

JobsNet An Employment Sourcing and Delivery System in Sri Lanka

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Asia Department

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Sida Evaluation 06/48

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This report is part of *Sida Evaluations*, a series comprising evaluations of Swedish development assistance. Sida's other series concerned with evaluations, Sida Studies in Evaluation, concerns methodologically oriented studies commissioned by Sida. Both series are administered by the Department for Evaluation and Internal Audit, an independent department reporting directly to Sida's Board of Directors.

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Sida Evaluation 06/48
Commissioned by Sida, Asia Department

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Registration No.: 1.3.3-23
Date of Final Report: May 2006
Printed by Edita Communication AB, 2006
Art. no. Sida31702en
ISBN 91-586-8230-9
ISSN 1401—0402

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Abbreviations

CCC	Ceylon Chamber of Commerce
EFC	The Employers' Federation of Ceylon
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
HRPS	Human Resources Placement Service
ILO	International Labour Organisation
MOLRFE	Ministry of Labour Relations and Foreign Employment
NATURE	National Association of Trade Unions for Research and Education
NEP	National Employment Policy
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
PPP	Public-private Partnership
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SME	Small and medium sized enterprise

Summary of Project Evaluation

Project's Immediate Objectives

The JobsNet system to be strengthened to effectively and independently provide employment services to jobseekers and employers.

Jobseekers throughout Sri Lanka to gain access to gainful employment or self-employment opportunities.

JobsNet to become financially sustainable in Year 3.

Main Findings

- The Ministry has allowed the PPP to gradually relapse without seeking a replacement of or a complement to CCC. This is a breach of an implicit commitment made when the government solicited donor funding for the project.
- JobsNet has not served the large public sector employment market nor will it directly serve employers outside of Sri Lanka. It is left with the private sector which in 2005 accounted for less than one third of the measurable demand for labour in Sri Lanka. This makes even more important to resurrect the PPP.
- JobsNet management has failed to accept that it should not serve foreign employers directly.
- JobsNet has neither defined and tested sellable employment products nor determined how to charge for them.
- Project implementation has been overly focused on jobseeker registration and system development at the expense of employment services for employers and financial sustainability.
- In 2005 JobsNet's revenue from employment related activities (mainly membership fees) amounted to less than 10 percent of total costs. Unless JobsNet changes its business concept to that of providing and charging for placement services it is heading for a financial collapse in less than a year's time. With revenue based on fees for placements/recruitments JobsNet should be able to become financially sustainable in the course of 2007.
- Little thought appears to have been given to how the proper handling and integrity of JobsNet's database should be guaranteed once the project is completed

Major Recommendations

- The Ministry should take immediate steps to resurrect the PPP and involve several private sector related social partners.
- JobsNet should focus on providing recruitment and placement services only.
- JobsNet should not register for matching purposes unemployed persons it deems unemployable or persons seeking employment in the public sector only. JobsNet should take immediate steps to improve the employability quality of its current jobseeker register.
- JobsNet should not undertake non-core activities that are unsustainable unless separate funding is provided for such activities.

- JobsNet halt the escalation of administration and overhead costs. Reductions could also be achieved by curtailing administration staff and by closing regional centres that are non sustainable.
- JobsNet should not solicit revenues from other sources but Sida and Sri Lankan employers unless authorised to do so by a unanimous Steering Committee.
- JobsNet's entire organisation should be driven by the following three measurable targets:
Placements,
Revenue from core activities, and
Ratio of placements to jobseeker registrations
- Database integrity must be guaranteed beyond the life of the project.

Lessons Learned

The project still has eight months before completion but a number of lessons could be learned from the experiences to date:

- Private sector representation on the partnership Steering Committee should consist of a representative sample of social partners.
- Targets should be reduced to a minimum and be clearly linked to a maximum of three key objectives.
- Care should be taken to ensure that system enhancements are in line with objectives and not 'over-glamorise' the service.
- Failure on the part of the Ministry to replace or complement the private sector partner with other private sector partners/representatives has seriously weakened the Steering Committee's capacity to guide and monitor the project. It has resulted in ILO having to take on a much greater management role than originally envisaged.
- The Ministry and the Steering Committee has at times pushed for JobsNet to engage in activities for which no paying clients exist. Examples are services for largely unemployable jobseekers at village level, counselling, training, etc. This has contributed to JobsNet's lack of sustainability and will threaten the survival of the organisation.

Follow-up Actions

See Recommendations

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

JobsNet – the National Employment Sourcing and Delivery System – was established as a referral system that benefits jobseekers, local and foreign employers and self-employment seekers by providing referrals to jobs and training, information, advice and career guidance. The project was developed as a public sector – private sector partnership (PPP) with the Ministry of Labour Relations and Foreign Employment (MOLRFE) representing the Public sector joining with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC) harnessing the support and active participation of the private sector. Under the project funded by Sida, the CCC would handle specific accounting and procurement tasks for JobsNet with ILO having overall responsibility for the management and implementation of the Project. Sida’s financial support for the project covers a period of three years with effect from March 2004.

1.2 Chronology of the Project

The National Employment Policy (NEP) was presented to the Sri Lankan Parliament in May 2002. The JobsNet project is linked to the 7th initiative of that policy. A three-year project proposal was developed in November 2002. NORAD agreed to fund the first year. A second phase of the project was prepared by ILO and proposed to Sida for funding in January 2004. A specific agreement between the government of Sweden and the Government of Sri Lanka was signed on 24th March 2004. An agreement was also signed on the 29th March 2004 between the Swedish government and ILO for ILO to manage the implementation of the project.

Before the project became operational, agreements were also entered into by ILO (as the managing body) and the MOLRFE, and between the ILO and the CCC as subcontractor.

1.3 Scope and Purpose of the Review

The objective of this mid term external evaluation is twofold.

- Firstly, the evaluation team is expected to assess whether the project is on the way towards, or has achieved its immediate project objectives measured against the set performance indicators stated in the programme document.
- Secondly, the evaluation should provide a basis for Sida’s and ILO’s assessment of the future development of the programme.

The terms of reference calls for recommendations as to possible continued support for the organisational structure that “is deemed to ensure the sustainability of the programme results.”

The review was commissioned by ILO. Its terms of reference are attached in Attachment 1. Work was carried out by a team comprising Mr. Michael Wheelahan and Mr. Lennart Königson (hereinafter referred to as the Consultants) in the period 8–31 May 2006. A list of persons consulted during the assignment is shown in Attachment 2.

2. Summary of Findings and Recommendations

2.1 Principal Findings

The Ministry has allowed the PPP to gradually lapse without seeking a replacement for or a complement to CCC. Both NORAD's and Sida's commitment of funds was predicated on JobsNet being a PPP. The Ministry's failure to invite other private sector actors to fill the void left by CCC is a breach of an implicit commitment made when the government solicited donor funding for the project.

JobsNet was created for the purpose of serving the entire Sri Lankan employment market, public as well as private. For various reasons it appears that this was unrealistic. Under current government policy, JobsNet has not served and is unlikely to serve in the future the large public sector employment market nor will it serve as a direct recruitment agency for outside employers (mainly Middle Eastern) of Sri Lankan labour. It is left with the private sector which in 2005 accounted for less than one third of the measurable demand for labour in Sri Lanka.

Management has failed to accept the Ministry's view that JobsNet should not serve foreign employers directly. In the expectation that it would be possible to generate revenue from serving foreign employers JobsNet has maintained an organisation that can be sustained only by capturing part of what is viewed as oligopolistic profits of Sri Lanka's many foreign employment agencies.

Although experience to date strongly suggests that employers prefer to pay for actual placement, JobsNet has not developed processes and products to adequately respond to this demand and it does not measure actual placement performance effectively. This shortcoming, in combination with a jobseeker rather than employer focus, has given JobsNet an image of poor quality among employers.

Project implementation has focused overly on jobseeker registration and system development at the expense of employment services for employers and financial sustainability. The result is a huge database of jobseekers (many of whom are regarded by employers as unemployable¹) and a failure to meet original sustainability targets..

Stakeholders and members of the Steering Committee have on occasions pushed for greater JobsNet involvement in employment facilitating activities for which there would be no paying customers. This has contributed to a lack of focus on the critical issue of sustainability.

In 2005 JobsNet's revenue from employment related activities (core activities) amounted to less than 10 percent of total costs. The pursuit of sustainability appears to have started in earnest only in the latter part of 2005. It led management to seek revenue from both sustainable and unsustainable sources – the latter being mainly donor funded programs. Unless drastic corrective measures are taken JobsNet will be heading for a financial collapse when Sida funding ceases in less than a year's time.

JobsNet's performance is driven by a plethora of targets and indicators most of which are unrelated to the organisation's survival as a financially sustainable entity. Examples are number of jobseeker registrations and number of CVs sent to employers.

JobsNet, not being an incorporated legal entity, operates in a legal no-man's-land where the enforceability of contracts and the rights of employees are uncertain and undefined.

¹ 'unemployable' is used in this context to denote jobseekers who are not able to be matched to vacancies in the private sector because of factors such as their poor educational background, limited language skills, job preference for public sector positions only, lack of training, need for counseling etc.

Little thought appears to have been given to how the proper handling and integrity of JobsNet's database should be guaranteed once the project is completed and ILO has terminated its involvement. In all likelihood, the public, currently regards the integrity of the database as being guaranteed by the Ministry, CCC and ILO, whose logos are featured jointly on virtually all JobsNet presentation material. These organisations share a moral obligation to ensure that the data currently stored for some 160,000 jobseekers is used only for the purpose for which it was solicited.

