation	Evidence	Page Numbers
Tailor the ECMS system to the complexities of agricultural work environments.	**RQ3.1** Inspectors cited decreases in both workload and wasted time by using the ECMS; however, challenges persist with ECMS's implementation regarding access and functionality.	18; 19
Address the high incidence of an undocumented labor force and the lack of appropriate registry of companies working in the field.	**RQ3.1** A major highlighted point was the high incidence of an undocumented labor force and the lack of an appropriate registry of companies working in the field.	14
Enhance case management system efficacy.	**RQ3.2** Inspectors reported issues with system accessibility, including system errors, system outages, and issues with remote access, forcing them to be present at the MOL office to complete their work.	20–22
Establish an ongoing training program for the MOL staff.	**RQ3.3** Stakeholders expressed a desire for more in-depth, ongoing, and specialized training tailored to their specific work demands rather than the broad overviews provided.	22–23
Update the national child labor data, and ensure its systematic integration within the MOL's systems.	**RQ3.4** There is a lack of updated data to quantitatively assess progress on child labor prevention; the most recent information dates from 2019.	24

Recommendation	Evidence	Page Numbers
Adjust the pilot program targeting vulnerable families.	**RQ3.5** Stakeholders reported the training equipped them with skills needed for job interviews and writing their resumes. Nonetheless, there were indications that certain areas of the training did not align with labor market demands, with a noted absence of IT training, which is deemed relevant in today's job market.	25–26
Design flexible project frameworks to effectively handle unforeseen challenges.	**RQ4** A combination of external and internal factors influenced project outcomes and, in some cases, caused delays in the initiation and progression of the project. External factors include the COVID-19 pandemic and changes in government. Internal factors include bureaucratic backstopping and IT capabilities of project staff.	27–29
Ensure availability of staff with realistic expectations about labor market conditions and salaries.	**RQ5** Financial planning was considered inflexible, and understaffing was a point of contention, causing strain on timelines and quality. The over-reliance on the overcommitted MOL led to a reactive project approach.	29

Recommendation	Evidence	Page Numbers
Ensure timely midterm evaluations.	**RQ6** The project comprehensively adopted recommendations from the midterm evaluation; nonetheless, due to project delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, changes in government administration, and the project's redesign phase, the midterm assessment could not adequately gauge the project's progress since it was still in its early stages.	30
Improve evaluation methods by implementing pre- and post-training tests, and boost project name recognition.	**RQ7** While the design of the CMEP is robust, it does not necessarily translate into effective impact measurement. This gap suggests that there might be a discrepancy between the data collected and its utility in evaluating the true progress of the project against its intended outcomes.	31–32
Develop an Equity and Inclusion Plan.	**RQ8** FORMITRA facilitated inclusive access to training and opportunities, accommodating a broad spectrum of participants, including persons with disabilities, albeit with room for improvement in accessibility tools like the ECMS system. However, there is a need to address issues of centralization that might lead to unequal access or benefits, particularly for participants in less central locations.	32

Recommendation	Evidence	Page Numbers
Strengthen local representation and supervision.	**RQ9** Stakeholders in the FORMITRA project evaluation have indicated that the sustainability of the project's outcomes is fundamentally reliant on the investment in human capital, such as ongoing training for inspectors and the provision of tools and knowledge.	34

ANNEXES

1. Management Procedures & Guidelines for Cooperative Agreements (December 2017), U.S. Department of Labor.

2. IL-31479-17-75-K-11 Grant Modification 0 (December 2017), U.S. Department of Labor.

3. IL-31479-17-75-K-11 Grant Modification 1 (February 2018), U.S. Department of Labor.

4. IL-31479-17-75-K-11 Grant Modification 2 (May 2018), U.S. Department of Labor.

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7. IL-31479-17-75-K-11 Grant Modification 5 (April 2021), U.S. Department of Labor.

8. IL-31479-17-75-K-11 Grant Modification 6 (November 2021), U.S. Department of Labor.

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11. Management Procedures & Guidelines for Cooperative Agreements (May 2022), U.S. Department of Labor.

12. Project: "Strengthening the Capacities of the Ministry of Labour to Improve Working Conditions in Agriculture in the Dominican Republic" (May 2019), International Labour Office.

13. IL-31479-17-75-K-11/IL31479C78 Federal Financial Report (December 2017), International Labor Organization.

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16. IL-31479-17-75-K-11/IL31479C78 Federal Financial Report (September 2018), International Labor Organization.

17. IL-31479-17-75-K-11/IL31479C78 Federal Financial Report (December 2018), International Labor Organization.

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33. IL-31479-17-75-K-11/IL31479F23 Federal Financial Report (December 2022), International Labor Organization.

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39. IL-31479-17-75-K-11 Comments on the Technical Progress Report – April 2018 (May 2018), U.S. Department of Labor.

40. IL-31479-17-75-K-11 Annex C: Response to DOL Comments from Last Technical Progress Report (required for all projects) (November 2018), International Labor Organization

41. IL-31479-17-75-K-11 Technical Progress Report October 2018 (October 2018), International Labor Organization.

42. IL-31479-17-75-K-11 Comments on the Technical Progress Report – October 2018 Reducing Child Labor and Improving Working Conditions in Agriculture in the Dominican Republic (November 2018), U.S. Department of Labor.

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53. IL-31479-17-75-K-11 Technical Progress Report September 2021 (September 2021), International Labor Organization.

54. IL-31479-17-75-K-11 Technical Progress Report Annex A September 2021 (September 2021), International Labor Organization.

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64. MOL Presentations (December 2022), Gobierno de la Republica Dominicana.

65. Informe final de la Consultoría para la actualización de la Resolución 52/2004 sobre trabajos peligrosos e insalubres para personas menores de 18 años, Contrato Núm.: 40397466 (2022), International Labor Organization.

66. Informe Final Corregido Percepciones De Los Grupos Sindicales Sobre El Trabajo Infantil En Cinco Provincias Del País (no date), Equipo Vargas de Investigación Social.

67. Entendiendo el trabajo infantil (no date), International Labor Organization and Gobierno de la Republica Dominicana.

68. El trabajo infantil en el marco del Covid-19 (no date), International Labor Organization and Gobierno de la Republica Dominicana.

69. Gobiernos Locales Contra El Trabajo Infantil (December 2021), International Labor Organization, Liga Municipal Dominica, FEDOMU, CONANI, and Gobierno de la Republica Dominicana.

70. Plaguicidas Guia Amigable de Uyso Y Aplicación (2021), International Labor Organization and Gobierno de la Republica Dominicana.

71. Compendio de Legislación Internacional Relativa al Trabajo Infantil (June 1991), International Labor Organization and Gobierno de la Republica Dominicana.

72. Compendio de la Legislación Nacional Relativa al Trabajo Infantil (January 2010), International Labor Organization and Gobierno de la Republica Dominicana.

73. Manual de Inspección del Trabajo (no date), International Labor Organization and Gobierno de la Republica Dominicana.

74. Protocolo de Actuación y Coordinación Interna Para Situaciones de Denuncia o Detección de Casos de Trabajo Infantil (March 2022), International Labor Organization and Gobierno de la Republica Dominicana.

B.   DATA COLLECTION ITINERARY

August 2023						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
	KIIs with ILO project staff and DR MOL state officials in Santo Domingo	KIIs with DR MOL state officials in Santo Domingo	No activity due to Tropical Storm Franklin	No activity due to Tropical Storm Franklin	KIIs with DR MOL state officials in Santo Domingo	
27	28	29	30	31	1	2
	KIIs with representatives from INFOTEP, CONANI, Supérate, CNTD, CNUS, and CASC online	FGD and KIIs with DR MOL state officials in San Juan	KII with CDL member in San Juan	KII with COPARDOM member online	FDGs with representatives from CDL, MOL, and other DR state officials in Santo Domingo	

September 2023						
Sunday	**Monday**	**Tuesday**	**Wednesday**	**Thursday**	**Friday**	**Saturday**
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
	Desk review	KIIs with ILO project staff and ILAB representatives online	KIIs and FGDs with DR MOL state officials in Santiago	KIIs and FDGs with DR MOL state officials and CDL members in Duarte	KIIs with USG officials online	

C. STAKEHOLDER VALIDATION WORKSHOP AGENDA

The lead evaluator hosted an evaluation debrief on September 15, 2023, which was attended by official state representatives from multiple practice areas, including MOL representatives, and civil society members. The debrief was composed of a slide deck featuring the preliminary findings and provided stakeholders with the opportunity to respond to the initial findings and provide feedback and recommendations. The agenda of the evaluation debrief is outlined below:

STAKEHOLDER VALIDATION WORKSHOP AGENDA

- Project Description
- Evaluation Background
- Evaluation Objective
- Fieldwork Approach
- Initial Findings
- Interpretation of Initial Findings

D. TERMS OF REFERENCE, INCLUDING EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND LIMITATIONS

TERMS OF REFERENCE

FINAL PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

"Project to Reduce Child Labor and Improve Working Conditions in Agriculture in the Dominican Republic"
DR FORMITRA

Contents

ACRONYMS LIST

CMEP	Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
CO	Contracting Officer
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DevTech	DevTech Systems Inc.
DMS	DevTech Monitoring System
DOL	Department of Labor
ECC	e-Country Clearance
FFR	Financial Reports
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FOA	Funding Opportunity Announcement
ILAB	Bureau of International Labor Affairs
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITA	International Trade Administration
KAP	Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices
KII	Key Informant Interview
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OCFT	Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OTLA	Office of Trade and Labor Affairs
PADF	Pan-American Development Foundation
PII	Personally Identifiable Information
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
POA	Partners of America
PWS	Performance Work Statement
RDQA	Routine Data Quality Assessment
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TPR	Technical Progress Report
U-FE	Utilization-Focused Evaluation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
USDOL	United States Department of Labor
USG	United States Government
QCP	Quality Control Plan

1. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

The Office of Child Labor, Forced Labor, and Human Trafficking (OCFT) is an office within the Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB), an agency of the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL). ILAB's mission is to strengthen global labor standards, enforce labor commitments among trading partners, promote racial and gender equity, and combat international child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking.

