

# Thematic Performance Evaluation of ILAB-supported Labor Administration Electronic Case Management Systems (ECMS) in Seven Countries

Sistemas, Familia y Sociedad Ltd. (SFS) | Contract Number: 47QRAA20D0045 | Task Order: 1605C2-20-F-00026

## Background

A thematic performance evaluation of the Electronic Case Management System components of OTLA and OCFT-funded projects was conducted by Sandra Wark and Ernesto Olivares in 7 countries: Colombia, Honduras, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam. Data collection for this evaluation was carried out between January and March 2021.

All projects collaborated with national labor administrations (LA) to develop and/or improve ECMS for the operation and management of labor inspection cases.

## Key Findings

### General Appraisal

Most project supported ECMS are evolving in ways likely to increase the tools' usefulness to strengthen the labor inspectorate's effectiveness and efficiency.



### ECMS Status per Project/ Country

At the time of the evaluation, four projects (Colombia, Peru, the Philippines, Sri Lanka) were closed and three (Honduras, Paraguay, Vietnam) were still ongoing.

**3 OUT OF 4** ECMS in closed projects are still functioning (Colombia, Peru, the Philippines). In Sri Lanka, the labor administration (LA) reported plans to redevelop a new system.

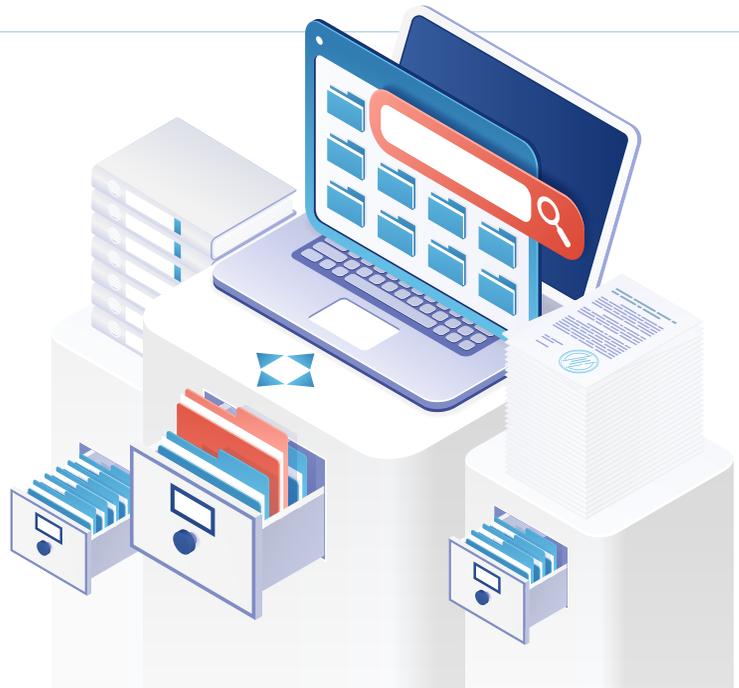
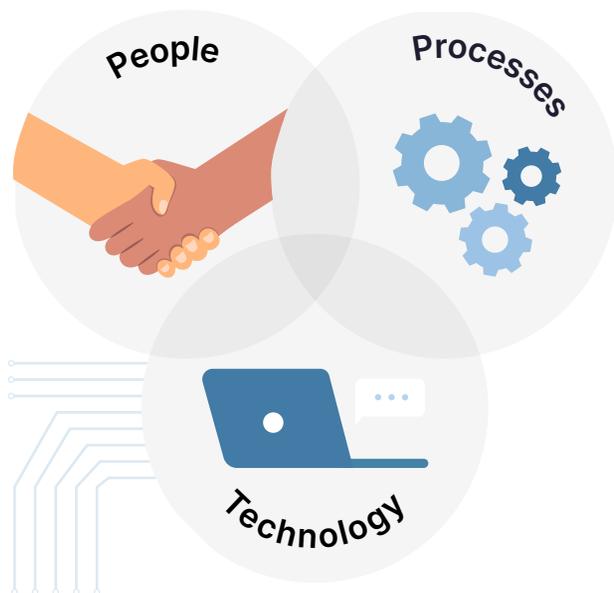
**2 OUT OF 3** ECMS (Honduras, Vietnam) in the active projects are working on software development and have not yet reached the critical deployment phase. ECMS is in an early deployment stage in Paraguay.