2.2 Recommendations

- The Ministry should take immediate steps to resurrect the PPP and involve other social partners. Given the short time remaining with Sida funding, the Ministry should set a deadline of two to three months to produce a result satisfactory to Sida and ILO. Otherwise the Ministry, on the one hand, and private sector social partners, on the other, should both be offered the right to make use of the software, have access to the database and operate separate 'JobsNet type' employment services. The private sector partners should be invited to take over JobsNet's direct employees and facilities while the Ministry should take back its staff currently serving with or being seconded to JobsNet.
- JobsNet should focus on providing recruitment and placement services only. It should orient its future system development efforts towards tracking and verifying its placement performance and devise simple charging formulas for its services. The organisation's performance should be monitored by way of monthly placement targets for each operational unit and for each staff member engaged in employment services.
- JobsNet should not register unemployed persons it deems unemployable in a register used for matching purposes nor should the register include persons seeking employment in the public sector only. JobsNet should take immediate steps to improve the employability quality of its current jobseeker register. The target for the register should be that anyone being registered should have at least a 25 percent chance of finding a job.
- JobsNet should not undertake activities that are unsustainable. Alternatively, if the stakeholders deem JobsNet to be a better-suited vehicle than other existing agencies then separate funding should be provided for such activities and they should be carried out in separate unit within JobsNet.
- JobsNet organisation and operating costs must be drastically reduced. Major reductions are needed in Colombo office administration staff levels and a number of regional centres would also need to close if sustainability is to be a possibility.
- In order to maintain management's focus on long-term sustainability JobsNet should not be allowed to receive funds from any sources other than Sida and its Sri Lankan private sector clients unless specifically authorized to do so unanimously by the Steering Committee.
- The stakeholders should ensure that JobsNet's legal status is normalized so that they and JobsNet can respect the rights of its employees granted under the laws of Sri Lanka.
- Database integrity must be guaranteed beyond the life of the project. A set of rules that should be established for access and handling on a 'need to know' basis.

3. Design

3.1 Project Design and Early Implementation

The Concept

The JobsNet Project is the result of the implementation of recommendations made in the NEP of Sri Lanka. The NEP formed a part of the Government's overall approach to making Sri Lanka's human capital more globally competitive². Initiative 7 of the NEP's strategies recommended the setting up of a National Employment Sourcing and Delivery System for Sri Lanka. The project was developed in an overall policy environment that included initiatives in relation to labour reforms and productivity policy.

The first outline for what became the JobsNet project was an internal MOLRFE paper that was inspired by the Australian unemployment registration and employment facilitation service called Job Network. It envisaged a fully government funded facility that would register jobseekers and offer information to potential Sri Lankan employers by way of a database. At the outset it was not envisaged to be a placement service.

The CCC was subsequently invited by government to develop a model that could become a self-sustaining service for Sri Lankan jobseekers and employers and that would be operated as a separate PPP. It would consist of an island-wide network of employment service centres. The implementation and management of the project was entrusted to CCC on a consultancy basis. The value brought to the project by CCC was its ability to bring together and engage its direct members and the thousands of organisations being members in the associations and business councils working closely with CCC.

CCC prepared a detailed project proposal which envisaged a rapid roll out of a network of service centres, revenue generated through fees from employers as paying members. The proposal was endorsed by the Ministry³ and submitted to NORAD which agreed to finance the first year of implementation.

The project was envisaged to be a PPP service to jobseekers and employers in Sri Lanka's public and private sector as well as to foreign employers of Sri Lankan labour. It was to be managed by CCC "for a three year period on a turn key style management model and at the end of the period handed over ... to a new Board of Management appointed by [the Minister of Labour and Employment] without funding support from the government, with the capability to operate as a profitable venture."⁴ A significant factor that is likely to have helped shape the original concept was a shared personal commitment to the JobsNet idea of respectively the Minister and the CEO of CCC.

Early Implementation

Project implementation by CCC started in early 2003. In the course of one year CCC had formed a close collaboration with the Ministry's Human Resources Placement Service (HRPS) and the foreign employment bureau in the Ministry, established 17 service centres in different parts of Sri Lanka,

² The NEP has the following components:

- Manpower Planning
- Education & training for lifelong employability
- Foreign Employment redefined
- Improving quality of life through SME's and self-employment
- Fulfilling social obligations
- Partnerships realigned
- Employment sourcing and delivery system

³ At the time MOLRFE was called Ministry of Employment and Labour

⁴ Cabinet Memorandum Serial No: 21/2003 Ministry of Employment and Labor dated May 23, 2003

engaged a staff of over 70 persons of which a large number was seconded from the Ministry and developed, operationalised a software and website and registered a large number of jobseekers.

JobsNet had also started to match jobseeker qualifications with employers' requirements and noted that jobseekers often did not match the required qualifications. Employers' interest in signing up as paying members was also not as strong as expected. JobsNet was not able to attract the number of members envisaged and was falling behind on the revenue targets. Further implementation would require more time and more funds than originally envisaged by CCC. Originally, CCC had envisaged that revenue would also come from jobseekers paying some type of registration fee but this concept was never implemented under the project.

A number of factors affected the early implementation of the project including a change of CEO at CCC, a subsequent change of government and new Minister of MOLRFE and the growing realisation that implementation would be costlier than envisaged.

The reduced level of interest in JobsNet on the part of both the Ministry and CCC resulted in a slowdown of implementation activities. It is probable that the project was saved by ILO which saw its potential benefits. ILO offered to fill the management void left by CCC's partial pullback and helped to put the project back on track after additional funding for another three years had been provided by Sida.

The Sida Funded ILO Managed Project

Sida agreed to provide funding to cover JobsNet's cost of operations for a period of three years starting in early 2004. The funding also covered technical assistance support provided by ILO and accounting and procurement services by CCC. The background, justification and project strategy was embodied in a Project Document prepared by ILO in January 2004.

A key justification for Sida's support was that JobsNet represented an innovative way to offer a "competitive and demand-driven employment service". The Project Document noted that "the idea to set up JobsNet as a public-private partnership represents an innovation in the area of employment services. Private sector management, latest technology and a customer service strategy in line with international best practice" were seen as key elements that would contribute to JobsNet's success. It was also noted that "by involving the private sector in the implementation and management of JobsNet, Sri Lanka can overcome a structural weakness found in public employment services in most other countries – a lack of trust in its capacity to deliver quality service".

3.2 Project Objectives

The following objectives were defined in the project document.

Development Objective

The overall development objective of the project is to contribute to poverty alleviation, employment promotion, private sector development, and peace and reconciliation.

Immediate Objective 1.

The JobsNet system has been strengthened to effectively and independently provide employment services to jobseekers and employers.

Immediate Objective 2.

Jobseekers throughout Sri Lanka to gain access to gainful employment or self-employment in large numbers.

Indicators of Achievement and Targets

The project document defined the following indicators of achievement:

For institutional sustainability:

- 5000 registered members after Year 1
- 7000 members registered after Year 2

For financial sustainability

- 45 percent cost recovery of JobsNet after Year 1 through membership fees and other income generated;
- 70 percent cost recovery after Year 2.

For technical sustainability

- 5000 jobseekers successfully placed in jobs or engaged in self employment after Year 1;
- 7000 jobseekers in gainful employment or self-employment after Year 2;
- Customer satisfaction among employers of 90 percent after Year 2 and among jobseekers of 75 percent after Year 2.

3.3 Overall Validity of Design

The JobsNet project was supported by the donors NORAD and Sida because it was to be:

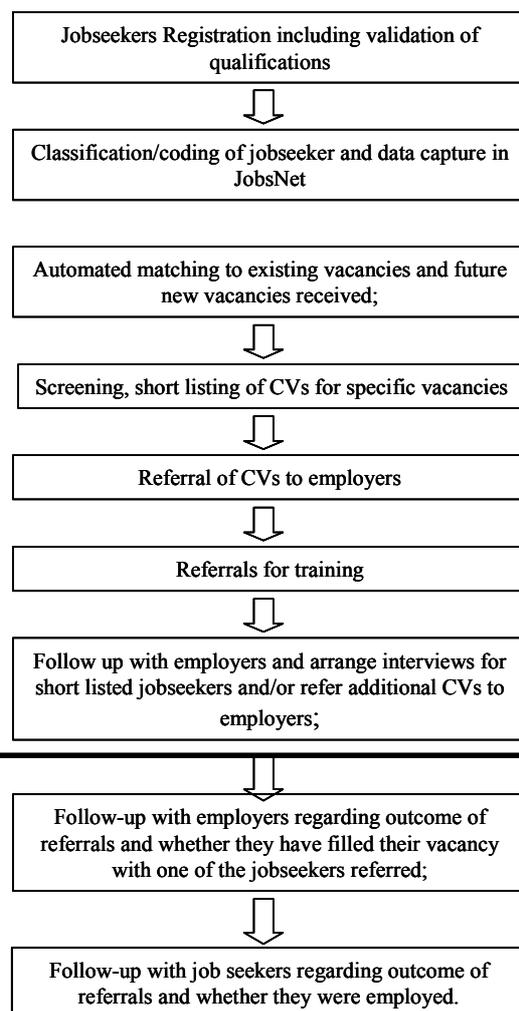
1. An IT-driven employment service for Sri Lanka linking jobseekers with employers in the public and private sector and facilitating jobseekers' access to overseas employment,
2. A public-private partnership (PPP), and
3. A financially self-sustainable entity by the end of the project.

Donors provided grant funding to test whether a JobsNet service encompassing these features could be implemented and made operational. A Steering Committee was appointed and a technical advisory and management structure comprising CCC and ILO was put in place to implement the project.

This section examines the validity of JobsNet s three basic design features and how stakeholders and management have handled the testing of the JobsNet concept. The donor funding period can be looked upon as a trial-and-error or learning phase during which an operational business concept should be produced or, alternatively, the concept should be abandoned.

Which service to deliver?

At the outset it was not made clear how far JobsNet should provide support and services in the chain of events leading



up to employment.. It is probable that the original concept framed during the project design assumed that the JobsNet ‘employment promoting and facilitating role’ would end with provision of jobseeker information to employers, i.e. the emphasis was on a matching and referral service to employers.