OCFT works to combat child labor, forced labor, and human trafficking around the world through international research, policy engagement, technical cooperation, and awareness-raising. Since OCFT's technical cooperation program began in 1995, the U.S. Congress has appropriated funds annually to USDOL for efforts to combat exploitive child labor internationally. This funding has been used to support technical cooperation projects in more than 90 countries around the world. Technical cooperation projects funded by USDOL support sustained efforts that address child labor and forced labor's underlying causes, including poverty and lack of access to education.

This evaluation approach will be in accordance with USDOL's Evaluation Policy.[12] OCFT is committed to using the most rigorous methods applicable for this performance evaluation and to learning from the evaluation results. The evaluation will be conducted by an independent third party in an ethical manner and safeguard the dignity, rights, safety, and privacy of participants. The quality standards underlying this evaluation are Relevance, Coherence/Alignment (to the extent possible), Effectiveness, Efficiency/Resource Use, and Sustainability.[13] A broader set of evaluative criteria or domains may also be considered depending on the learning objectives for this evaluation, including themes of design, equity, replicability, consequence, and unintended effects, among others.[14] In conducting this evaluation, the evaluator will strive to uphold the American Evaluation Association Guiding Principles for Evaluators.[15] ILAB will make the evaluation report available and accessible on its website.

ILAB has contracted with DevTech under order number 1605C2-23-F-00017 to conduct a performance evaluation of technical assistance for a project in the Dominican Republic. The present terms of reference (TOR) pertain to the final performance evaluation of the "Project to Reduce Child Labor and Improve Working Conditions in Agriculture in the Dominican Republic (DR FORMITRA)." This document serves as the framework and guidelines for this evaluation.

PROJECT CONTEXT

The Dominican Republic faces issues around decent work. Informal work has remained relatively stagnant in the past two decades, with the number of workers employed in

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[12] U.S. Department of Labor Evaluation Policy.

[13] These criteria stem from Better Criteria for Better Evaluation: Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use by the Organization for Economic Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) Network on Development Evaluation. DOL determined these criteria are in accordance with the OMB Guidance M-20-12.

[14] Evaluative Criteria: An Integrated Model of Domains and Sources, American Journal of Evaluation, Rebecca M. Teasdale, 2021, Vol. 42(3) 354-376. The selection of standards is aligned with the evaluation criteria shared by ILAB.

[15] American Evaluation Association's Guiding Principles.

informal conditions sitting at 56.2 percent in 2022.[16] The incidence of informality translates into poor job conditions, with most workers lacking access to quality healthcare, social security, and overall job safety. As a result, in 2020, only 56.3 percent of the population was covered by at least one social protection benefit, and only 40.8 percent of workers were covered in the event of accidents at work.[17]

Child labor is also prevalent in the Dominican Republic. Children are victims of child labor in different sectors, including agriculture and some service and industry subsectors. In 2022, children ages 5 to 14 represented 6.3 percent of the working population in the country, and 9.6 percent of children ages 7 to 14 worked while attending school.[18] Children are also subject to the worst forms of child labor, including commercial sexual exploitation in a thriving touristic industry and human trafficking leading to forced domestic work and commercial exploitation (street vending, begging, and sexual exploitation).[19]

The agricultural sector remains one of the most affected by precarious working conditions. Despite accounting for 8.1 percent of total jobs in the last quarter of 2022, the share of agricultural sector employment from total formal employment was 2.5 percent. In contrast, the share of total informal employment during the same period was 13.6 percent.[20] In comparative terms, the agricultural sector exhibits the second highest incidence of informality, only surpassed by construction, accounting for 84.8 percent of informal employment in 2022, equivalent to over 311,000 workers.[21] This sector also remains the one with the highest presence of child labor, where children who work alongside their parents lack access to schooling and basic services. In fact, child labor rates are nearly double the rate in urban areas.

PROJECT-SPECIFIC INFORMATION

ILAB is committed to supporting the elimination of forced labor and child labor and supports the Government of the Dominican Republic in its responsibilities in this area. To this end, ILAB awarded the FORMITRA project, an initiative designed jointly by the Dominican Republic's Ministry of Labor with technical support from the International Labor Organization (ILO). This project is the focus of this final performance evaluation.

On December 8, 2017, ILAB awarded a USD 5,000,000 grant to ILO to implement DR FORMITRA, originally a four-year (2017–2021) project, to support the Dominican government's efforts to strengthen the capacities of the Ministry of Labor (MOL) for compliance of labor regulations and improve working conditions in the agricultural sector in the Dominican Republic. Through capacity-building activities, FORMITRA supports the strengthening of intra- and inter- institutional coordination and the relationships between labor inspections' Directorate and Ministry directorates. On April 22, 2021, the project was modified to extend the period of performance by 16 months, from August 31, 2021, to December 31, 2022 (Mod 5). On November 10, 2022, the project was modified (Mod 6)

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[16] BCRD, "Labor market statistics: Encuesta Nacional Continua de Fuerza de Trabajo (ENCFT)," Central Bank of the Dominican Republic (BCRD), 2022.

[17] CEPAL, "Databases and statistics publications: Proportion of the population covered by at least one social protection benefit," CEPALSTAT, April 21, 2023

[18] ILAB, "Child labor and forced labor reports: Dominican Republic," ILAB, n.d.

[19] Ibid.

[20] BCRD, "Real economy statistics: National accounts," Central Bank of the Dominican Republic (BCRD), 2022.

[21] Ibid.

to increase the period of performance for an additional one year and increase the budget by USD 150,000. As of July 2023, the project is expected to conclude on December 31, 2023, with a budget ceiling of USD 5,150,000.

The project leverages ILAB's long history of engagement with the government of the Dominican Republic to provide resources to significantly reduce child labor and improve labor law compliance in the agriculture sector. In support of the government's national policies, the project works with the MOL as it seeks **to strengthen its labor inspection system and to improve labor law enforcement and working conditions.**[22]

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF EVALUATION

EVALUATION PURPOSE

DevTech Systems, Inc. was commissioned to conduct an independent final performance evaluation of DR FORMITRA to assess the project's design relevancy and validity, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

The purpose of the final performance evaluation covered under this contract includes, but may not be limited to the following:

1. Assessing if the project has achieved its objectives and outcomes, identifying the challenges encountered in doing so, and analyzing the driving factors for these challenges (with particular attention to equity and inclusion, wherever relevant).

2. Assessing the intended and unintended effects of the project.

3. Assessing lessons learned and emerging practices from the project (e.g., strategies and models of intervention) and experiences in implementation that can be applied in current or future projects in the focus country and in projects designed under similar conditions or target sectors.

4. Assessing which outcomes or outputs can be deemed sustainable.

Additionally, the final performance evaluation will also shed light on the extent to which the midterm evaluation's recommendations were adopted by the project management.

INTENDED USERS

The evaluation will provide ILAB/OCFT, the grantee, participants, and other project stakeholders or actors—who have a concern, interest, and/or influence on working to combat child labor more broadly—an assessment of the project's performance, its effects on project participants, and an understanding of the factors driving the project results. The evaluation results, conclusions, and recommendations will serve to inform stakeholders of any adjustments that may need to be made and to inform stakeholders in the design and implementation of subsequent phases or future labor rights projects as appropriate. The evaluation report will be published on the USDOL website, so the report should be written

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[22] See: Project to Reduce Child Labor and Improve Working Conditions in Agriculture in the Dominican Republic (FORMITRA)

as a standalone document, providing the necessary background information for readers who are unfamiliar with the details of the project.

3. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation questions for the final performance evaluation of FORMITRA aim to assess the performance in terms of the relevancy and coherence of project design, efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability. This final performance evaluation will examine the project's achievements in meeting its objectives, considering factors such as the coherence and relevance of the project's design—including its theories of change within the local environment—efficiency and effectiveness in delivering planned results, identification of unintended effects, and the likelihood of sustained benefits. The evaluation will also assess the extent to which the project applied the lessons learned and recommendations garnered during the midterm evaluation, among other learning activities.

The following evaluation questions, grouped by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) criteria and ILAB learning priorities, will be applied to assess the overall performance of the FORMITRA project:

Relevance and Coherence of Project Design

1. To what extent is the project design, theory of change, and intervention logic relevant to improve working conditions in the agricultural sector of the Dominican Republic?

2. To what extent are the project strategies relevant to the specific needs of project participants, communities, and other key stakeholders?