### Implementing Agencies

International Labor Organization (Colombia, The Philippines, Sri Lanka, Vietnam); World Vision International (Honduras); Partners of the Americas (Paraguay); PLADES / Programa Laboral de Desarrollo (Peru)

## ECMS Thematic Evaluation Conceptual Framework

Successful initiatives to improve organizational effectiveness and efficiency in IT driven transformation projects, need to balance and align three dimensions of organizational change (people, processes, technology or PPT model) as per below. (\*)



### ✔ People

Extent intended users have received adequate support, training and have adopted the ECMS

### ✔ Technology

Extent software is fully developed, the number of types of features, level of adaption to ICT enabling environment

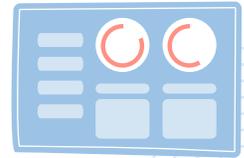
### ✔ Processes

Extent software has been adapted to labor administrations procedures and legal framework

(\*) The PPT model grew out of Harold Leavitt's diamond organizational model. It is often applied in the field of organizational transformation. Learn more: [www.smartsheet.com/content/people-process-technology](http://www.smartsheet.com/content/people-process-technology)

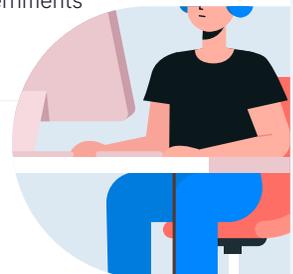
## ✓ Related to **TECHNOLOGY (infrastructure, software, users' access)**

ACHIEVEMENTS	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In most cases technical support has led to improved ECMS designs that take in account institutional needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Meeting labor administration (LA) requirements for ECMS has largely been a process of trial and error: LA were not able to anticipate their needs in the early design phase.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to basic Information Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure by system users is improving in all four countries with mature systems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absence of adequate IT infrastructure (hardware, Internet access and bandwidth), especially in sub-national field offices.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some countries (Colombia, Philippines) are upgrading the servers, increasing bandwidth, and improving server maintenance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Slow data upload speed and system downtime constrain system acceptance, especially among labor inspectors (LI).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ECMS are evolving from being used mainly as tools to upload and store inspection data to systems that automate labor inspection and labor violation case management processes (follow up, sanctioning, administrative tasks).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limitations in grantee and LA's IT expertise and time led to extensive outsourcing of ECMS implementation (software development, deployment and change management strategies).</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a potential demand among LA for using ECMS to achieve intervention outcomes such as more data-driven decision making, more effective enforcement of labor laws and greater transparency, including sharing data between public sector and other information systems.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lack of effective oversight, design errors and delays due to the software development team's lack of subject-matter expertise, as well as difficulties in getting adequate input or cooperation from labor administration stakeholders</li> </ul>



## ✓ Related to **PEOPLE: Extent of System Adoption by Users**

ACHIEVEMENTS	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implementation of strategies to foster labor inspector acceptance in several countries, such as: Involving LI in initial consultations, IT literacy and user training programs, user support through peer-to-peer and helpdesk mechanisms, and targeted communication activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inspectors' reluctance was a major challenge for ECMS adoption in several countries. Inspector's workload, inadequate user training and technical glitches influenced inspectors' reluctance to adopt ECMS. Many projects underestimated the need for well thought change management strategies</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Project strategies to involve higher level decision-makers were generally effective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Several systemic issues beyond projects' responsibility challenged ECMS implementation, such as: LI's resistance to stronger oversight and increased accountability, limited number of adequately trained and motivated inspectors, corruption, LA limited power to impose sanctions, governments' slow progress improving LI's status and working conditions, lack of political will to enforce compliance.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Other successful strategies included:                             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requiring labor inspectors to use ECMS through administrative orders or including the requirement in job descriptions</li> <li>Tracking labor administration key performance indicators in ECMS reports and dashboards</li> <li>Using incentives to reward inspectors or inspection units that meet their targets</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some grantees' advocacy and support for broader labor administration reforms created opportunities for dialogue on needed changes.</li> </ul>



## ✓ Related to **PROCESSES:**

### Extent ECMS adapted to Labor Administration's legal and procedural frameworks

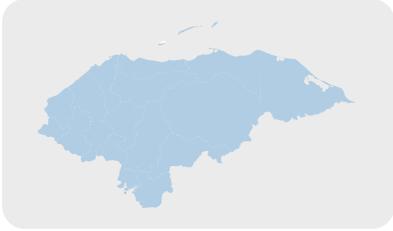


ACHIEVEMENTS	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Projects implemented largely effective strategies to align ECMS with laws, regulations, and LA practices and workflows in the seven evaluation countries.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absent or nonstandard processes in LA led contractors not only to align but also to standardize the procedures by themselves.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ECMS implementation offered opportunities to improve inspection processes in the countries while reflecting the actual practices in the same.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Broader technical assistance on labor administration reforms was needed to complement the ECMS intervention.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ECMS stakeholders in countries with mature systems noted the ECMS was contributing effectively to greater consistency in labor inspection processes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In most evaluation countries, legal frameworks are not yet fully adapted to digitalization (e.g., paper-based systems are still used in parallel in some countries).</li> </ul>