This ‘matching’ focus is evident in JobsNet’s approach to jobseekers. JobsNet staff carries out a range of activities when assisting jobseekers but the indications are that much less attention is given to those recruitment/placement activities shown below the line in the picture to the right:

This ‘matching’ as opposed to ‘placement’ focus has also been reflected in the way JobsNet has charged for its services. Under the original concept, it was envisaged that JobsNet would be made sustainable by collecting membership fees from thousands of employers and CCC was confident that a large majority of its members would also become paying JobsNet members. However, after an encouraging start, it became apparent in 2004 that relatively few employers were attracted by this concept.

Nevertheless, it seems JobsNet continued to promote its ‘membership’ approach to employers with different membership levels being linked to the number of CVs provided for free, the degree of access to CVs in JobsNet’s database, etc. JobsNet also developed special deals outside the official ‘JobsNet Tariff Card’ offer to induce employers to test its services and to meet employers’ desires to pay for successful placement rather than the number of CV referrals they were sent.⁵ However, as of the time of this study only one employer had been charged on the basis of a successful placement being made.

The other stakeholders have also recognized that the membership model has fallen far short of expectations. Mere supply of jobseekers’ data was not sufficiently attractive for employers and as a result the focus shifted towards recruitments. Sida, in particular, made it clear that this is the outcome it expected from JobsNet stressing the importance of quality control of the database and that ‘the gap between the referrals and placements is still a key issue that needs to be addressed’⁶.

The record⁷ suggests that the Ministry and ILO have both concurred. The fact that the membership model has not produced expected results was apparently not viewed as a proof of a failure of the basic JobsNet concept. The database, the computer matching and the referrals needed to be complemented with actual placements and this issue was discussed in detail at several Steering Committee meetings. However, the stakeholders and JobsNet have so far not translated this adjustment of the business concept into a new promotional approach aimed at employers nor into a new remuneration model. By continuing to promote a ‘matching’ service to employers with fees based on membership and/or on number of CVs sent to employers, the incentive for JobsNet staff is likely remain on sending as many CVs as possible, i.e. to provide quantity not quality. Employers, on the other hand, want the opposite and are unlikely to want to pay unless they are satisfied.

JobsNet’s market

JobsNet’s original targets were based on the assumption that it would serve clients in all sectors of Sri Lanka’s economy. Its organisation and office network also reflects the view that it should be accessible for jobseekers in all of Sri Lanka’s different regions. Management has interpreted the mandate to also include servicing foreign employers of Sri Lankan labour. However, the record suggests that this has not been the view of the Ministry’s representatives in the Steering Committee. Likewise the Ministry appears not to have facilitated JobsNet’s access to public sector employers and none have been served to date. JobsNet’s market has been confined to private sector employers and to a limited number of Sri Lanka’s many foreign employment agencies.

Neither the Steering Committee nor JobsNet’s management have adjusted its targets, organization and office network to reflect this very substantial change in market access that has taken place. The chart

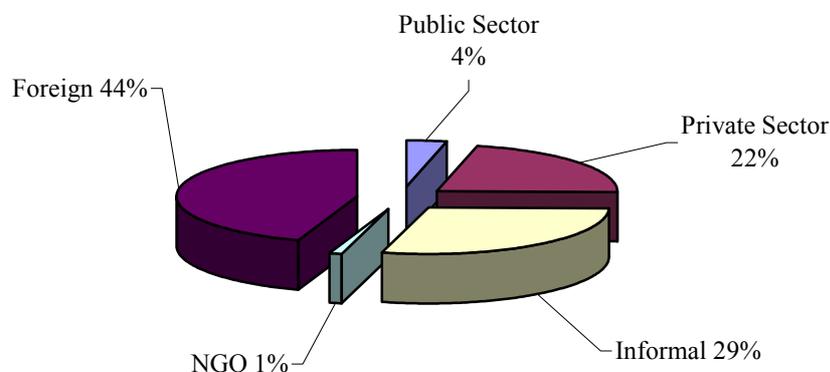
⁵ Details of the JobsNet Tariff of Fees are shown in Annex 4.

⁶ Steering Committee Meeting Minutes on JobsNet, May 5, 2005.

⁷ Mainly Steering Committee reports and minutes

below shows the percentage of vacancies across all sectors of the market based on a survey of newspaper job advertisements carried out during 2005.⁸ It indicates that if JobsNet is only able to service private sector vacancies and cannot operate in direct foreign employment recruitment its target market was only 22 percent of recorded recruitment in the period January to October 2005.

Job Vacancies by Sector Jan–Oct 2005



Source: Newspaper Surveys, LMI Unit MOLRFE LMI Bulletin Vol 1 Nos 1&2 2005

This also highlights another crucial issue that JobsNet must address. If its primary target group is employers and vacancies in the private sector, it must ensure that the jobseekers that register are interested in applying for vacancies in this sector. JobsNet staff state that many Sri Lankan jobseekers are only interested in jobs in the public sector. Others that may register are clearly not qualified for most of the jobs offered by the private sector – they may be both unemployed and unemployable due to poor educational background, limited language skills, etc. These jobseekers would need counselling, guidance, training or access to Job Circle services before they could become employable and although these are very worthwhile activities and staff in JobsNet offices try to offer these services at present, JobsNet cannot engage in them on a sustainable basis unless and until the stakeholders have identified a source of funding to cover the costs of these services.

The Steering Committee and JobsNet management need to address the issue of the purpose of JobsNet’s register and provide clear policy guidance to JobsNet on which categories of jobseekers should be encouraged to register and what advice or assistance should be provided to jobseekers who would not be able to benefit from JobsNet’s referral and placement services.

Public-private Partnership

JobsNet’s status as a PPP was a precondition for the funding from the donors – both NORAD and Sida. The government together with donors would implement the project while the private sector partner/s would manage it. The fact that the private partner CCC, after both its leadership and that of the Ministry had changed, limited its role to that of a comptroller and purchasing agent and later effectively withdrew from active participation in the project, has been taken as an indication that the original PPP concept failed. This is, in our view, an unwarranted conclusion. Our interviews with a cross section of private sector organisations suggest, on the contrary, that there is considerable interest in the continued existence and development of JobsNet and a preparedness on the part of virtually all the interviewed organisations to participate and contribute.

Given that the donors’ funding was solicited by the government on the basis that JobsNet would be a public-private partnership it was (and remains) an obligation on the part of the government to ensure that this is realized – that JobsNet becomes a PPP. Since only eight months remain during which donor funding is available, the Ministry should make immediate and concerted efforts to resurrect the PPP.

⁸ LMI Bulletin Volume 1, Nos 1 and 2, 2005, MOLRFE.

Our summarized interpretation of the comments made by the organisations interviewed is presented in Attachment 4 to this report. They show very clearly that the private sector organisations contacted share a common interest in and concern for JobsNet and there is ample scope for broadening the private sector base of JobsNet and to resurrect the ailing PPP.

Financial Sustainability

Financial sustainability implies that JobsNet must cover its costs by way of revenue generated from a permanent market comprising employers and foreign employment agents in Sri Lanka. JobsNet receives funding on a grant basis from Sida for the purpose of developing these services to the point where they are achieving this sustainability by the end of the project.

From this financial sustainability requirement two things essentially follow:

- Firstly, that revenues generated from other sources on a temporary basis would not contribute to JobsNet's financial sustainability although they may solve temporary liquidity problems.
- Secondly, that JobsNet's focus must be to meet the needs of employers. JobsNet can only assist persons that are employable, i.e. persons that employers wish to employ.

In a number of instances, JobsNet's management has contracted with NGOs and foreign donors to provide services for which JobsNet's office network, database and matching capacity could be used. Although this would generate revenue for JobsNet it would not be commensurate with the organisation's mission and purpose. Attracting such temporary revenue would instead risk diverting the efforts of JobsNet's management and staff from the main objective of achieving market based financial sustainability.

The self-sustainability requirement necessitates that JobsNet must provide a service that employers are willing to pay for. This in turn means that JobsNet can only refer suitable jobseekers. The implications of this are that unless it is subsidised to do so, JobsNet cannot help jobseekers who are unemployable or not job-ready either because of lack of qualifications of one kind or another, or for any other reason. JobsNet, at the moment, does not have a sustainable source of revenue that would cover its costs of engaging in activities aimed at making unemployed persons employable. To the extent that Sida funding is used for addressing lack of jobseeker employability the effort to prove JobsNet's capacity to be sustainable would suffer.

The original project design did not address this dilemma in terms of how to provide a wide range of jobseeker assistance and services and at the same time become financially sustainable. Neither the Steering Committee nor the management has subsequently developed a clear strategy on this issue. JobsNet has engaged in a range of different 'employability' activities from career guidance and counselling to training referrals and large-scale registration of tens of thousands of 'unemployable' persons. This has diverted the organization's attention from efforts to become self-sustainable.

4. Implementation

4.1 JobsNet Administration

The project management unit and the JobsNet Project Director and his staff have established a functioning and well-organised network of offices across Sri Lanka.

They have done an excellent job in promoting the service and creating a public awareness of JobsNet. Field staff has been actively involved in developing links and networks with other Agencies and organisations to establish areas of mutual cooperation and field staff have been involved in a range of activities, e.g. mobile service programmes, Job Fair and Self Employment Promotion Programs and the Distance Education Modernization Project.

The Marketing and Communications Division has supported JobsNet with a range of ongoing initiatives and activities which have included the printing of corporate Brochures, the “Education Guide Sri Lanka”, printing of 1500 Year Planners and 150,000 Pocket calendars and a range of other media coverage relating to JobsNet events. All of these activities have been regularly reported on in Quarterly Progress Reports.