Effectiveness and Efficiency

3. To what extent is the project making progress toward its planned outcomes and sub- outcomes? What are the key results achieved so far, specifically regarding:

   a) Improving strategic enforcement of labor laws with an emphasis on the agricultural sector by MOL – OTC 1

   b) Improving systems, tools, and instruments adopted by the MOL with an emphasis on the electronic case monitoring system (ECMS) – SO 1.1

   c) Improving knowledge to enforce the legal framework with emphasis on the agricultural sector – SO 1.2

   d) Improving implementation of institutional initiatives related to acceptable conditions of work and child labor by key actors – SO 1.3

   e) Innovative strategies for improving work opportunities, working conditions, and productivity through the pilot program – SO 1.4

4. What are the key internal or external factors that affected the achievement of project outcomes?

5. How effective and efficient are the project's intervention and management strategies? What are the key strengths and weaknesses in project implementation and management? What areas need improvement?

6. To what extent were the midterm evaluation's recommendations adopted by the project management?

7. Does the project's Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (CMEP) provide a valid means to monitor project progress and achievements, and to what extent has the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system been effectively used by the project to inform management decision-making?

8. To what extent is the project contributing toward the USG policy objective of advancing equity for all, including groups who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality?

Sustainability

9. To what extent are the project's plans for sustainability adapted to the local level, national level, and capacity of implementing partners? What steps have been taken to ensure sustainability?

These evaluation questions will provide the structure for the evaluation and be tailored to the specific learning priorities, objectives, expected results, activities, and stakeholders of the project. The evaluation team identifies the data sources it intends to use to answer these questions in Appendix A.

4. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY AND TIMEFRAME

This evaluation should be conducted in the context of criteria and approaches for international development assistance as established by the OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Standard and the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the United Nations System.

The evaluation methodology will consist of the following activities and approaches:

A. APPROACH

The evaluation approach will be qualitative and participatory in nature, utilizing a two-step outcome harvesting methodology infused with the principles of a utilization-focused evaluation (U-FE). Therefore, the extent to which effectiveness and improvement, measured as change between the start end of the program, is subject to the qualitative perceptions of the key informants, the insights from focus group discussions, and observations from data collectors. A U-FE approach ensures that the evaluation is useful to its intended users and that integrating users into the evaluation process generates more relevant findings that are more likely to be used. This approach aligns with evaluation best practices and the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018 and ensures that the findings, conclusions, and recommendations are validated and clearly oriented toward ILAB's learning priorities.

In accordance with the outcome harvesting methodology, the evaluation team will first identify the anticipated and actual outcomes of DR FORMITRA using project indicators, targets, and reported results. The evaluation team will then reconstruct the chain of events

that led to those outcomes by leveraging participatory data collection techniques, including surveys to MOL inspectors involved in the project, semi-structured key informant interviews (KIIs), and focus group discussions (FGDs). These techniques actively involve the subjects of the evaluation in the process, allowing them to elaborate on the details of the outcomes, how and when they were achieved, how they linked to program outputs, why processes unfolded as they did, and lessons learned. This approach empowers stakeholders to share what they perceive to be critical data to yield a more nuanced and comprehensive evaluation. Additionally, the participatory nature of the evaluation will contribute to a sense of ownership among stakeholders and project participants. The KIIs and FGDs will be conducted both in-person during the field visit and remotely through videoconferences or phone calls to guarantee a larger coverage of participants. Outcome harvesting with U-FE principles facilitates the evaluation to:

- Identify which interventions are most effective at producing the desired outcomes.

- Identify which outcomes and, where applicable, which outputs have the greatest likelihood of being sustained after donor funding ends.

- Objectively rate the level of achievement of each of the project's major outcomes on a four-point scale (low, moderate, above moderate, and high).

- As relevant during final evaluations, assess whether the results from the Routine Data Quality Assessment (RDQA) were used by the project to formulate and implement measures to strengthen their data management and reporting system and improve data quality.

- Include evaluator activity to review the CMEP data with the grantee.

The evaluation team will incorporate quantitative data, to the extent that it is available, from the CMEP and project reports into the analysis. The evaluation team will triangulate this data with the qualitative data collected during fieldwork (FDGs, KIIs, and inspector survey). The triangulation will allow the evaluation team to objectively assess the level of achievement of each major outcome on a four-point scale (low, moderate, above moderate, and high). The combination of both quantitative and qualitative data and primary and secondary data sources allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the project's performance and increases the validity and reliability of the evaluation findings by triangulating data sources (discussion of data quality and data validation is included in the Data Analysis section below).

The evaluation approach will be independent in terms of the membership of the evaluation team. Project staff and implementing partners/ILO will only be present at the start of the meetings with stakeholders, communities, and participants to provide introductions and will then exit the room/space where the data collection is taking place to ensure there is no conflict of interest. The following additional principles will be applied during the evaluation process:

1. Methods of data collection and stakeholder perspectives will be triangulated for as many of the evaluation questions as possible.

2. Efforts will be made to include parents' and children's voices, using child-sensitive approaches to interviewing children following the ILO-IPEC guidelines on research with children on the worst forms of child labor[23] and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Principles for Ethical Reporting on Children.[24]

3. Gender and cultural sensitivity will be integrated in the evaluation approach.

4. Consultations will incorporate a degree of flexibility to maintain a sense of ownership of the stakeholders and participants, allowing additional questions to be posed that are not included in the Terms of Reference (TOR) while ensuring that key information requirements are met.

5. As much as possible, a consistent approach will be followed at each project site, with adjustments made for the different actors involved, activities conducted, and the progress of implementation in each locality.

B. EVALUATION TEAM

The evaluation team will consist of:

1. Contract Manager (Senior Program Manager)

2. Lead Evaluator (Senior Technical Component Expert)

3. Local Evaluation Team Member (Senior Technical Component Expert)

4. Data Analyst (Junior Data Analyst)

5. Regional Coordinator (Senior Data Analyst)

6. Local Researcher (Junior Analyst)

The Lead Evaluator will be responsible for conducting the DR FORMITRA final performance evaluation, including managing the local team and preparing and finalizing the country evaluation report. The lead evaluator, with oversight from the DevTech team, will develop the evaluation methodology in consultation with ILAB and project staff; plan and implement data collection, including directly conducting interviews; analyze the evaluation material gathered; and create written and non-written deliverables, such as presenting feedback on the initial results of the evaluation to the stakeholder meeting and preparing the evaluation report. The Contract Manager from DevTech's home office will support the Lead Evaluator by providing administrative support, technical oversight, and logistical support.

DevTech's home office will ensure consistent oversight and quality control throughout the evaluation process, utilizing field-tested knowledge management tools to facilitate cohesive and effective teamwork. Devtech will also manage resources and guide the

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[23] Ethical Considerations When Conducting Research on Children in the Worst Forms of Child Labour (TBP MAP Paper III-02). ISBN 92-2-115165-4. Geneva: December 1, 2003.
[24] UNICEF Principles for Ethical Reporting on Children.

overall implementation of the evaluation, including the development, review, and submission of all deliverables.

The local team will support the data instruments design and lead the data collection and the on-the-ground implementation of the performance evaluation. The local team will also organize and lead an in-person stakeholder workshop at the end of the fieldwork to validate the evaluation findings. The local team will provide substantial contributions to the final evaluation report.

C. DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGY

DOCUMENT REVIEW

In preparation for fieldwork, the evaluation team will conduct an extensive review of relevant project documents, which will serve as the team's foundational understanding of the project under examination, including its objectives, priorities, documented achievements, stakeholders, strengths, and challenges. The team may also request supplementary program documentation as needed, such as deliverables, policies, and strategies, be developed by the project team, either prior to or during the data collection phase.

The desk review allows the evaluation team to construct a preliminary sketch of the chain of events leading to the realization (or lack thereof) of project results. This preliminary understanding will be subsequently verified and expanded upon during fieldwork through KIIs and FGDs. The information collected during the desk review will also contribute to the evaluation's findings, conclusions, and recommendations and inform the refinement of additional data collection protocols by identifying specific areas of discussion for each group of stakeholders.

- Pre-field visit preparation includes an extensive review of relevant documents.

- During fieldwork, documentation will be verified, and additional documents may be collected.

- The evaluation team will also review the RDQA form completed by the grantee. The evaluator will assess whether results from the RDQA were used by the project to formulate and implement measures to strengthen their data management and reporting system and improve data quality. Findings from these reviews will be included in the evaluation report.

- The evaluation team will also review key CMEP outcomes and OCFT standard output indicators with the grantee. This will include reviewing the indicator definitions in the CMEP's Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) and the reported values in the Technical Progress Report (TPR) Annex A to ensure the reporting is accurate and complete.

- The evaluation team will review the following initial list of documents, many of which have already been provided by ILAB:
    - Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA),

- o CMEP documents and data reported in Annex A of the TPR,
- o RDQA form as appropriate,
- o Baseline and endline survey reports or pre-situational analyses,
- o Project document and revisions,
- o Project budget and revisions,
- o Cooperative Agreement and project modifications,
- o Technical Progress and Status Reports,
- o Project Results Frameworks and Monitoring Plans,
- o Work plans,
- o Correspondence related to Technical Progress Reports,
- o Management Procedures and Guidelines,
- o Research or other reports undertaken (knowledge, attitudes, and practices [KAP] studies, etc.), and
- o Project files (including school records) as appropriate.

