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Session 5

Improving Labour Capacity Through Cooperation and Technical Assistance - The Canadian Experience

Submitted by: Canada



**Capacity Building for Negotiating Labor
Provisions in FTAs Workshop
Medan, Indonesia
28-29 June 2013**

Labour

**APEC Workshop on Trade and Labour Negotiations
June 28-29, 2013
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**Session 5
IMPROVING LABOUR CAPACITY THROUGH
COOPERATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**

THE CANADIAN EXPERIENCE

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**Goals and Objectives of Canada's Labour-Related
Technical Assistance**

- to strengthen institutions of democratic governance; promote economic growth while respecting workers' rights; and improve the quality of working conditions in partner economies.
- to help partner economies modernize their labour policy and administration, in order to foster better enforcement of national labour laws and greater respect for internationally-recognized core labour standards.

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A Decade of Labour-Related Technical Assistance

- 2004 – 2012: International Trade and Labour Program (\$11.6M)
- 2006 – 2009: Trade and Labour in the Americas (\$1M – co-funded with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA))
- 2009 – 2013: International Program for Professional Labour Administration (\$7.8M – co-funded with CIDA)
- 2010 – 2015: Canada-Americas Trade-Related Technical Assistance Program (approximately \$2M for the labour theme – funded by CIDA)
- 2013 - ongoing: Labour Funding Program/International Trade and Labour stream (\$1.2M/year)

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Links between Labour Cooperation Agreements and Technical Assistance

- Labour cooperation is an essential element in raising the level of compliance with labour standards. Labour Cooperation Agreements (LCA) provide for the development of a flexible plan of action for technical assistance and cooperative labour activities between Canada and partner economies.
- Funding priority is given to economies that have signed a LCA with Canada, followed by economies involved in active LCA negotiations and economies of national interest.
- Projects funded are also identified during Ministerial Council Meetings and through ongoing exchanges between Labour Program officials and their counterparts in partner economies.
- The potential for measurable, tangible and demonstrable results are fundamental project selection criteria.

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Eligible Organizations and Activities

Eligible Organizations

- International organizations: ILO, OAS;
- Legally incorporated, national and international, not-for-profit organizations providing technical assistance on labour issues;
- Publicly funded universities and colleges.

Eligible Activities

- Capacity-building projects, training, modernization of labour ministries;
- Conferences and seminars, research and analysis, polls and other surveys on international labour and trade-related labour issues.

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Independent Evaluation of the International Trade and Labour Program (ITLP)

Labour-related technical assistance provided by the Labour Program continues to be relevant. Findings of the 2011 evaluation include:

- Historically, 95% of available funds was disbursed, indicating a high demand among stakeholders.
- The Labour Program did not overlap or duplicate the efforts of other federal, provincial, territorial or non-government organizations in the area of labour affairs.
- Expectations need to be managed. Key informants perceived that the funded projects had positive results on the capacity of trade partner economies to address targeted labour issues. However, representatives in partner economies were not satisfied with the level of change although useful tools were provided by the projects.
- Project performance measurement and monitoring required improvements.

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Project Intake Process

Call-for-proposal:

- Used only once. Proved to be labour-intensive and did not allow for the required targeted flexibility to address stakeholder needs and Labour Program priorities.

Continuous intake vs solicited (directed) approach:

- Because technical assistance provided by the Labour Program is mainly LCA-specific, and of the relatively small number of labour-related executing agencies that operate in economies of interest, a solicited approach in the selection of projects and executing agencies will remain the preferred option. This will not affect the possibility of receiving unsolicited proposals from interested parties in Canada or abroad.

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Recent Projects Funded by the Labour Program

Capacity Building of Local Tripartite Stakeholders in Vietnam (International Labour Organization - ILO)

- To support the Better Work Vietnam program by strengthening the capacities of the local tripartite stakeholders to support compliance with internationally accepted labour standards and domestic labour law.

Occupational health and safety in the mining sector in Colombia (ILO)

- To improve the social and economic conditions of coal mining sector stakeholders in the Department of La Guajira in Colombia through enhanced occupational health and safety practices and through strengthened respect for fundamental rights at work.

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Recent Projects Funded by the Labour Program (cont.)

Strengthening Labour Law Compliance and Social Dialogue Capacities in Honduras and the Dominican Republic (*Fundacion par la Paz y la Democracia – Costa Rica*)

- To improve the capacities of labour ministries to enforce domestic labour laws, with emphasis on social dialogue and professional training as tools to generate a culture of compliance.

Labour Ministries' Capacity Building in Gender Mainstreaming (Organization of American States- OAS)

- To undertake gender audits and develop work plans to strengthen the gender mainstreaming capacity of the Ministries of Labour in Barbados, Honduras and El Salvador.

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Success Story

- The Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare of El Salvador now has a comprehensive Work Plan to continue strengthening its gender mainstreaming efforts. This was anticipated as a result of the project **Labour Ministries' Capacity Building in Gender Mainstreaming**. What was unexpected is that the Ministry actually put in operation a whole Unit for Gender Equality, with staff and resources, thanks to the project. The Minister has recognized that the support from ILO and OAS, made possible with funding from the Canadian Government, has been fundamental in creating the Unit and endowing it with a concrete Work Plan to move forward.

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THANK YOU