A profile of staffing as at April 2006 is shown in the following table:

Location	Males	Females	Total
Head Office employees	13	10	23
Centre Managers	14	3	17
Assistant JobsNet Officers	13	10	23
Centre Managers (HRPS staff)	5	-	5
Tharuna Aruna Management Trainees	18	11	29
HRPS Officers	13	10	23
Total	76	44	120

HRPS officers from MOLRFE make up 28 percent of staff working in JobsNet offices and graduate management trainees comprise 30 percent of field staff. Women comprise 37 percent of total staff. There has been a significant investment in staff training concentrating on customer service and computer skills training.

Head Office staff comprises 19 percent of total staff and these staff members work in Divisions covering Business Development, Marketing and Communications, Coordination, Human Resource Development and Administration, Systems Administration, Finance and Human Resources Division. There is no doubt that this administrative support has been very useful in implementing the project. An Operations Manual has been produced, extensive marketing and promotional work has been carried out and systems development and administration functions are in place ensuring the JobsNet software is operating efficiently.

However, because of factors mentioned earlier in the report, it seems that much of this implementation was done without regular, ongoing oversight and guidance by the Steering Committee and without serious focus until recently on the requirement to become self-sustainable. These issues are discussed in more detail in Chapter 5.

4.2 Reporting

The project has continued to provide comprehensive reporting on activities carried out and outputs produced. These have not been reproduced in this report but were reviewed by the consultants and are available in the project office. Quarterly progress reports provide very detailed descriptions of activities carried out, statistics on performance and details of activities undertaken by marketing and communications and other divisions.

However, the reports themselves are not easy to follow. They are very long and could be considerably improved and streamlined in a number of ways to make them more 'reader friendly' and useful for Steering Committee members and other stakeholders. The work plan presented in the most recent progress report (March 31st, 2006) covers the whole life of the project. It could be summarised to reflect key issues or problems to emerge during the latest quarter being reported on and action taken or proposed to address them. A brief outline of priorities for the upcoming quarter could also be highlighted.

On the statistical side, there is no clear or separate focus given to key targets such as 'placements' and 'revenue generated' as paramount indicators. It was noted that there were inconsistencies between the figures quoted in the text of the report and those listed in various statistical tables and charts either because they covered differing time periods or because of different terminology. (The report uses the terminology 'numbers matched', numbers 'referred for interview' and numbers 'referred for employment' but it is not clear what the difference is between these categories). This can make it very difficult to draw any meaningful comparisons between periods and to spot any emerging trends. The practice of showing cumulative statistics on transactions since the project commenced may have some interest but it has little direct bearing on current performance. A more useful basis for reporting and comparison would be to show current quarter results compared to corresponding quarter results for the previous year and compared to the immediately preceding quarter.

The Quarterly Report should highlight more specifically the progress being made towards achieving sustainability on the basis of core activities and actions. It should also highlight issues that need to be considered by the Steering Committee to further this objective.

A list of document sources used during the review is shown in Attachment 3.

5. Performance

5.1 Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency

To achieve its outputs, JobsNet's management has set targets for a number of key activities and the current system provides for up to seven different targets for each JobsNet office which are reported on quarterly but which each office monitors at least weekly.

The 'Mission Targets' listed in reports are:

- Number of Jobseeker registrations
- Vacancies received
- No of matches
- No referred for interview
- Confirmed recruitments
- Member registration
- Revenue generation

Some of these ‘targets’ are in fact workload or performance indicators. While they are useful in analyzing performance and volume of transactions, they do not readily or immediately highlight how the organization stands in relation to achieving its most important objectives. The Consultants consider that only two or three key targets such as ‘confirmed recruitments’ ‘ratio of placements to jobseeker registrations’ and ‘revenue generation’ should be set as the driving force for activities in JobsNet offices. JobsNet managers will only be able to manage effectively if they are measuring these outputs and ensuring that all activities undertaken by staff are contributing to these outcomes.

Stakeholders, Associations and private sector employers contacted by the consultants gave positive comments on the role of JobsNet and its potential in providing an effective service to jobseekers and employers in Sri Lanka. Mr. Gotabaya Dassanayaka, Director-General, The Employers’ Federation of Ceylon (EFC) views JobsNet as critically important for Sri Lanka and considers it would have been good if the EFC had also been involved in the project from the beginning in view of the nature and scope of its activities. He stated that his organization would welcome the opportunity to join Chambers of Commerce and selected Unions as stakeholders in exploring future options for JobsNet.

5.2 MOLRFE Review of JobsNet

MOLRFE commissioned a national consultant to conduct an independent ‘Study on the Viability of the JobsNet Project’ in October 2005. The review focussed extensively on comparing JobsNet’s achievements with the development goals and sustainability targets listed in the Project Document. It did not discuss the issue of whether or not those targets are relevant given the developments and changes that occurred in the course of the implementation period. In particular, the MOLRFE’s consultant’s review did not take into account the fact that JobsNet’s market includes neither public nor foreign employers of Sri Lankan labour as originally intended and therefore JobsNet serves less than 30 percent of the market for which the operational targets were established.

Regarding financial sustainability, the consultant’s report concluded that the performance of the JobsNet in terms of placements indicates that it would not be able to meet the requirements of the market satisfactorily and that “the sustainability of the project is in doubt”. The report noted “the cessation of the donor funding would bring the entire project to a halt”. However, in view of the importance of the project to the nation MOLRFE’s consultant recommended that it not be abandoned but restructured to meet the requirements of the stakeholders.

The report also suggested that a PPP should not be an option but that “it would be imperative for the Ministry of Labour Relations and Foreign Employment as the lead agency to manage this project in the future as one of its Agencies.” While we agree with the Ministry consultant’s conclusion with respect to the project’s uncertain sustainability prospects, we do not believe the PPP can be abandoned. This would be tantamount to reneging on an implicit commitment made to the donors. We also believe that a more careful analysis of the results of JobsNet’s jobseekers surveys of ‘realized’ as opposed to ‘reported’ placements would have led MOLRFE’s consultant to be less categorical with respect to JobsNet’s sustainability prospects.

5.3 Visits to JobsNet Offices

The Consultants also visited the JobsNet offices in Colombo, Nuwara Eliya, Kandy, Galle and Matara and met with Office Managers and staff in these locations. A brief summary of observations and findings were as follows:

- Managers and staff were impressive in their enthusiastic approach, willingness to seek out local opportunities and develop local responses to meet these needs. These ranged from free counselling

for jobseekers, seminars to attract people to work in particular sectors or occupations and participation in Jobs Fairs;

- Managers showed a strong awareness of their targets and great commitment to selling the service to employers either through membership arrangements or by negotiating CV matching and referral rates for individual employers in response to specific vacancies;
- There was a less clear understanding of which targets (and activities) specifically contributed to earning revenue to cover the cost of operations. Managers do not have detailed budgets or control over their running costs and as a result would not have a clear knowledge of what it costs to run their centre;
- The JobsNet software was being used widely and staff appeared to have a very good working knowledge of the JobsNet system requirements and operations, using it extensively in their daily tasks;
- The JobsNet system is used to record all transactions relating to jobseekers and employers and data entry requires significant staff time in keeping records up to date, creating the risk that staff become ‘captives’ of the system at the expense of servicing employers and jobseekers in a timely manner;
- It was evident that there was a strong emphasis on using the system to match and refer clients’ details to employers;
- All acknowledged that the ratio of referrals to actual placements was very high but stated that it was very difficult to find out from employers whether they had selected someone or from jobseekers whether they had been successful in finding a job;
- No formal partnership arrangements were in place with MOLRFE or CCC at any of these locations and there were no official links or regular meetings with the local officers of MOLRFE offices;
- Only two of the sites visited had a MOLRFE staff member still working in the JobsNet office. In the other three locations, staff had either been recalled or had returned to the Ministry as long ago as 2004;
- No specific programmes or services were being offered in these offices to assist disadvantaged groups but staff stated that when these clients came in to register, they were assisted through mainstream services;

5.4 Referrals versus Placements

The latest JobsNet Progress Report notes that, for the nine months up to March 2006, 109,429 jobseekers were referred for employment but that only 2,199 of those were confirmed as ‘recruitments’⁹. JobsNet management acknowledges that ‘confirmed recruitments’ remain very low. A key issue JobsNet has yet to solve is how to ensure that information on recruitments is obtained.. In the first two years it relied exclusively on information from employers. In 2005 JobsNet, for the first time, carried out surveys¹⁰ of jobseekers based, in one case, on random selection from the database and, in another, on recently referred jobseekers. Although the population used for these surveys differed, the results were similar. They indicated quite clearly that actual placements are considerably higher than those reported by employers. The surveys have so far been limited in scope and carried out by JobsNet’s own staff but they nevertheless show that actual placements are likely to be at least four to five times higher than

⁹ Page 22, JobsNet Project Progress Report, 1st July 2005 – 31st March 2006.

¹⁰ Telephone interview survey, Gampaha 2005; Survey of 20 Jobseekers in each office who had been referred for interviews within the previous 2 weeks, March 2006.

those reported. This suggests that JobsNet may, in fact, have achieved its technical sustainability targets for placements (7,000 placements after Year 2). However it appears that no procedures have been put in place to validate more accurately the outcome of referrals to employers as a standard part of JobsNet procedures and services. The conclusion to be drawn from the surveys would appear to be that such procedures should be based on jobseekers information rather than on information provided by employers.

5.5 Institutional Sustainability

Relevance of the 'Institutional Sustainability' Targets

The criterion for institutional sustainability used in the Project Document was number of memberships. JobsNet very clearly failed to meet the targets set up for this criterion during its first year of existence and also failed to do so during the first two years of the Sida financed implementation period. Yet the stakeholders have continued to support JobsNet. They have obviously not drawn the conclusion that JobsNet's inability to meet the target warrants abandoning the project due to lack institutional sustainability.