QUESTION MATRIX

The evaluation design matrix outlines the source of data where the team will collect information for each TOR question and the data collection tools and analysis approach. The matrix will guide the evaluation team's allocation of time in the field, ensure that all possible avenues for data triangulation are explored, and clearly note where evaluation results come from. Please refer to Annex A for the draft evaluation design matrix summarizing the proposed data sources, data collection tools, and analytic approaches informing each of the evaluation criteria.

INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS

The evaluation team will conduct **18 KII, 9 FGDs, and 1 survey for 150 respondents** during the data collection phase with stakeholders in the Dominican Republic and Washington, D.C. and remotely via video e-meetings or phone calls as needed. Excluding the survey respondents, the team estimates it consulted approximately **120 informants.** The team will solicit the opinions of a diverse group of project stakeholders, including staff from ILAB and ILO, project participants, community members, government representatives, and others. Once DevTech receives the final list of stakeholders, the team will prepare a sample of informants to contact through interviews, group discussions, and surveys. The evaluation team will aim for an equal distribution of male and female respondents and will assess the gender balance during the interviews, making specific requests for more gender equality as needed. The evaluation team will gather data from representatives of the organizations below, with the number of KIIs and FGDs and participants for each organization depending on availability. Furthermore, the evaluation team will seek to balance the sample of informants by participant type and geographic area.

Table 1: Data Collection Strategy

Stakeholder Type	Method	Tentative Sample Size*	Potential Respondents
US Government	KII	2 KIIs (3 informants)	USDOL and US Embassy FORMITRA point of contact in the Dominican Republic.
Key host country government entity	KII	7 KIIs (13 informants)	Directors of General Directorate of **Employment** (DGE); Labor Inspection Direction, Mediation Direction, General Directorate of Hygiene and Safety (DGHS); the Directorate of Policies for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor and the Directorate of Equal Opportunities and Non-Discrimination. Also, those responsible for the Department of Judicial Assistance (DAJ) and the Director of Planning & Development from the MOL.
Implementing partner	KII	2 KIIs (5 informants)	ILO country office (representatives: Child Labor specialist, Coordinator, and M&E Officer. Also, ILO Subregional Office Deputy Director and Labor Law Specialist.
Host-country government collaborating institutions	KII	2 KIIs (4 informants)	Representatives from INFOTEP, PROSOLI (Supérate Program), and CONANI.
Ministry of Labor inspectors	FGD and Survey	4 FDGs (40 participants) and 150 in survey	Labor inspectors from DGT (focus groups in San Juan, Duarte, Santo Domingo, Santiago)
Ministry of Labor technical staff	FGD	2 FDGs (20 participants)	Personnel from the General Directorate of Hygiene and Safety (DGHS), the Department of Judicial Assistance, and the Directorate of Policies for the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor (focus groups in Santo Domingo).
CDLs	FGD	2 FDGs (20 participants)	CDL (focus groups in San Juan and Duarte)
Participants of SO1.4 component	FGD	1 FDG (10 participants)	Participants of the pilot program on job insertion for vulnerable families (focus group in Santiago).
Employers' Associations	KII	1 KII (1 informant)	COPARDOM
Workers' organizations	KII	1 KII (3 informants)	Representatives of Confederación Autónoma Sindical Clasista (CASC), National Confederation of Dominican Workers (CNTD), and National Confederation of Trade Unions Unity (CNUS).
Local representatives	KII	3 KIIs (3 informants)	Local representatives in Santiago, Duarte, and San Juan.

Interview Methods

KIIs: The evaluation team will conduct KIIs with stakeholders involved in project implementation. KIIs will be semi-structured interviews that will last 60 minutes or less. The semi-structured format of these interviews will enable respondents to provide verbal accounts of specific moments in time. The retrospective data obtained through KIIs is critical for the outcome harvesting method. KIIs will begin with discussions related to the outcomes reported in program documents, followed by eliciting data from respondents on the specifics of the outcomes, how and when they were achieved, how they relate to program outputs, why the processes unfolded as they did, and any lessons learned.

FGDs: The evaluation team will conduct FGDs with project participants and other relevant stakeholders not directly involved in implementation. These FGDs will be semi-structured interviews with six to eight people, lasting no longer than 90 minutes. The use of FGDs will enable the evaluation team to assess whether the experiences of these stakeholders are consistent with the reported project outcomes and to help verify reported project achievements and the underlying chain of events that led to those achievements, as reconstructed by the evaluation team. FGDs will also help identify additional intended or unintended outcomes, lessons learned, and recommendations. As with KIIs, FGD protocols will follow an outcome harvesting approach, beginning with discussing what is known (i.e., the reported outcomes) and then eliciting elaboration from participants on their experience to better understand the project achievements, processes, and linkages.

The use of the rapid scorecard template provided by ILAB, as outlined in Annex B, will be incorporated into KIIs and FGDs as appropriate. This will serve to enhance the objective of the achievement and sustainability ratings.

Surveys

The evaluation team will also collect data through a survey focused on capturing perceptions from the project stakeholders and participants about the project strategies, approaches, and outcomes. DevTech anticipates reaching around 150 labor inspectors with surveys. These surveys will be self-administered, anonymous, and will be shared using online platforms such as Microsoft Forms. Participants will need to have access to the internet to fill out the forms using their phones, tablets, or PCs.

FIELD VISITS

The evaluation team will visit a selection of project sites to meet with a diverse array of involved stakeholders and participants. Different sites and stakeholders may also have different experiences of how the project experienced successes and/or encountered challenges. Field visits will take place in Santo Domingo, Santiago, Duarte, and San Juan de la Maguana in an effort to represent the north and south part of the country in the discussions.

D. DATA ANALYSIS

The evaluation team will undertake a rigorous analysis of the data gathered through the various sources to assess the performance of activities in relation to the intended results and equity considerations. For the quantitative analysis, the evaluation team will rely on

project monitoring data obtained through desk research. The team will follow a two-stage approach to analyze the project monitoring data. First, the team will compare the most recent (or final, if available) indicator data to the final targets to understand the project's performance to date. Second, the team will examine indicator data at each available reporting interval to establish whether the project was ahead, behind, or on schedule during its implementation. This two-pronged assessment of quantitative data will establish the project's achievements and identify any potential successes or challenges encountered during implementation, which are essential forms of learning for outcome harvesting.

The evaluation team will use thematic coding of KII and FGD transcripts using Dedoose or similar software for the qualitative data analysis. This analysis will guide the understanding of connections between planned and actual project achievements and the chain of events that produced them. This approach, aligned with outcome harvesting methodology, provides a holistic examination of the evaluation criteria while recognizing the dynamic relationship between, for example, project relevance and sustainability. Upon completion of the qualitative coding exercise, the evaluation team will identify the most reported themes across data sources under each evaluation criteria. These majority perspectives will be the focus of the evaluation report, ensuring the reliability and clarity of the information presented. Additional minority codes, which were not reported as frequently but provide valuable insight, may also be included in the evaluation findings.

The evaluation team will then triangulate quantitative data (project monitoring data and survey data) with relevant qualitative data collected during fieldwork and via KIIs and FGDs to compare documented and lived project achievements. This comparison validates similar findings between evaluation activities and across stakeholder groups while also identifying any gaps in evaluation findings. The team will use the information gathered through triangulation to generate summary achievement and sustainability ratings on a four-point scale: low, moderate, above-moderate, and high. Furthermore, the team will conduct an examination of equity in relation to the project's design, implementation, and outcomes for the target participants, with a special focus on underserved populations or historically marginalized groups or communities.

E. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND CONFIDENTIALITY

The evaluation will observe utmost confidentiality related to sensitive information and feedback elicited during KIIs and FGDs. To mitigate bias during the data collection process and ensure maximum freedom of expression of implementing partners, stakeholders, communities, and project participants, implementing partner staff will generally not be present during interviews. However, implementing partner staff may accompany the evaluator to make introductions whenever necessary, facilitate the evaluation process, make respondents feel comfortable, and allow the evaluator to observe the interaction between the implementing partner staff and the interviewees.

The evaluation team will respect the rights and safety of participants in this evaluation. During this study, the evaluation team will take several precautions to ensure the protection of respondents' rights:

- No interview will begin without receipt of informed consent from each respondent.

- The evaluation team will conduct KIIs and FGDs in a confidential setting, so no one else can hear the respondent's answers.

- COVID-19 precautions and social distancing will be implemented during face-to-face interviews and FGDs.

- The evaluation team will be in control of its written notes at all times.

- The evaluation team will transmit data electronically using secure measures.

The evaluation team will talk with respondents to assess their ability to make autonomous decisions and their understanding of informed consent. Participants will understand that they have the right to skip any question with which they are not comfortable or to stop at any time.

F. STAKEHOLDER MEETING

POST-FIELDWORK STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

At the conclusion of field-based data collection, the evaluation team will facilitate a post-fieldwork stakeholder workshop. This workshop will engage in-country stakeholders to validate preliminary emergent findings and discuss key factors surrounding project sustainability. The workshop will include a wide variety of stakeholders and may require translation and interpretation services to ensure stakeholder engagement. The list of participants to be invited will be drafted prior to the evaluator's visit and confirmed in consultation with project staff during fieldwork. ILAB staff may participate in the stakeholder meeting virtually if available. ILAB and project staff may coordinate with relevant US Embassy representatives for their participation as well. The evaluation team will coordinate with the grantee for the stakeholder workshop logistics.

