

EVALUATION BRIEF

MIDTERM EVALUATION OF THE CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY IN ELIMINATING SLAVERY AND TRAFFICKING IN ASIA (CREST) PROJECT

This evaluation brief presents a summary of the key findings, learnings, and recommendations, as identified by the evaluator(s) for use by key stakeholders, including internally by IOM staff and externally by project partners. More details can be found in the full evaluation report.

Evaluation type:	External midterm evaluation
Evaluator(s):	UPENDO Consulting Inc.
Field visit dates:	N/A
Final report date:	18 July 2021
Commissioned by:	IOM Mission in Viet Nam
Managed by:	Anastasia Vynnychenko, Project Manager

Evaluation purpose: To provide an opportunity for organizational learning to improve future programming and to introduce corrective measures to strengthen the project’s ability to deliver high-level results.

Evaluation criteria: Relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, potential impact, and sustainability as well as performance against the crosscutting criteria of gender, human rights and environment.

Evaluation methodology: a theory of change analysis, contribution analysis, cross-country comparison analysis, quantitative data analysis, coding and triangulation, gender equality and equity analysis and a human rights impact assessment approach analysis.

PROJECT SUMMARY

Businesses are increasingly working towards making their supply chains exploitation-free, in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs).

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is implementing the Corporate Responsibility in Eliminating Slavery and Trafficking (CREST), a regional partnership project with activities in Bangladesh; Hong Kong SAR, China; Malaysia; the Philippines; Thailand; and Viet Nam that aims to realize the potential of private sector to uphold the human and labour rights of migrant workers in their operations and supply chains.

Through CREST, IOM develops partnerships and projects with businesses to build stronger commitments to eliminate modern slavery, implement ethical recruitment standards that address migrant workers’ vulnerabilities, and encourage collaboration across industries and stakeholders in order to achieve sustainable change. The project is funded by the Section for Regional Development Cooperation for Asia and the Pacific at the Embassy of Sweden in Thailand and through direct and in-kind contributions by private sector partners and institutions. Private sector contributions are expected to match the funding of SEK 52,086,020 by the end of 2020.

Project information:

Geographical coverage:	Bangladesh; Hong Kong SAR, China; Malaysia; the Philippines; Thailand; and Viet Nam
Project type:	Labour Migration
Project code:	LM.0331
Gender marker:	2a
Project period:	2017 - 2022
Donor:	Embassy of Sweden in Thailand
Budget:	SEK 52,086,020

SUCCESSSES

- CREST contributed to strengthening the placement of migration work within the core business and human rights agenda and is filling an important gap to support private sector to uphold the UNGPs and promote the rights of migrant workers
- Successfully established 19 private sector partnerships, exceeding its target by nearly double
- Demonstrated interest and commitment by private sector partners, as seen by securing 92 percent of its private sector financial contributions only part way through the project
- Established important strategic partnerships with non-private sector actors
- Provided highly appreciated customized tools and support, including labour supply chain mappings
- Supported companies to develop human rights policies and due diligence processes and begin implementing remediation processes

CHALLENGES

- Minimal formal partnerships with other IOM initiatives and UN entities
- Limited direct empowerment of migrant workers
- Delayed engagement of civil society organizations (including migrant worker associations and networks)
- Significant investment in time and human resources required to set up most private sector partnerships
- Perceived slow administrative processes compared to those in the private sector
- Challenges around sharing information and reporting on results due to non-disclosure agreements (NDAs)

LESSONS LEARNED

• Partnership engagement process

Engaging with companies that have not yet formally endorsed UNGP principles can potentially have great impact on migrant workers. However, they can also create inefficiencies by often requiring lengthy partnership engagement processes. These inefficiencies can be mitigated by only engaging with partners who have demonstrated some degree of commitment towards the UNGP principles.

• Limitations caused by non-disclosure agreements (NDAs)

NDAs can hinder transparency and accountability, limit information sharing that includes results, and reduce the ability to generate momentum across companies. However, these limitations can be reduced by negotiating certain terms such as the inclusion of basic elements of transparency.

• Complex role of private sector partners

Under the CREST model, private sector companies are partners who play a multi-faceted role as clients, strategic partners, and funders. The classic IOM partnership framework used to engage traditional donors is designed for funders that are not playing these dual roles, and therefore does not fully support the framework needed to forge these complex partnerships.

• Benefits of a hybrid funding model

A hybrid funding model can successfully leverage both traditional donor and private sector funding by allocating traditional donor funding exclusively towards those elements of the project that do not contribute to direct support to the private sector (and therefore not run the risk of potentially subsidizing the private sector), while ensuring that private sector funding covers all costs associated with the provision of partnership support.

• Funding strategic level work

It is crucial to engage private sector company industry-wide champions to fund strategic work around industry-wide collaboration, momentum building, knowledge exchange, etc. Those private sector companies that are not interested in funding strategic work that goes beyond activities that directly benefit them are interested in paying on a per deliverable basis and may be willing to pay for strategic work that is implicitly factored in as a type of overhead cost.

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- Partnership development process and the power of referrals

The most effective method of identifying potential new private sector partners has been through word of mouth and business referrals. The partnership development process can be shortened and made more efficient by being clear and direct with private companies from the start of any partnership discussions to understand the level of financial investment they are willing to provide towards the partnership as well to explain both the advantages and administrative requirements of working with a UN agency in order to set realistic expectations.

- Advantages of using a practical approach

The CREST initiative's practical approach and direct engagement with private sector companies across migration corridors through customized tools and resources, labour supply chain mappings, and tailored trainings has helped to advance partnerships with private sector companies and other key stakeholders as well as the overall migration, business, and human rights agenda, and has generated tangible learnings that have been shared across IOM.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Further define CREST's scope and project parameters to facilitate more impactful programming

Develop a CREST-specific Theory of Change and define the scope and parameters of its thematic work.

- Focus on strategic level work

Link private sector partners to other UN entities, continue to foster an industry-wide approach, continue to develop strategic partnerships, and widely share knowledge and best practices.

- Increase direct engagement with and empowerment of migrant workers

Work with partners such as the Migrant Forum in Asia as well as engage migrant worker organizations in the project design and implementation through an external Advisory Board.

- Establish CREST-specific guidelines to facilitate more efficient and sustainable partnership development processes

Establish criteria that clearly states when the development of a partnership should be cut off based on a cost/benefit analysis, and develop a minimum standard of information that must be publicly shareable when negotiating NDAs.

- Develop a sustainable funding strategy to ensure the sustainability of the CREST initiative once the project ends in September 2022

Use the second half of the project to focus on reporting on results and sharing information in order to gain more visibility among potential traditional donors, private sector foundations, and private sector companies, and develop a sustainable funding strategy that draws on CREST's successful mixed funding model.