We believe that there could be at least three explanations for this stand taken by the stakeholders. One would be that they have come to realize that the number of memberships is a poor measure of institutional sustainability. Alternatively, the reason for the low number of membership subscriptions could be due to poor performance on the part of the private sector partner in combination with the fact that JobsNet has only been able to service a part of the total number of Sri Lanka's employers. Thirdly, the stakeholders may have taken the view that JobsNet's ability to attract members may take longer time than originally envisaged.

Our view is that there is merit in all three explanations. The number of memberships is a poor measure of the degree of support JobsNet could muster from Sri Lanka's employers because experience has shown that it does not offer them the product they demand. It offers referrals not placements. There is also little doubt that the change of leadership in both the CCC and later in the Ministry affected the commitment to JobsNet of both of these stakeholders, at least for a period of time. It is also likely that the diminished role of CCC created a perception within the private sector that JobsNet is a government entity. It is likely to take both time and a resurrected PPP to change this perception.

Institutional Sustainability and Governance

Another indicator of institutional sustainability is the operation of its governance function. Governance of JobsNet has been entrusted to a Steering Committee which consists of representatives of the key stakeholders: the MOLRFE, CCC, ILO and Sida. The Steering Committee met only twice in 2004 (17 November and 20 December), twice in 2005 (5 May and 19 September) and so far only once in 2006 (an emergency meeting on 12 April). Given this low frequency of meetings and based on a review of Steering Committee meeting Minutes, it would seem that the implementation task has been left largely to the Technical Adviser and to the JobsNet management team. The Steering Committee has not been called on to provide guidance and direction to the project. As a result, JobsNet has continued to develop as an entity but with a number of key issues remaining unresolved. These include:

- appointment of other private sector representatives to replace CCC and ensure the PPP model was maintained;
- decision on which jobseekers should be encouraged to register;
- how to assist or refer elsewhere jobseekers who are not job-ready or not interested in vacancies in the private sector;
- a review of JobsNet fee charging structure and rationale;

- decision on the status of JobsNet as a legal entity; and
- a transition strategy for JobsNet at the conclusion of project funding.

The low frequency of Steering Committee meetings has made decision on several of these issues long overdue. In particular, the present arrangement with JobsNet having no legal status is irregular, jeopardizes the continuation of the project and is unfair to staff employed under its letterhead.

Our conclusion regarding the governance aspect of JobsNet as an institution is that there is room for considerable improvement. A certain indifference on the part of the Ministry coupled with a clear lack of interest on the part of CCC has made it difficult for ILO, Sida and JobsNet's management to pursue the objectives of JobsNet. Furthermore, until the issue of a legal entity for JobsNet is resolved its institutional sustainability is clearly quite unsatisfactory.

5.6 Sustainability of Technical Systems

System Development

JobsNet has developed a very sophisticated software system to support its operations. JobsNet staff currently use the Database Client Server software for job seeker registration and job order registration. At the same time, a web based dynamic site allows jobseekers and clients to interact with JobsNet online over the Internet. Synchronization software is used for data transfer between remote JobsNet centres and the Head office database in Colombo. The software provides an automated matching system and allows individual jobseeker records to be updated with feedback and new information.

Further enhancements are currently being developed and some have already been introduced. These include changes covering a new data entry form which will capture additional jobseeker information; improved occupational coding which is expected to provide more accurate matching against vacancies; and an intranet service which has improved the exchange of documents and information between offices. The intranet also provides improved administrative features for managers and includes a 'Business Tracker' – for improved information on employer profiles and visits, 'News Events' – for faster sharing of information on upcoming events and 'Daily Reporting' – for improved performance monitoring and evaluation. A major 'clean-up' of the database is currently underway with letters being sent to jobseekers registered with JobsNet to clarify their current status.

It will be essential for JobsNet management and staff to maximise the use of this major investment in software support and additional enhancements to generate 'placements' that earn revenue. The costs of system support are high and must be recouped through improved services to employers willing to pay for recruitments.

Database Integrity

The database now contains over 160,000 jobseeker records and an important issue will be for the Steering Committee and JobsNet to safeguard and ensure the integrity and proper handling of JobsNet's database once the project is completed and ILO has terminated its involvement. As interconnectivity and IT communication possibilities expand, database integrity will become a more pressing concern. We understand that there is at present no law in Sri Lanka governing the handling of database information.

In the absence of such a law and a proper enforcement system, we believe that the three parties that have appeared to the public as guarantors of JobsNet, i.e. the Ministry, CCC and ILO, have a joint moral responsibility to ensure that international best practice rules are used to safeguard the information in the database and to govern the manner in which it is used.

5.7 Can JobsNet Be Sustainable?

Current Revenue Base

In 2005 JobsNet's revenue from its core activities (placements, referrals, provisions of CVs, etc) amounted to LKR 3.4 million compared with total costs of LKR 44.7 million, i.e. only 7.6 percent of costs. Five of JobsNet's 19 offices accounted for 76 percent earnings from core activities. Revenue from core activities for those five and for the total JobsNet operation was as follows:

Item	HQ Colombo	Rathnapura	Negombo	Ampara	Kurunegala	Total
Membership	1,537.0	394.0	231.0	116.0	119.0	3,065.8
Direct Mail	35.5		25.0			60.5
Sales CV	121.2	1.0	11.1	15.0	7.3	269.4
Total core revenue	1,921.9	395.0	267.1	131.0	126.3	3,395.7
	49.6%	11.6%	7.0%	3.9%	3.7%	100%

In addition to the revenue from core activities, JobsNet earned LKR 478,000 from non-core revenue sources such as interest, rent, training fees, Internet café income, etc.

Membership fees accounted for 90 percent of JobsNet's core activity revenue. Colombo accounted for half of JobsNet's total membership revenue. Some eight of the 19 centres had membership revenue of less than LKR 50,000. Earnings from sale of CVs accounted for only eight percent of total revenue and covered less than one percent of total costs.

For the first quarter of 2006 JobsNet earned LKR 1,181,000 from core activities. This corresponds to LKR 4.7 million on an annual basis and thus represents an increase of 38 percent compared with 2005. The increase is due mainly to higher membership revenue but JobsNet also earned some LKR 76,000 in placement fees.

Operating and Overhead Costs

The distribution of costs and the contribution margins for the five centres with the highest revenue was as follows:

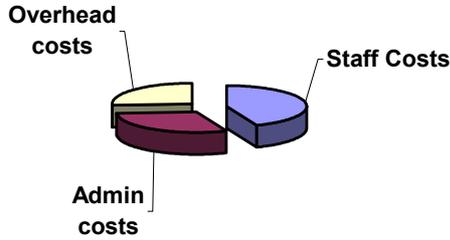
(LKR thousand)	HQ Colombo	Rathnapura	Negombo	Ampara	Kurunegala	Total
Staff cost	6,289.0	388.4	356.5	560.7	583.5	13,562.2
Contribution I	-4,367.0	45.0	-86.5	-416.2	-455.2	9,688.6
Admin costs	16,369.6	344.0	241.6	224.9	125.5	19,521.0
Contribution II	-20,736.6	-275.0	-309.0	-641.1	-580.8	-29,209.6
Overhead costs	11,555.4	0.0	19.2	0.0	0.0	11,618.6
Surplus/deficit	-32,292.1	-313.4	-331.0	-641.1	-580.8	-40,828.2
Extra-ordinary income	1,835.2	38.4	2.9			1,835.2

Only one centre – Rathnapura – was able to cover staff costs with its own earnings. JobsNet earned a total of LKR 1.9 million from a donor-funded project (4R).

The results for the first quarter of 2006 show total costs some 25 percent above those for 2005 – a total of LKR 12.5 million for three months or the equivalent of LKR 50 million for the full year. Unless this trend is reversed the deficit is likely to be considerably higher than for 2005.

Total 2005 operating and overhead costs exceeded revenue by a factor of more than 10. The largest single cost item was staff remuneration and related costs. It amounted to LKR 13.6 million and accounted for 30 percent of total costs. For the first quarter of 2006 staff cost had reached an annual level of LKR 18 million. Administrative costs at LKR 20.2 million (of which LKR 8.8 million was for data communication) amounted to 44 percent and head office overheads to 26 percent.

Operating and Overhead Costs



As of May 2006, JobsNet had a staff of 106 persons of which 62 were staff directly employed by JobsNet (38 in centres and 24 at head office) and 44 were seconded from the government or otherwise wholly or partly subsidized. Of these, five have been engaged for the donor funded AES project. On average JobsNet had between three and five persons in each centre of whom two were staff directly employed by JobsNet.

In 2005 the staff costs at the Colombo office corresponded to approximately half of the total and head office administrative staff accounted for over 80 percent of total head office staff. A total of 27 persons, 24 of whom are JobsNet employees, are employed at the head office for administrative and other purposes.

Three items accounted for 75 percent of the 2005 administrative cost. These were data communication costing a total of LKR 8.8 million, advertising and promotion at LKR 2.6 million and vehicle rent at LKR 1.1 million. Overhead costs in 2005 corresponded to LKR 11.5 million of which the largest items were depreciation (LKR 6.0 million) and a management fee paid to CCC (LKR 3.7 million).

In spite of somewhat lower data communication costs and a sharp reduction in the cost of management fees, the administrative and overhead costs of the first quarter of 2006 remained at the 2005 level. Part of the reason was the cost for cleaning up the database.

The scope for cost reduction is likely to be considerable. JobsNet needs to orient its activities towards its clients and serve jobseekers only to the extent they represent a value for employers. The implication is that centres which do not serve employers and which do not generate employable jobseekers cannot be supported. The main measures for reducing costs would be a reduction of regional centres and of head office administration as well as a cut back in data communication.