The agenda will be determined by the evaluation team in consultation with project staff and may include specific questions to guide the discussion and a brief written feedback form. The agenda is expected to include some of the following items:

- Presentation by the evaluation team of the preliminary emergent findings.

- Feedback and questions from stakeholders on the results.

- Opportunity for implementing partners not met to present their views on progress and challenges in their locality.

- Discussion of recommendations to promote sustainability.

- Distribution of a feedback form for participants to nominate their "action priorities" for the remainder of the project, if time and context allows.

In addition, the evaluation team will conduct a separate virtual data interpretation session with ILAB following the stakeholder workshop. This session will engage ILAB stakeholders in a brief review of preliminary findings and conclusions, leading to a preliminary discussion of recommendations. The purpose of the session is to ensure that the conclusions resonate with ILAB and that the pursuant recommendations reflect USG resources, requirements, goals, and priorities. The team will gather input from attendees

to refine and prioritize recommendations, which will be included in the draft report. This data interpretation workshop aligns with U-FE best practices and reduces the need for revisions and review by ILAB.

G. LIMITATIONS

The evaluation team recognizes that, as with any research endeavor, factors may affect the ability of the team to gather complete and accurate data and, thus, may impact the validity of the evaluation findings. This section provides an overview of the limitations identified by the evaluation team and discusses the strategies that will be implemented to address or mitigate them. The limitations discussed in this section include time and resource constraints, potential biases, and the scope of the evaluation.

1. **Time constraints.** In-country fieldwork for the evaluation will last approximately two weeks, which may not be sufficient time to visit all project sites and stakeholders.

2. **Selection bias.** Additionally, the stakeholders who agree to participate in the KIIs and FGDs may have a more positive view of the project, which could affect the accuracy of the evaluation findings. To the extent possible and as time and resources allow, the evaluation team will utilize a snowball sampling approach to identify relevant individuals during fieldwork to complement the pre-identified participants of at least 20 KIIs and, thus, diversify the range of stakeholders interviewed.

3. **Recall bias.** Key informants constitute a crucial source to obtain insights around the evaluation questions. But, interview data is prone to cognitive biases, including recall and social desirability. Recall bias is a potential limitation as KII and FGD participants may have difficulty accurately recalling and reporting past events or experiences for a specific period in time, leading to distorted or incomplete information that may affect the validity and reliability of the evaluation results.

4. **Social desirability bias.** This is also a potential limitation, as KII and FGD participants may provide responses that they believe will be viewed favorably by the evaluation team or society, particularly when discussing sensitive topics such as child labor.

To mitigate the potential cognitive bias, the evaluation team will begin each KII and FGD with a protocol that will review the project's objectives, explain the evaluation purpose and how the data will be used, and ensure confidentiality. The evaluation team will also create a comfortable, private, and safe environment for participants to share their thoughts and experiences, explain the purpose and uses of the interview material, and use an anonymous online survey to allow for candid responses without fear of judgment or repercussions.

To ensure the evaluation's validity and reliability, the team will systematically triangulate data across respondent groups as well as data-collection methods, using multiple data sources to identify whether and where there is alignment or divergence in findings to generate actionable conclusions and recommendations. Additionally, the primary data collected will be triangulated with secondary data sources whenever possible.

Finally, **this evaluation is not an impact evaluation**. Therefore, no causality between the

intervention and the outcomes can be established. The evaluation team will make a point of highlighting this when providing **effective** policy-level recommendations. Results for the evaluation will be based on information collected from background documents and insights and perceptions from interviews with stakeholders, such as project staff and project participants. The accuracy of the evaluation results will be determined by the integrity of the information provided to the evaluator from these sources.

Furthermore, the ability of the evaluator to determine **efficiency** will be limited by the amount of financial data available. A **cost-efficiency analysis is not included** because it would require impact data, which is not available.

H. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

DevTech is responsible for accomplishing the following items:

- Providing all evaluation management and logistical support for evaluation deliverables within the timelines specified in the contract and TOR.

- Providing all logistical support for travel associated with the evaluation.

- Providing quality control over all deliverables submitted to ILAB.

- Ensuring the evaluation team conducts the evaluation according to the TOR.

The evaluation team will conduct the evaluation according to the TOR. The evaluation team is responsible for accomplishing the following items:

- Receiving and responding to or incorporating input from the grantees and ILAB on the initial TOR draft.

- Finalizing and submitting the TOR and sharing concurrently with the grantees and ILAB.

- Reviewing project background documents.

- Reviewing the evaluation questions and refining them, as necessary.

- Developing and implementing an evaluation methodology, including document review, KIIs and FGDs, and secondary data analysis, to answer the evaluation questions.

- Conducting planning meetings or calls, including developing a field itinerary, as necessary, with ILAB and grantees.

- Deciding the composition of field visit KII and FGD participants to ensure the objectivity of the evaluation.

- Developing an evaluation question matrix for ILAB.

- Presenting preliminary results verbally to project field staff and other stakeholders as determined in consultation with ILAB and grantees.

- Preparing an initial draft of the evaluation report for ILAB and grantee review.

- Incorporating comments from ILAB and the grantee/other stakeholders into the final report, as appropriate.

- Developing a comment matrix addressing the disposition of all of the comments

provided.

- Preparing and submitting the final report.

ILAB is responsible for the following items:

- Launching the contract.

- Reviewing the TOR, providing input to the evaluation team as necessary, and agreeing on the final draft.

- Providing project background documents to the evaluation team in collaboration with the grantees.

- Obtaining country clearance from the U.S. Embassy in fieldwork country.

- Briefing grantees on the upcoming field visit and working with them to coordinate and prepare for the visit.

- Reviewing and providing comments on the draft evaluation report.

- Approving the final draft of the evaluation report.

- Participating in post-trip debriefing and interviews.

- Including the ILAB evaluation contracting officer's representative (COR) on all communication with the evaluation team.

ILO is responsible for the following items:

- Reviewing the TOR, providing input to the evaluation team as necessary, and agreeing on the final draft.

- Providing project background materials to the evaluation team in collaboration with ILAB.

- Preparing a list of recommended interviewees with feedback on the draft TOR.

- Participating in planning meetings or calls, including developing a field itinerary, as necessary, with ILAB and evaluator.

- Scheduling meetings during the field visit and coordinating all logistical arrangements.

- Helping the evaluation team to identify and arrange for interpreters as needed to facilitate worker interviews.

- Reviewing and providing comments on the draft evaluation reports.

- Organizing, financing, and participating in the stakeholder debriefing meeting.

- Providing in-country ground transportation to meetings and interviews.

- Including the ILAB program office on all written communication with the evaluation team.

I. TIMETABLE

The tentative timetable is as follows. Actual dates may be adjusted as needs arise. Furthermore, data collection will be contingent on coordination with ILO, including the final

submission of project stakeholders and setting up interviews in the field.

Table 2: Timetable

Task	Responsible Party	Date
Evaluation launch call	DOL/ILAB	06/20/2023
Background project documents sent to Contractor	DOL/ILAB	07/11/2023
TOR template submitted to Contractor	DOL/ILAB	06/21/2023
Contractor and Grantee work to develop draft itinerary and stakeholder list	Contractor and Grantee	08/04/2023
Logistics call – discuss logistics and field itinerary	Contractor and Grantee (DOL/ILAB as needed)	TBD
Contractor sends minutes from logistics call	Contractor	TBD
Draft TOR sent to DOL/ILAB and Grantee	Contractor	07/28/2023
DOL/ILAB and Grantee provide comments on draft TOR	DOL/ILAB and Grantee	08/04/2023
Fieldwork budget submitted to DOL/ILAB	Contractor	TBD
Fieldwork budget approved by DOL/ILAB	DOL/ILAB	TBD
Revise and finalize field itinerary, TOR, and stakeholder list based on comments	DOL/ILAB, Contractor, and Grantee	TBD
Cable clearance information submitted to DOL/ILAB, if required	Contractor	TBD
Final TOR submitted to DOL/ILAB for approval	Contractor	08/11/2023
Question matrix submitted to DOL/ILAB for review	Contractor	08/11/2023
Final approval of TOR by DOL/ILAB	DOL/ILAB	08/18/2023
Submit finalized TOR to Grantee	Contractor	08/11/2023
Interview call with DOL/ILAB	Contractor	TBD
Interview call with Grantee HQ staff	Contractor	TBD
Fieldwork/data collection	Contractor	08/21/2023-09/08/2023
Stakeholder Validation Workshop	Contractor	09/15/2023
Post-fieldwork debrief call	Contractor	09/08/2023
Initial draft report for review submitted to ILAB and Grantee	Contractor	10/13/2023