# ECMS Outcomes on Labor Administration Decision-making, Labor Violation Case Management, Enforcement of Sanctions, and Transparency

			
<p><b>LABOR ADMINISTRATION DECISION MAKING</b></p>	<p><b>LABOR VIOLATION CASE MANAGEMENT</b></p>	<p><b>ENFORCEMENT OF SANCTIONS</b></p>	<p><b>PROMOTION OF TRANSPARENCY</b></p>
<p>Except for Peru and Philippines, the practice of using data to drive labor administration planning and policy decisions was still in its early stages in most of the countries.</p>	<p>Despite ECMS effects in improving case management efficiency, in most countries it is political will and not data which often drives LA decisions.</p>	<p>Prosecuting cases and imposing sanctions are negatively affected by a limited number of labor personnel with legal expertise as well as limitations in labor court and other dispute resolution mechanisms.</p>	<p>LA in most countries look forward to sharing ECMS data with stakeholders outside the LA, increasing “outsiders” capacity to see and advocate for compliance improvements.</p>

## ECMS and sustainability in countries

COUNTRIES WHERE ECMS ARE LIKELY TO BE SUSTAINABLE	COUNTRIES WHERE ECMS MAY NEED ADDITIONAL SUPPORT TO BECOME SUSTAINABLE
<p>✓ <b>Colombia and Perú</b> appear to have adequate technical capacity within the labor administration to sustain and improve their ECMS without significant donor or grantee support.</p> <div data-bbox="102 1274 331 1504">  </div> <div data-bbox="347 1274 576 1504">  </div>	<p>✓ The ECMS in <b>Sri Lanka</b> is currently out of use and needs to be redeveloped.</p> <div data-bbox="667 1116 1060 1347">  </div> <p>✓ ECMS software development is ongoing in <b>Honduras</b>, but deployment is facing significant reluctance. The system would likely benefit from additional support afforded by a project extension.</p> <div data-bbox="1128 1213 1521 1537">  </div>
<p>✓ Within certain limits, <b>The Philippines</b> has adequate technical capacity within the labor administration to continue implementing the system without significant donor or grantee support</p> <div data-bbox="347 1569 576 1931">  </div>	<p>✓ <b>Paraguay and Vietnam</b> are facing the end of project assistance relatively soon after the initial deployment of their systems, likely placing their ECMS sustainability at risk.</p> <div data-bbox="1023 1601 1252 1964">  </div> <div data-bbox="1279 1601 1521 1964">  </div>



RECOMMENDATIONS		USDOL	Grantees	Labor Admin
1	<b>Conduct readiness assessments prior to ECMS software development:</b> Review other countries' experience, and carry out assessments on ICT infrastructure, government IT standards, labor inspection process and legal requirements, information systems in other LA departments, etc. Assess LA's political will and develop clear MOUs among donor, grantees, and governments.	✓	✓	✓
2	<b>Use more adaptive management approaches:</b> Develop ECMS in phases, taking in account the time required to address system design errors, incorporate new features to meet emerging needs, resolve technical bugs, train users and overcome their reluctance to ECMS use.	✓	✓	✓
3	<b>Pilot the system before expanding countrywide and/or developing all planned ECMS modules:</b> Take a step-by-step approach to automating labor inspection processes, recognizing the limits of how quickly technology can drive organizational development.	✓	✓	✓
4	<b>Address hardware, software, and software hosting solution requirements:</b> To promote usability, projects and/or labor administrations should allocate resources to ensure the ICT infrastructure available to users is adequate.		✓	✓
5	<b>Outsource at least part of software maintenance to the software development company following deployment:</b> Projects and/or labor administrations should acquire software maintenance contracts after the software is deployed for at least two to three years.		✓	✓
6	<b>Design and implement comprehensive change management strategies:</b> Aimed at fostering ECMS acceptance and adoption by labor inspectors as well as decision-makers who may not use the system directly but will benefit from access to data for decision-making.		✓	✓
7	<b>Advocate for and assist with overcoming systemic issues affecting labor administration effectiveness</b> (e.g., limited number of labor inspectors, LI status and access to training, national leaders' commitment to enforcing labor laws and fighting corruption).	✓	✓	✓
8	<b>Ensure software developers are guided by government and grantee labor inspection specialists.</b>		✓	✓
9	<b>Orient ECMS data collection forms and reporting tools to facilitate measurement of labor inspection key performance indicators and other required reporting.</b>	✓	✓	✓
10	<b>Capitalize on lessons learned from past ECMS interventions:</b> Systematize and document good practices and lessons learned supporting ECMS development in practical formats, such as an ECMS toolkit, business cases, or implementation guidelines.	✓	✓	