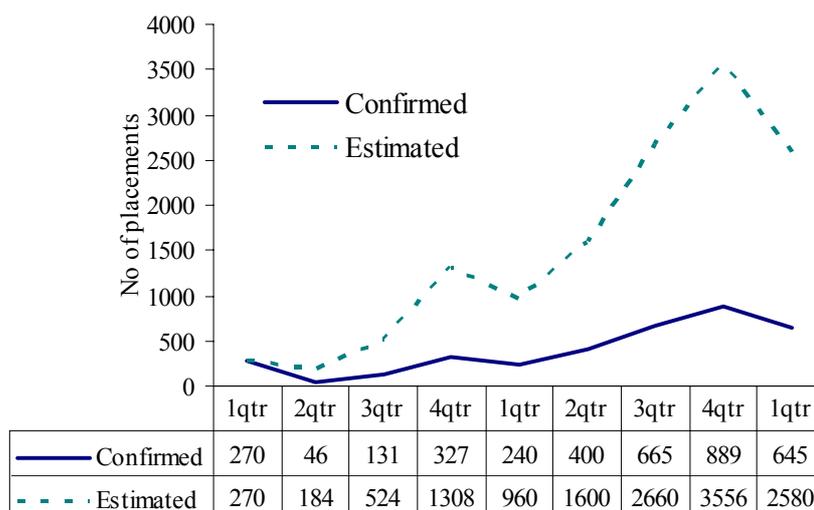
Possible Future Revenue Base

JobsNet’s membership revenue base is entirely inadequate for sustaining the organisation and, in addition, it shows signs of declining. A switch to placement fee appears to be the only feasible alternative. A normal fee for placement services in Sri Lanka corresponds to one month’s salary or wage. The common salary level for JobsNet referrals is, according to management, LKR 10,000. During the first quarter of 2006 JobsNet earned a total of LKR 76,000 for placement services. Six of those placements appear to have been on market terms for private employers while the others were for donor funded and tsunami related employment programs. The six placements generated revenue of LKR. 57,870 corresponding to LKR 9,645 per placement.

The graph below sets out,

- on the one hand, the confirmed number of placements made through JobsNet referrals for each quarter since January 2004; and
- on the other, the estimated actual number of placements that have resulted from JobsNet referrals during the same period (based on jobseeker surveys).

For the last nine months these two levels of placements have averaged respectively 250 and 1,000 per month corresponding to approximately 3,000 and 12,000 per year. If JobsNet could maintain this level of placements and be able to charge an average of LKR 10,000 per placement it would receive some LKR 30 million per year from the confirmed placements and collect as much as LKR 120 million for all estimated placements.



	Average placements/mth	Corresponding placements/yr	Placement fee (LKR)	Annual placement revenue (LKR m)
Confirmed	244	2,932	10,000	29.3
Estimated	977	11,728	10,000	117.3

It should be noted that some of the placements in recent months may have been related to special aid programs such as the AES and others. For those the fee is considerably lower and they do not represent a sustainable source of revenue.

However, even with this proviso, it would appear that JobsNet’s best chance of becoming financially sustainable would be to focus on placements and to introduce systems that give referred jobseekers a tangible incentive to report if and when they have been employed. The relatively attractive earning prospects for a JobsNet focused on placement should not detract from the need to reduce costs. JobsNet needs to cover its full operating costs, including the cost of staff currently subsidised by the Ministry and others, from mid-2007. JobsNet’s own revenue projections for 2006 total LKR 20 million while costs are likely to reach and possibly exceed LKR 50 million.

Cost Reductions

JobsNet should require its regional centres to at least breakeven after staff and administrative costs. An assessment should be made as to which centres would be able to do so after a given period of say two years. Available data, corroborated by management’s assessment, has suggested that such criteria would lead to the closure of some five to seven regional offices. This would, in comparison with 2005 costs, reduce staff and administrative costs by LKR 2.1 and LKR 0.5 million respectively. This would in part be offset by the fact that JobsNet would need to pay the full unsubsidized cost of its seconded staff.

In 2005 total headquarter administrative costs corresponded to LKR 33.5 million. The 2006 costs are likely to reach the same level. Centre costs in 2005 amounted to a mere LKR. 11.2 million. Significant reductions of JobsNet’s costs can therefore only be achieved by reducing JobsNet’s head office administrative staff and operating and overhead costs.

Conclusion

JobsNet should be able to become financially sustainable on the basis of the private sector market in Sri Lanka provided it switched to a placement fee basis and achieved sharp improvements in the quality of its jobseeker database. Unless this is done urgently, JobsNet will be heading for a financial collapse as

revenue with the current business model based on membership fees is entirely insufficient for covering JobsNet's costs.

A prerequisite for financial sustainability is also that the current rapid escalation of costs is halted and preferably reversed. During the first quarter of 2006 the average monthly deficit increased by 10 percent – from LKR 3.2 million in 2005 to LKR 3.5 million.

6. Special Concerns

6.1 Gender Dimension

Quarterly reports provide aggregate data on registrations by gender but most statistics and tables reported on do not contain a breakdown by sex or age.

Of the 34 Tables and Figures presented in the report only two Figures provided any information by gender. These were Figures 15 and 16 Jobseekers by sex at 31/3/2005 and at 31/3/2006 respectively. These figures were cumulative figures of all registrations since JobsNet commenced. It was noted that 6 percent of registrations were unspecified in March 2006 (down from 8 percent in 2005). It would appear that in early registrations gender status had not been identified but this has subsequently been rectified.

The practice of showing tables and figures by sex should be adopted in all future reports. Centre Managers should also monitor their activities using these indicators.

A consultant was recruited to conduct an evaluation on gender aspects of JobsNet in November 2005. The TOR were to

- Analyze the gender aspects internally in JobsNet and suggest improvements. The analysis will cover employees, procedures, language on the website and in written material, attitude towards men and women, gender stereo types.
- Produce gendered data from existing information in the JobsNet database. An analysis will also be done to determine whether JobsNet is doing better relative to the overall employment situation in Sri Lanka for Sri Lankan men and women.
- Provide suggestions for Jobs Net in the future: How can more gender sensitive approach ensure jobs for women and men?
- Training of local gender specialists. Under this local gender specialists will be trained and execute different aspects of research.

The consultant's final report was not available at the time of this review.

There was no evidence of specific programmes having been developed to assist other disadvantaged jobseekers, however comments from staff indicated that these clients are assisted through mainstream services available at JobsNet offices.

7. Findings and Recommendations

7.1 A Dysfunctional PPP

Both NORAD's and Sida's commitment of funds was predicated on JobsNet being a PPP and on management being provided by the private partner/s. Because of the withdrawal of CCC, JobsNet is today a dysfunctional PPP and it has been so for considerable time without any efforts being made to address the situation. The responsibility for this state of affairs rests with the Ministry. Its failure to invite other private sector actors to fill the void left by CCC is a breach of an implicit commitment made when the government solicited donor funding for the project. It has also had a clearly detrimental effect on the governance of JobsNet and probably exacerbated its problems with financial sustainability.

Recommendation

The Ministry should take immediate steps to resurrect the PPP. Our interviews with a number of social partners have made it abundantly clear that there is considerable private sector interest in the continued existence of JobsNet and a willingness on the part of several such partners to play an active role in JobsNet including providing day to day management. The EFC, the Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry of Sri Lanka, The Ceylon Workers Congress, the National Association of Trade Union for Research and Education (NATURE) are just some of the social partner organisations that would be interested in playing a role in a resurrected PPP for JobsNet.

The short time remaining with Sida funding and the seriousness of JobsNet's financial situation makes the issue of private sector involvement a very urgent one. The Ministry should accept to complete efforts to involve social partners in JobsNet within a given period of no more than two to three months. If such efforts do not produce a result satisfactory to Sida and ILO within this period, our recommendation would be for JobsNet to be split into two – one JobsNet to be a purely private sector entity owned and run by interested social partners and another to be a JobsNet that could be integrated with the Ministry's existing employment service in the manner suggested by the MOLRFE consultant. The Ministry and the private sector would each be given the right to make use of the software and to access the database. The private sector partners should be invited to take over JobsNet's direct employees and facilities while the Ministry should take back its staff currently serving with or seconded to JobsNet. Ministry premises currently occupied by JobsNet should revert to the Ministry unless otherwise agreed. The database, could under this scenario, be administered by ILO which would also ensure that its integrity be protected.

We do not recommend that JobsNet be privatised in favour of a profit seeking private owner. There are two reasons for this. The first is that JobsNet is a unique system in Sri Lanka that could render a private sector owner a monopoly position in the market. The second is the database integrity issue. Jobseekers that have registered are likely to have done so in the belief that the database would be a national asset controlled by an organisation without a profit motive. The privatisation of JobsNet or the transfer of JobsNet in its entirety to the government, as was suggested by MOLRFE's consultant, could, in our opinion, only take place if and when all individuals who have registered data with JobsNet have been asked to concur.

7.2 JobsNet's Market

JobsNet was created for the purpose of serving the entire Sri Lankan employment market, public as well as private and to facilitate foreign employment for Sri Lankan jobseekers. However, JobsNet has not so far served and is unlikely to serve in the future the large public sector employment market. It has likewise not been able to serve overseas employers of Sri Lankan labour because this has not been in

the interest of the Ministry. JobsNet has been left with the private sector which in 2005 accounted for less than one third of the measurable demand for labour in Sri Lanka.

Recommendation

JobsNet should redefine its vision, its mission statement, its message to the public and its products so that it is perceived as capable of delivering on its promise. JobsNet should make it clear that it can only provide employment in Sri Lanka's private sector and, in the case of overseas employment, through some selected foreign employment agencies. This would not correspond to the "comprehensive employment services" touted in the mission statement.

JobsNet's market should be clearly defined as Sri Lankan employers and foreign employment agencies. Unless there is agreement reached among stakeholders for JobsNet to serve directly employers outside Sri Lanka, its management should not pursue this objective.