Task	Responsible Party	Date
1st round of review comments due to Contractor	ILAB and Grantee	TBD
Revised report submitted to DOL/ILAB and Grantee	Contractor	TBD
DOL/ILAB and Grantee/key stakeholder comments due to contractor after 2nd round of review	DOL/ILAB and Grantee	TBD
Revised report in redline submitted to DOL/ILAB and Grantee demonstrating how all comments were addressed either via a comment matrix or other format	Contractor	TBD
DOL/ILAB and Grantee provide concurrence that comments were addressed	DOL/ILAB and Grantee	TBD
Final report submitted to DOL/ILAB and Grantee	Contractor	12/15/2023
Final approval of report by DOL/ILAB	DOL/ILAB	TBD
Draft infographic/brief document submitted to DOL/ILAB	Contractor	TBD
DOL/ILAB comments on draft infographic/brief	DOL/ILAB	TBD
Editing and Section 508 compliance by Contractor	Contractor	TBD
Final infographic/brief submitted to DOL/ILAB (508 compliant)	Contractor	2/28/2024
Final approval of infographic/brief by DOL/ILAB (508 compliant)	DOL/ILAB	TBD
Final edited report submitted to COR (508 compliant)	Contractor	TBD
Final edited approved report and infographic/brief shared with grantee (508 compliant)	Contractor	TBD
Learning event for ILAB staff, Grantees and other stakeholders as requested (usually virtual)	Contractor	2/2/2024

5. EXPECTED OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES

5.1 MONTHLY PROGRESS REPORTS

The evaluation team will submit monthly progress reports on the first Monday of every month for the duration of the contract. The reports will be no longer than two pages and will summarize activities undertaken during the reporting period, deliverable status, matters requiring decisions or input, how progress compares to the work plan, any deviations from the work plan, and anticipated activities for the subsequent reporting period. They will also cover potential risks and proposed mitigation strategies, and, if needed, remediation actions. Additionally, throughout the evaluation process, the evaluation team will conduct weekly check-in calls with ILAB (as the team moves from the preparation phase to data collection, these can become bi-weekly check-ins). These calls, lasting no more than 60 minutes, will provide updates and discuss coordination

requirements, anticipated or realized challenges that require special attention, and overall contractual and technical implementation of the evaluation.

5.2 DRAFT AND FINAL TOR

This document presents the draft Terms of Reference, which describe the evaluation timeline, methodological approaches, and main deliverables. The evaluation team will revise the draft TOR to address any feedback provided by ILAB and ILO, ensuring that the TOR is finalized and approved by ILAB prior to data collection. The evaluation team will submit the final TOR within five business days of receiving ILAB's feedback.

5.3 DRAFT EVALUATION REPORT AND INFOGRAPHIC

Within four weeks of completion of fieldwork, a first draft evaluation report will be submitted to the COR. The report will have the following structure and content:

1. Table of Contents

2. List of Acronyms

3. Executive Summary (no more than **five pages** providing an overview of the evaluation, summary of main results/lessons learned/emerging good practices, and key recommendations)

4. Evaluation Objectives and Methodology

5. Project Description

6. Evaluation Results (facts and supporting evidence, including answers to evaluation questions)

    a. The results section includes the facts, analysis, and supporting evidence. The results section of the evaluation report should address the evaluation questions. It does not have to be in a question-response format but should be responsive to each evaluation question.

7. Lessons Learned and Emerging Good Practices

8. Conclusions – interpretation of the facts, including criteria for judgments

9. Key Recommendations – critical for successfully meeting project objectives and/or judgments on what changes need to be made for sustainability or future programming

10. Annexes

    a. List of documents reviewed.

    b. Interviews (including list of stakeholder groups; without PII in web version)/meetings/site visits.

    c. Stakeholder workshop agenda and participants.

    d. TOR, evaluation methodology, and limitations.

    e. Summary of recommendations (citing page numbers for evidence in the body of the report, listing out the supporting evidence for each recommendation, and identifying party that the recommendation is directed

toward.)

The key recommendations will be **action-oriented and implementable.** The recommendations will be clearly linked to results and directed to a specific party to be implemented. It is preferable for the report to contain no more than 10 recommendations, but other suggestions may be incorporated in the report in other ways.

The total length of the report should be approximately 30 pages, excluding the executive summary and annexes. The first draft of the report will be circulated to ILAB/OCFT and the grantee individually for their review. Following a two-week review period and within 14 calendar days of receiving ILAB and grantee feedback on the draft report, the evaluation team will incorporate comments from OCFT and the grantee/other key stakeholders into the final reports as appropriate, and the evaluator will provide a response, in the form of a comment matrix, as to why any comments might not have been incorporated. The evaluation team will ensure that the final report is ILAB-compliant and of high quality and completeness.

While the substantive content of the results, conclusions, and recommendations of the report will be determined by the evaluation team, the report is subject to final approval by ILAB in terms of whether or not the report meets the conditions of the TOR. DevTech expects to receive feedback within two weeks of submission of the first draft of the report. The evaluation team will address and incorporate feedback received from ILAB, ILO, and any other stakeholder and submit a revised version for approval.

The electronic submissions of any deliverables intended for publication, including the evaluation report and infographics (1 to 3 pages—additional deliverable), or other communication products will include two versions: one version, including personally identifiable information (PII) that is not Section-508 compliant, and a second version for publication that is Section-508 compliant and does not include PII such as names and/or titles of individuals interviewed.

5.4 FINAL EVALUATION BRIEFING AND PRESENTATION

In addition to the written evaluation products, the evaluation team will also develop and present a summary PowerPoint presentation recapping the key findings and recommendations. The intended audience for the presentation includes ILAB and other key stakeholders, as appropriate.

ANNEX A: EVALUATION DESIGN MATRIX

Evaluation Criteria / Question	Data Source	Data Collection Tools	Analysis Approach
Relevance and Coherence of Project Design 1. To what extent is the project design, theory of change, and intervention logic relevant to improve working conditions in the agricultural sector of the Dominican Republic? 2. To what extent are the project strategies relevant to the specific needs of project participants, communities, and other key stakeholders?	Reports and resources generated by the project, including design documents, progress reports, research, and other documents as identified. Stakeholders from ILAB/OCFT, grantee, government/workers, and employers' unions.	**Desk review** of project documents. **KIIs** with ILAB/OCFT, grantee and partners. **FGDs** with participant groups.	Conduct comparative assessment of stated project objectives against the needs and priorities of the multistakeholder community to identify alignment and/or gaps. Assess to what extent MOL units, in particular the directions involved in inspection activities and health and safety at work, improved their knowledge to conduct supervisory work compared to prior the intervention took place. Identify the unique needs of vulnerable populations and to what extent the project was responsive to them. Identify changes in stakeholder priorities during implementation and assess how the project adapted to those changes.
3. To what extent is the project making progress toward its planned outcomes and sub-outcomes? What are the key results achieved so far, specifically regarding: a) Improving strategic enforcement of labor laws with an emphasis in the agricultural sector by MOL – OTC 1 b) Improving systems, tools, and instruments	Reports generated by the project, including Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, periodic reports, and briefs. Stakeholders from ILAB/OCFT, grantee,	**Desk review** of project documents. **KIIs** with ILAB/OCFT, grantee and partners. **FGDs** with participant groups.	Assess KII/FGD results to examine if the chain of events associated with the project led to expected outcomes, distinguishing factor directly linked with project activities. Identity recommendations derived from midterm evaluation and cross-validate them with implementing team and with the MOL to determine their adoption level.

Evaluation Criteria / Question	Data Source	Data Collection Tools	Analysis Approach
adopted by the MOL with an emphasis on the electronic case monitoring system (ECMS) – SO 1.1 c) Improving knowledge to enforce the legal framework with emphasis on the agricultural sector – SO 1.2 d) Improving implementation of institutional initiatives related to acceptable conditions of work and child labor by key actors – SO 1.3 e) Innovative strategies for improving work opportunities, working conditions and productivity through the pilot program – SO 1.4 4. What are the key internal or external factors that affected the achievement of project outcomes? 5. How effective and efficient are the project's intervention and management strategies? What are the key strengths and weaknesses in project implementation and management? What areas need improvement? 6. To what extent were the midterm evaluation's recommendations adopted by the project management? 7. Does the project's Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (CMEP) provide a valid means to monitor project progress and achievements, and to what extent has the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system been effectively used by the project to inform management decision-making?	government/union/ regional groups.		Conduct revision of CMEP against project objectives and consultation with project stakeholders to determine to what extent M&E tools were used to communicate project status. Evaluate equity level in terms of pilot program participation of SMEs owners for capacity building and of vulnerable agricultural families to promote job insertion. Comparative assessment of performance indicator targets against reported achievements. Assess thematically coded KII/FGD transcripts to determine what results were intended, how activities were implemented compared to what was planned, why any deviations from the initial plan occurred and what was achieved.

Evaluation Criteria / Question	Data Source	Data Collection Tools	Analysis Approach
8. To what extent is the project contributing toward the USG policy objective of advancing equity for all, including groups who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality?			
Sustainability 9. To what extent are the project's plans for sustainability adapted to the local level, national level, and capacity of implementing partners? What steps have been taken to ensure sustainability?	Project documents, including the Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, periodic reports, work plans, and other briefs. Stakeholders from ILAB/OCFT, grantee, government/union/ regional groups.	**Desk review** of project documents and project performance indicator data from the CMEP. **KIIs** with ILAB/OCFT, grantee and partners. **FGDs** with participant groups.	Assess thematically coded KII/FGD transcripts to determine perceived benefits of activities by participant groups, appropriation of project results, alignment with their future priorities and willingness and concrete actions developed to continue enforcing positive practices acquired during the project.

ANNEX B: INFORMED CONSENT AGREEMENT – KII/FGD

The evaluation team will review this form in detail with all informants before the interview and be sure that they understand it clearly before obtaining their signature. If the informant is illiterate or expresses discomfort signing the form but verbally consents to proceeding with the interview, the evaluator may sign the form to indicate that they received verbal consent.

Thank you for taking the time to talk to me. My name is [INSERT NAME]. With me, is my colleague [INSERT NAME], who will also participate in today's discussion by asking questions and taking notes. We are from DevTech Systems Inc., a U.S.-based international development advisory firm.

DevTech was contracted by ILAB to conduct a final performance evaluation of the ILAB-funded project FORMITRA in the Dominican Republic. The DR FORMITRA Project, initiated in 2017, sought to support the Dominican government's efforts to combat child labor and strengthen labor law enforcement while helping businesses prevent, detect, and eliminate labor abuses in the agriculture sector. The project, implemented in the agriculture sector, provided technical assistance to stakeholders to implement activities related to the mitigation of child labor. The project activities which aimed to combat child labor included designing a training program for labor inspectors to strengthen their labor inspection by increasing their knowledge on labor regulations, fundamental labor rights, safety, and health at work, and investigative techniques; raising public awareness about child labor through various channels; designing a multi-module training program on child labor for government officials.

For this final evaluation, I would like to ask you questions related to your expertise and experience of the project's implementation.

This interview will last approximately one hour (1h). In the evaluation report, your name will not be mentioned except in an annex in a list of people consulted and this list will only be shared with the donor, ILAB. The evaluation team will make every effort to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of our discussion and hope you will feel comfortable providing honest feedback on your experiences and points of view. Participation is voluntary; also, you may decline to respond to our questions or end the interview at any time. Do you have any questions?

Can we start now?

□ Yes

□ No

ANNEX C: RIGHT TO USE

United States Department of Labor

Right to Use

I, _____, grant to the United States Department of Labor (including any of its officers, employees, and contractors), the right to use and publish photographic likenesses or pictures of me (or my child), as well as any attached document and any information contained within the document. I (or my child) may be included in the photographic likenesses or pictures in whole or in part, in conjunction with my own name (or my child's name), or reproductions thereof, made through any medium, including Internet, for the purpose of use, dissemination of, and related to USDOL publications.

I waive any right that I may have to inspect or approve the finished product or the advertising or other copy, or the above-referenced use of the portraits or photographic likenesses of pictures of me (or my child) and attached document and any information contained within the document.

Dated_____, 20____

_____

Signature or

Parent/guardian if under 18

_____

Name Printed

_____

_____

_____

Address and phone number

Identifier (color of shirt, etc.): _____

E.   LIST OF MIDTERM EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS[25]

1	2	3	4	5
Recommendation number	Recommendations	Action plan	If the recommendation is to be acted upon, what actions will be taken?	Status of Follow-up Actions
1 (page 73)	ILO and the MOL reach agreements on the following topics: a) the project activities that must continue or start in the next 4 to 5 months; b) the scope of the products that are relevant to specify for the achievement of the result and objective of the Project but the progress of which up to now is practically nil; c) updating the work plan, identifying those activities and products that will not be able to be carried out during the execution period of the Project; and d) the roles to be played during the remainder of the Project. Regarding the first point, it is suggested that the activities be those a) that are more closely linked to the fulfillment of the result and objective of the Project, b) the performance of which is a requirement to carry out other activities of the Project, c) in which there is already an agreement between the MOL and the ILO on its scope, and/or d) which are of significant relative importance in budgetary terms. The evaluation considers that the activities that meet these requirements are: • In the first intermediate result, the harmonization and integration in a single compendium of the Inspection Manual with the action protocols of other areas/directorates/departments of the MOL; the start of the design of the new SEMC; and the update of the SICET.	**FIRST POINT: Activities that must continue or start in the next 3 months:** **RI1)** Inspection Manual: completed; development of new SEMC (SICIT) completed, acquisition and deployment of equipment in HQ and 16 local representations in project provinces. **RI2)** Both inspection and child labor training programs developed, being prepared to be of permanent access through virtualization. Module of the child labor training program regarding articulated works against child labor is the foundation for designing the DAR-CE method. **RI3)** The MOL implemented its own dissemination strategy for materials of both developed campaigns. Strengthening the CDL: Workshops for developing work plans at the local level for provinces Santiago and Duarte. Strengthening of the inter-union Committee: representatives of the 3 workers' associations participated in the "Online Course for International Year of	Dialogue with the MOL continued in 3 ways: at a strategic level by leads of both institutions; regular meetings with the MOL focal point to monitor the progress of activities, budget, and indicators; and with Vice Ministers and heads of Directorates to coordinate the implementation of activities directly. After obtaining approval for project extension and validation with MOL officers on a continuous basis, it was expected that the project would be implemented in full in the available time. However, three (3) activities were not implemented due to changes in MOL priorities: A**1.1.2.5**, A**1.3.3.2.b** and A**1.4.1.4**. **FIRST POINT: Activities that must continue or start in the next 3 months:** All activities were implemented as planned. **SECOND POINT: Products with practically zero advance**. The strengthening of DGHSI through the development of a proposal for the	achieved

1	2	3	4	5
Recommendation number	Recommendations	Action plan	If the recommendation is to be acted upon, what actions will be taken?	Status of Follow-up Actions
	• In the second intermediate result, the development of training programs on labor regulations aimed at labor inspectors and on child labor aimed at officials of the MOL and other socio-labor actors. It is important that these programs include strategies and instruments to measure the learning of those who receive it, such as entry/exit tests and, better still, medium-term monitoring of individual changes generated in professional performance (at the level of skills and attitudes). • In the third intermediate result, the implementation of the campaign "Throw your dart against child labor," the strengthening of the CDL and the Inter-Union Committee to Fight Child Labor, and the development of strategic alliances with employers, workers, and other institutions. • In the fourth intermediate result, the mapping of the supply and demand of employment and technical training in the three provinces where the pilot program of job insertion for vulnerable families will be carried out, and the online implementation of Module 3 SCORE in companies. Regarding the second point, the products that are relevant for the achievement of the result and objective, but that until now have had practically no progress are: a) development of the Institutional Statistical System and b) strengthening of the DGHS. The delimitation of the scope of these products must mainly take into account the deadlines and available budget. Regarding the third point, as a result of the update of the work plan and the identification of the activities and products that will not be able to materialize in the Project execution period, an extension of the term would be officially requested from USDOL, specifying the suggested	Child Labor," held by ITC-ILO. Other constituents and one staff from the project team also participated. As a request from trade unions, a CAP study on perceptions of members of workers organizations was developed, and as a consequence, a document with guidelines for ongoing awareness raising and prevention of child labor was developed, and multipliers trained. **RI4)** Mapping of supply and demand for employment and technical training: Reports for 3 labor market studies for the provinces San Juan, Santiago, and Duarte finalized. 431 participants trained for the Labor Insertion Pilot. Module 3 of the SCORE methodology is fully implemented virtually. **SECOND POINT: Products with practically zero advance**. Development of the Institutional Statistical System for the MOL: After numerous meetings of analysis of the feasibility of this output, first it was declared NON-VIABLE in the time available. After donor and beneficiary agreed on conducting the first 2 steps: Diagnosis and design of the Administrative Register System of the MOL. Strengthening of the DGHSI: in coordination with the Directorate, an	National Policy of Health and Security at work, a vision-setting process for the DGHSI, and the training of DGHSI analysts have all been completed. With regards to the Development of the Institutional Statistical System for the MOL, it was substituted for the diagnosis and design of a new Administrative Register System, which was also completed. **THIRD POINT:** Work plan updated accordingly. **FOURTH POINT:** The roles of the constituents and the ILO are reinforced constantly in regular communication and coordinated actions. Communication continued to be intensive at all levels between MOL and ILO (SJO direction, specialists, project), especially toward project closure, with apparent improvement in understanding and joint work.	

1	2	3	4	5
Recommendation number	Recommendations	Action plan	If the recommendation is to be acted upon, what actions will be taken?	Status of Follow-up Actions
	period and what activities and products would be carried out or concluded during said extension. Regarding the fourth point, the evaluation considers that the role of ILO is to be the executor of the Project and provider of technical assistance to the constituents; the role of the MOL is to be the beneficiary and main partner of the Project; and the role of the employers and workers is to be sources of consultation and also as participants in some outputs and the third intermediate result. The recent change of administration in the country has brought about changes in the MOL at the Minister and Vice Minister level and, in this sense, the evaluation considers it a good opportunity for ILO and the MOL to meet formally to discuss and reach agreements on the points mentioned in this recommendation or others that they deem relevant.	update of the Guidelines for using chemical products in agriculture and training Mixed Committees of enterprises in all project provinces was carried out. **THIRD POINT:** Work plan update: Work plan updated in line with approved project extension until December 2023. **FOURTH POINT**: Regarding the roles of the constituents and the ILO, the project staff is in permanent communication with MOL Directors, and Vice Ministers involved in the project and with other constituents. Coordination activities are set up to reinforce the role of each stakeholder.		
2 (page 75)	Use the CMEP as a monitoring and management tool, for which in addition to collecting and validating the information on the values of the product indicators, it is necessary to calculate the baseline value of the indicators of the first three intermediate results. Likewise, it is suggested to carry out the CAP Study of different actors on CL and adolescents in the agricultural sector in the provinces in which the Project intervenes or, alternatively, a study that measures the impact of the campaign "Throw your dart against child labor." Although these studies are not explicitly linked to any of the indicators contemplated in the CMEP, they would be very useful to measure awareness and information initiatives on the prevention and eradication of child labor that the Project is carrying out and to fine-tune the contents and strategies of the ones planned for next year.	The implementation of the CMEP is running. All indicators requiring baseline values have been measured. The Pre-Situational Analysis and KAP on child labor studies are both completed. Since the MOL has requested to manage the implementation of the campaign "Throw your dart against child labor," an impact assessment will not be conducted.	With the development of studies, the project has significant input to help refine project strategies and support the decision-making process. The CMEP document is currently being revised in order to make necessary minor adjustments (basically a narrative of the results framework and indicators) to better reflect the reality of project implementation based on learnings from practical experience. To comply with both ILO procedures and donor request, a participatory Sustainability Plan and a set of project communicational products were	achieved