7.3 JobsNet's Products

JobsNet has overly focused on jobseeker registration and system development at the expense of employment services for employers and financial sustainability. The result is a huge database of jobseekers (many of whom are regarded by employers as unemployable) and a failure to meet original sustainability targets. JobsNet has yet to define and test sellable employment products for private sector employers. It also has to determine how to charge for them. Experience to date strongly suggests that employers prefer to pay for actual placement. JobsNet's lack of focus on placements as opposed to registrations and referrals, in combination with a jobseeker rather than employer focus, has given JobsNet an image of poor quality among employers. 'JobsNet supplies quantity but very little quality' would be a summary of comments made by customers interviewed by the Consultants.

JobsNet's two main products for jobseekers are, firstly, registration and, secondly, matching. JobsNet is currently precluded from charging for these services. The fact that they are free poses a problem in that it risks diminishing both the quality of the database and of the referral process, the latter because many jobseekers fail to show up for interviews as it costs them nothing to be serviced by JobsNet.

Recommendations

JobsNet should focus on providing recruitment and placement services only. It should do away with the cumbersome membership structure which is clearly not able to generate but a fraction of the funds it needs. JobsNet must develop processes and products to respond to the demand for placement services and put in place procedures to measure actual placement performance. There are clear indications that such procedures must be based on information supplied by the jobseekers. This brings up the issue of how jobseekers could be motivated to supply information.

JobsNet should not register unemployed persons it deems unemployable in a register used for matching purposes. This is both a waste of JobsNet's own staff time and unfair to the respective jobseekers as it encourages false expectations. In order to improve the quality of the database, JobsNet could consider creating financial incentives for jobseekers in ways that would not conflict with the requirement that it did not charge jobseekers. One way could be to demand a deposit by the jobseeker that is referred and selected for interview. The deposit would be refunded after the interview provided the jobseeker attended. This would have the added advantage of improving the quality of JobsNet's referral process since jobseekers that would not be prepared to pay a deposit could be eliminated. Another option could be to offer an outright cash bonus to jobseekers that actually land a job resulting from a JobsNet referral.

7.4 JobsNet's Sustainability

As of April 2006 JobsNet was financially unsustainable without substantial support for covering operating costs from Sida. In 2005 JobsNet's revenue from employment related activities (mainly membership fees) amounted to less than 10 percent of total costs. Although financial sustainability was a key sustainability criterion in the Project Document it appears that the pursuit of sustainability started in earnest first in the latter part of 2005. It led management to seek revenue from both sustainable and unsustainable sources. The latter being mainly donor funded programs.

One reason that financial sustainability has remained a relatively unimportant issue for so long may have been management's belief that JobsNet could "earn massive income from foreign employment"¹¹. However, the Ministry, being a key stakeholder, is of the view that JobsNet should not serve foreign employers directly. It appears that management's and to some extent also the Technical Adviser's reluctance to accept this view has resulted in the establishment of an organisation that can be sustained only by capturing part of what is viewed as oligopolistic profits of Sri Lanka's many foreign employment agencies. JobsNet has devoted considerable resources to jobseeker counselling, training needs assessment and training provision and it has created an administrative overburden that accounts for 70 percent of total costs.

It appears, however, that JobsNet could become financially sustainable by switching to a business concept based on provision and fee revenue for placement services. Even relatively conservative assumptions regarding the number of placements achieved would appear to generate funds that should cover costs provided JobsNet achieves some cost reductions mainly at its head office.

Recommendations

JobsNet should eliminate activities for which it cannot find paying clients irrespective of whether or not these activities benefit jobseekers. These activities should be left to the government and/or to other organisations that are not required to be sustainable until such time as JobsNet has a surplus that it can use for unsustainable but worthy purposes. Alternatively, separate funding should be provided for such activities if the stakeholders deem JobsNet to be a better suited vehicle for these services.

JobsNet needs to take steps to halt the increase in its organisation and operating costs. Staff reductions should be made at its Colombo office where general administration and data communication accounts for a major part of its costs. It would also need to close some of its regional centres although their contribution to the deficit is relatively limited.

7.5 Institutional Sustainability

JobsNet in its present form is not institutionally sustainable. The reason for this is not the poor level of membership subscriptions but rather two other factors, namely:

1. the lack of a committed private sector partner, and
2. the lack of legal status.

A further factor which indicates a lack of institutional sustainability is the paucity of governance input on the part of the stakeholders and through the Steering Committee.

Recommendation

For private partner see 7.1 above. The issue of JobsNet's status has been pending for some eight months. The Consultants have not been able to find any reason why a resolution should be delayed further.

¹¹ Management's note to the Consultants dated May 2006.

7.6 Data Base Integrity

Little thought appears to have been given to how the proper handling and integrity of JobsNet's database should be guaranteed once the project is completed and ILO has terminated its involvement. In the eyes of the public the integrity of the database is likely to have been guaranteed so far by the Ministry, CCC and ILO whose logos are featured on virtually all JobsNet presentation material. These organisations share a moral obligation to ensure that the data currently stored for some 160,000 jobseekers is used only for the purpose for which it was solicited.

Recommendation

The stakeholders need to find a lasting solution to the issue of database integrity. It is recommended that a set of rules should be established for access and handling on a 'need to know' basis and that ILO could have a continuing advisory role in oversighting these arrangements.

8. Lessons Learned

The project still has 8 months before completion but a number of lessons could be learned from the experiences to date:

- Private sector representation on the partnership Steering Committee should provide for more than one social partner to be represented. From discussions with a range of social partners there would be considerable interest and support for JobsNet from this group.
- Targets should be reduced to a minimum and be linked clearly to objectives. A distinction should be made between targets, workload indicators and performance ratios or indicators.
- Care should be taken to ensure that system enhancements are in line with objectives and not 'over-glamorise' the service. An assessment should be made about the usefulness of enhancements such as automatically generated text messages and emails to advise jobseekers about matching and referrals and this should not be relied on as the primary source of contact unless and until it has been proven to be the fastest and most effective method of communicating with jobseekers.
- The failure to replace the private sector partner with other private sector partners/representatives seriously weakened the Steering Committee's capacity to guide and monitor the project and resulted in the ILO as implementing partner taking on a much greater management role in the project – which was not envisaged originally. Good governance through the Steering Committee is an essential element of project implementation.
- Concerns by MOLRFE that JobsNet was not able to provide adequate access to services for jobseekers at village level and that its own HRPS services could do this more effectively were not raised at Steering Committee level. Such issues should be addressed and resolved as quickly as possible.

Attachment 1. Terms of Reference

1. Background and Justification

1.1. Introduction

JobsNet – the National Employment Sourcing & Delivery System – is a referral system that benefits jobseekers, local and foreign employers and self-employment seekers by providing referrals to jobs and training, information, advice and career guidance. It is an on-line referral system with a web interface at www.jobsnet.lk. The project is a public sector – private sector partnership (PPP). As a National project the Ministry of foreign Employment and Labour relationship representing the Public sector joins hands with the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, harnessing the support and active participation of the private sector in this unique partnership. Currently, the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce manages JobsNet. The project is funded by Sida for its operations and HRD for a period of 3 years with effect from 2004.

Vision

Be the Premier Provider of Globally Employable and Competitive Human Capital, Thereby Enhancing and Sustaining the Qualitative Standard Of Living of All Sri Lankan

Mission

To Deliver Comprehensive Employment Services Through A Transparent And Merit Based System Driven By Information Communication Technology In A Sustainable Manner

Role

- Influence necessary policy changes through lobbying to the relevant authorities
- Exploit new avenues to mitigate unemployment
- Act as a catalyst in identifying emerging trends in the job market
- Disseminate information enabling training providers to be relevant in their programs
- Act as a change agent in the field of Employment

Values

- Commitment to a Nations' Cause
- Sustainable in all our Activities
- Integrity in-built
- Nurturing Team spirit
- Reflecting Professionalism
- Proactive Thinking
- Striving for Excellence

1.2. Chronology of the project

The National Employment Policy was presented to the Sri Lankan Parliament in May 2002. The JobsNet project is linked to the 7th initiative of that policy document. A 3 year project program was presented in November 2002 and funded by NORAD for the first year of operations.

A second phase of the project was prepared by ILO and proposed to Sida in January 2004. A specific agreement between the government of Sweden and the Government of Sri Lanka was signed on 24th

March 2004. Next to this an agreement between the Swedish government and ILO was signed on the 29th March 2004.

Before becoming operational two other agreements were needed: one between ILO as the managing body, and the Ministry of Labour (also signed on the 29th March), and the other between the ILO and the CCC, as subcontractor, signed 31st May 2004.

The change in government in Sri Lanka explains why phase I and II of the project are not fully linked to each other. Since March 2004 the second phase has been implemented and the project funding will end in January 2007. The project became operational in September 2004, and in September 2005, in response to the tsunami disaster, an additional extension program was added to the initial project.

2. Scope and Purpose

The objective of the external evaluation is twofold: firstly, the evaluation team is expected to assess whether the project is on the way towards, or has achieved its immediate project objectives measured against the set performance indicators stated in the programme document. Secondly, the evaluation should provide a basis for Sida's and ILO's assessment of the future development of the programme. In particular, it is expected that the evaluation will include recommendations with regard to design and scope of continued support in the light of the proposed privatisation, or any alternative arrangement in the organisational structure that is deemed to ensure the sustainability of the programme results."

3. Aspects to be Addressed

3.1 Project design

Is the original justification for the project still valid and confirmed by the project design?

Were the project objectives as stated in the project document clearly formulated, describing the solutions to identified needs?

Were the indicators of achievement clearly defined, describing the changes to be brought about?

Were the target realistic and well documented?

Has the project design built on lessons learned from previous activities that are relevant to project objectives?

Were the project assumptions correct? What, if any, divergence is there between project assumptions and reality?