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			developed based on information on project's main deliverables.	
3 (page 75)	Regarding the strengthening of the Inter-Union Committee to Fight Child Labor (result 1.3), it is recommended: a) to train the representatives of the trade union associations and farming organizations in the prevention and eradication of child labor: human rights, youth, migration, social security, ILO Conventions 138 and 182, Sustainable Development Goals and government commitments; b) increase their capacities to prepare project proposals and access financing sources; and c) support them with the use of social networks and the creation of web pages, so that they are able to carry out awareness-raising campaigns directed at workers.	From the beginning of the project, meetings with representatives of the Inter-Union Committee have been held to identify concrete actions for its strengthening, and 2 trainings addressing the issues identified have already been implemented. A document was prepared with details on their demands for strengthening and how they visualize their implementation.	A study on the perception of trade union members on child labor was finalized and presented to the workers' organizations. Results showed opportunities for improvement regarding awareness among leaders and associates of workers organizations. Request for support to provide awareness raising-materials and a facilitation guide to implement it was fulfilled.	achieved
4 (page 75)	Establish alliances with other institutions to generate greater effectiveness and efficiency in the intervention of the Project in the prevention and eradication of child labor (result 1.3) and carrying out the pilot program for the job insertion of vulnerable families (result 1.4). Regarding child labor prevention and eradication actions, it is suggested to establish alliances with PROSOLI, with other public institutions linked to the agriculture and education sectors, employers' organizations, and international cooperation institutions such as UNDP or UNICEF.\n\nRegarding the pilot program for job insertion, it is recommended to establish strategic alliances with INFOTEP and PROSOLI to: a) participate in the intervention as providers of technical training and/or in the identification of participants (in the case of PROSOLI, through SIUBEN); b) that they share good practices and lessons learned from similar experiences (such as that of "Progresando Unidos" in the case of PROSOLI); and c) given the possibility that the training is semi-face-to-face and that the vulnerable population does not have the	In coordination with the MOL, the project promotes the creation of strategic alliances with entities such as PROSOLI, INFOTEP, and others, in order to enhance the actions established in the project, as well as within the framework of the CDN to carry out actions for the prevention and eradication of child labor.\n\nThe project will explore opportunities for coordination with other international cooperation entities, as recommended by the Evaluation.\n\nRegarding the pilot for labor Insertion, the project has suggested alliances with Supérate (former PROSOLI) and INFOTEP, in coordination with the MOL for its implementation. On the other hand, the project is aware of Supérate's interest in	From both the design and implementation of the project, the formation of alliances to enhance the scope of actions, specifically on issues related to the Prevention and Eradication of Child Labor, given its multidimensionality and the variety of actors involved and also to reinforce sustainability, has been understood as a crucial point.\n\nOne inter-institutional agreement was signed between the MOL and the municipalities to promote joint actions for the prevention of child labor and rescue of children in child labor. There is interest from the MOL to continue expanding the scope of the agreement to include other entities, such as the Federation of Municipal Districts	achieved

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	appropriate virtual infrastructure available (PC, electricity, internet access, speed of connection), evaluate the possibility of taking advantage of their facilities and virtual infrastructure at the national level.	participating due to its experience in similar initiatives.	(FEDODIM) and COPARDOM, among others. With regards to the DAR-CE method, it is a collaborative effort from MOL, Supérate, and CONANI. A new agreement is not necessary because there is a framework agreement between MOL and CONANI, and in practice, all 3 institutions are fully engaged and empowered to implement the method in a coordinated manner. After project support ceased, all 3 institutions continued with their commitment to implement the methodology. To date, we have been informed that DAR-CE workshops were conducted in 8 provinces without project support.	
5 (page 76)	For a better response to the context of the pandemic, it is suggested that the training actions or other activities carried out by the Project virtually with the inspectors or other officials of the MOL and other institutions take into account (insofar as schedules, duration, methodology) the need of these people, especially women, to reconcile household responsibilities with their active participation in these training actions. Likewise, it is suggested: a) to adjust the content of the training for inspectors and analysts of the DGHS in relation to OSH, taking into account the protocols that apply in the current context of the pandemic; b) training for DGHS analysts and product 1.2.2 activities may place emphasis not only on the agricultural sector but on others such as textiles or tourism; c) the Child Labor Training Program for CDL prioritizes the provinces selected by the Project that have been most affected by COVID 19; d) the supply and demand mappings necessary for the pilot	Due to the pandemic, all training activities, and meetings within the framework of the project (including consultancies and administrative processes) from the period March 2020 to May 2021 were carried out virtually. a) Since May 2021, the MOL has approved the implementation of face-to-face activities, including meetings and trainings. In this regard, some activities have been implemented taking into account the COVID context and the protocols approved by the country. b) Training to DGHSI analysts included the agricultural sector, including a visit	Response to the COVID context has been considered in various initiatives implemented by the project. Some trainings were provided virtually during lockdown, but the project has resumed in-person implementation of trainings, while all health and safety COVID-related measures continue to be rigorously applied. All 3 labor market studies have been finalized, including requested identification of opportunities generated by COVID in the provinces analyzed.	achieved

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	program of employability, to identify sectors with potential for rapid growth in the context of a pandemic; and e) to adjust the Module 5 of SCORE (OSH) for when it is implemented again in companies, after the end of the Project.	to a rice farm in the province Monseñor Nouel. c) In the framework of the project, among the 11 target provinces, there are some which have been most affected by COVID-19. d) The contents and scope of the mappings were redefined with the MOL in light of the current context. e) The SCORE methodology. The ILO is coordinating to identify if module 5 of the SCORE has been adapted to protect it from COVID-19.	The trainings for DGHSI Mixed Committees of Enterprises were implemented in April 2022. Module 5 of SCORE was implemented as originally designed. However, ILO introduced specific modules such as "Covid-19 Safety & Health at Work" and "Covid-19 Business Continuity Planning," as well as a number of events to interchange experiences in delivering and training during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.	
6 (page 76)	Implement the following measures aimed at incorporating the gender equality and non-discrimination approach in the Project: a) establishing strategies aimed at reversing the main vulnerability factors of girls and adolescent women to child labor; b) in the implementation of the campaign "Throw your dart against Child Labor" and in carrying out other activities of the third intermediate result, consider the key role that adult women can play in the prevention and eradication of child labor, especially mothers of families where child labor exists or are at risk of child labor; c) in the pilot program for job insertion, incorporate strategies that address the main restrictions faced by women in obtaining and keeping employment, specifically those linked to being almost the only ones responsible for domestic tasks and caring for household members; and d) carry out training actions on the incorporation of the gender approach, aimed at the Project team. Regarding the first and third suggested measures, it may imply previously carrying out studies to identify the	The recommendations of the Midterm Evaluation are relevant to the project, and their implementation is considered as follows: a) In the labor insertion pilot, a quota for female heads of household and youth participants of the training has been established. The project will be addressing strategies to consider the particular needs of this population and facilitate their insertion into the labor market, to be implemented during the design of the trainings, scheduled after the studies on the needs of the labor market in the 3 selected provinces. b) In relation to the campaign, it is considered an adaptation to highlight the key role of adult women in the	This recommendation is considered relevant since the incorporation of more gender-specific actions will improve the project's approach to a more comprehensive and inclusive one, which will also contribute to sustainability. Gender issues included in the mentioned initiatives: a) and c) During the identification and recruitment of participants in the labor insertion pilot, and specifically because around 80% were women, the MOL took note to provide support to link participants in need to existing social services, especially regarding childcare.	achieved

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	vulnerability factors of female girls and adolescents, as well as the main restrictions that women face to enter the labor market, with emphasis on the economy of home care. Both issues are even more relevant in a pandemic context since some families (especially the most vulnerable) will turn to their minor children to work and, thus, try to reverse the situation of job losses and income reductions. Regarding the home care economy, because due to the closing of schools and other care facilities as a result of the pandemic, the workload for mothers within the home has increased.	prevention and elimination of child labor, to be implemented during the execution of the campaign in the media, scheduled for the first semester of 2022. c) It will be timely considered during the design of the strategy to implement the labor insertion pilot, specifically during the design phase of the training in response to the needs of the labor market (it is related to section a) of this recommendation), scheduled to take place within the second trimester of 2022. d) Training on gender issues has been proposed to be included in ILO staff individual capacity development plans for the years 2022 and 2023.	b) The campaign continues to be implemented by the MOL, specifically products regarding dissemination of awareness raising and educational and promotional materials.	