3.2 Implementation (delivery process)

Have the inputs (human, financial and material) to the project been provided as planned?

Have the planned activities been carried out and the outputs produced with the expected quality, quantity and timeliness?

What was the impact of factors external to the project on the execution?

Has the overall execution of the project focused on the attainment of the objectives?

What activities have taken place, outputs produced and impact realised over and above the project document?

How does this project relate to other ILO/Sida projects in Sri Lanka or other similar projects elsewhere in Asia?

3.3 Performance

Relevance:

Describe the needs addressed by the project as stated in the project document and determine whether these needs still exist

Indicate the views of the intended beneficiaries and/or direct recipients on the usefulness of the outputs of the project and whether the progress made towards the achievement of the objectives has contributed to meeting their needs

Describe alternative ways to meet the needs of the intended beneficiaries and/or direct recipients, if any.

Effectiveness:

Are the objectives of the project clear, realistic and likely to be achieved within the established time schedule and with the allocated resources?

Describe the progress made towards the achievement of the objectives and specify major accomplishments and/or drawbacks

Describe whether the number and/or type of intended beneficiaries and/or direct recipients have been reached according to plan. Explain the reasons for and the nature of changes, if any

Describe the effects of the project on the situation of the intended beneficiaries and/or direct recipients. How many successful matches have been achieved during the programme?

Describe any internal and/or external factors that have (positively or negatively) influenced the achievement of the objectives

Describe the ways to improve the effectiveness of the project, if any

How do other organisations, public and private, perform in this field?

How was knowledge shared within and between NPP employment creation projects?

How does the integrated employment creation knowledge-sharing project perform based on a benchmarking with similar projects inside and outside the ILO?

Assess the impact of knowledge shared based on measurable (proxy) indicators

Efficiency:

To what extent has the programme achieved technical efficiency (could the same technical results been achieved using less costly interventions?) and locative efficiency (in cost-benefit terms). Explain whether the project's results have justified the costs incurred

Describe alternative ways of increasing the efficiency of the programme/project, if any

Indicate the efficiency of other organisations, public and private, offering similar services.

Sustainability:

Have institutional arrangements been made to ensure the continuation and/or further development of activities initiated under the project? Describe the ways in which project clients are being equipped to assume responsibilities after the completion of the project

Will the required personnel and other resources be provided to ensure the continuation and further development of relevant activities initiated under the project? In particular, comment the expected financial viability of the programme and the revenue projections at the end when the external funds are

withdrawn. Are there any recommendations on how to improve the financial sustainability of the programme?

What is the best organisational structure to guarantee *institutional* sustainability after the project period ended? Comment also the impact of the staff turnover and the sustainability of the achieved level of knowledge within the group of implementors.

Gender Dimension:

What activities have so far been undertaken to mainstreaming gender by the project?

Have specific studies and analyses of gender issues, in relation to the subject, been used?

Have women-specific or men-specific activities been designed and implemented to enable women and men to participate in and benefit equally from the project?

How does the project's monitoring and evaluation system measure explicitly any differential effects on women and men, girls and boys?

Has the project collected relevant data disaggregated by sex?

To what extent has the project contributed to promoting gender awareness and gender mainstreaming? Are women participating in the planning, implementation and monitoring of project activities?

4. Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

The Evaluation Team shall list:

- The major findings of the evaluation (on the basis of the evaluation terms of reference)
- Conclusions based on an analysis and synthesis of the facts
- Recommendations containing practical guidance for future planning, implementation and evaluation of related activities, including suggestions on how to ensure the use of lessons learned.

5. Lessons Learned

The Evaluation Team shall formulate a general list of “lessons learned” that apply to other projects and programmes. For this purpose, two types of lessons learned shall be identified:

- Normative lessons that point out what should be done or avoided to ensure the success of these types of projects; and
- Causal lessons that show what are the likely positive or negative outcomes of certain actions or processes.

The evaluation shall also summarise the pros and cons that are particularly relevant for Jobsnet and the future development of the programme.

6. Composition of the Evaluation Team

The evaluation team should be composed of two external evaluators, agreed upon by the donor. ILO will propose an evaluation team to the donor. The proposed consultants should have experience with employment services and public-private partnerships. Working experience in as well the public and private sector is required. Knowledge and experience with the use of new technologies in employment services is an asset. English is the working language.

7. Timetable and Itinerary

The evaluation mission will be organised in the second half of May, starting on Monday 8th May. The mission will include field visits to the JobsNet headquarters and several district offices, meetings with all stakeholders and the ILO – Colombo office.

The evaluators are expected to stay 10 days in Sri Lanka and finalise their draft report within two weeks after finishing the field visit. Within two weeks of receiving ILO's and Sida's comments on the draft, a final report shall be submitted. The evaluation report shall be written in English.

8. Sources of Information

The evaluation will be provided with all available information available at the JobsNet headquarters and the ILO Colombo office in advance:

- Project documents
- Related correspondence
- Project steering committee documents
- Quarterly reports
- Audit report
- Internal staff meeting reports
- Quality survey reports
- Balance Scorecard reports

ILO will also inform the relevant organisations of the evaluation and forthcoming visits by the consultants. The consultants will be responsible for the practical arrangements in conjunction with the field visit.

9. Consultations

The evaluation team should consult all stakeholders involved in the project: employers, jobseekers, government officials, trade unions, ILO, JobsNet employees and subcontractors.

10. Final Report (preparation and dissemination)

The evaluators are also expected to write the final report following the structure stated in the ILO guidelines/Sida's evaluation manual. The evaluation teams should also be prepared to present and discuss the main findings at the Embassy of Sweden in Sri Lanka and/or at the Sida HQ upon request.

The outline of the evaluation report should follow the CODEV recommendation:

In addition, a summary of the report is to be provided in the form of a project evaluation report form (SPERF).

Attachment 2. List of Consultations May 9–17, 2006

Contact Person	Company	Telephone
Per Dans First Secretary	Embassy of Sweden 49, Bullers Lane Colombo 7	Direct – 4795426
Mr. Mahinda Madihahewa Secretary	Min. of Labour Relations & Foreign Employment Labour Secretariat, Colombo 5	2368164
Mr D. L. Kumaradasa Additional Secretary	Min. of Labour Relations & Foreign Employment Labour Secretariat, Colombo 5	2582447
Upali S. Athukorala Senior Assistant Secretary (Foreign Relations)	Min. of Labour Relations & Foreign Employment Labour Secretariat, Colombo 5	
Mr. Prema Cooray Secretary General	The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce 50, Nawam Mawatha Colombo 2	232401-3 (direct) 2421745-6 (general)
Mr. Ranil Seneviratne, Centre Manager Mr. R.C. Dassanayaka, Center Manager	JobsNet Centre Nuwara Eliya 16, Cross Street, Nuwara-eliya Kandy JobsNet Centre Kandy Basement Level, Sri Pushpadana Society Building, No:115, D.S.Senanayaka St, Kandy	Tel: 052-2234945 Tel: 081-5740700
Mr. Wasantha Centre Manager Mrs. R K Wimali Centre Manager	JobsNet Centre in Galle 02, Ward Street, Galle Jobsnet Centre in Matara 381/B, Kumarathunga Mawatha, Pamburana, Matara.	Tel: 091-2232895 Tel: 0915-450399 Tel: 041-2231530 Tel: 075-419977
Mr. Harry Sandrasekara Vice President	Ceylon Workers Congress 72, Ananda Coomaraswamy Mawatha Colombo 7.	Tel: 2574528
Mr Lesley Devendra	National Trade Union 301, T B Jayah Mawatha Colombo 10	2694074
Harsha de Alwis Senior Zonal Manager	Janashakthi Insurance 20, Staple Street Colombo 2	077 312 4128
Ms. Kanthi Yapa	Consultant and former employee Bureau of Foreign Employment	Tel: 2636521
Mr. Sam Stembo	Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry of Sri Lanka Level 5, 53, Vauxhall Lane Colombo 2	2304253-4 2421745-6
Mr. Gotabaya Dassanayaka Director – General	The Employers' Federation of Ceylon 385 J3, Old Kotte Road, Rajagiriya	2867966-8 2867943 (direct)

Contact Person	Company	Telephone
Mr. Deepthi Lamahewa Chief Executive Officer	Youth Employment Network VT Complex 354/2, Elvitigala Mawatha Colombo 5	2502093 071 4260484
Mr. Palitha Athukorale Chief Organiser	Jathika Sevaka Sangamaya 416, Kotte Road Pita Kotte.	Mobile: 0722-172512
Mr R M Rizmy Manager	Transgulf (PTE) Chatham St Colombo 01	2541076

Attachment 3. Document Sources

1. Project Document. Employment Sourcing and Delivery System in Sri Lanka: JobsNet.
2. Copies of all relevant MOU and agreements between stakeholders.
3. All JobsNet Quarterly Performance Reports.
4. Steering Committee Meeting Minutes.
5. JobsNet Corporate brochures, prospectus and publicity material.
6. JobsNet Operations Manual.
7. JobsNet Newsletters 1–10.
8. Financial Evaluation of JobsNet, KPMG Report, Nov 2005.
9. PowerPoint presentations on ‘Revenue Generation of JobsNet’, JobsNet Performance.
10. Results of 2005 Gampaha Jobseeker survey and 2006 Telephone Survey of Jobseekers.
11. Study on the Viability of the Jobsnet Project – Consultant’s Report commissioned by MOLRFE.

Attachment 4. JobsNet Tariff Card

Membership Charges*

Category	Price(SLR)	Service Offer
Subscription	2000/=	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500,= for first set of 3 CVs • Rs 200/=each additional CV
Ordinary Membership	5000/= –20,000/=	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 500,= for first set of 3 CVs • Rs 200/=each additional CV • User name and password access to jobseeker database • Preliminary interviews • Final interview location arrangements
Platinum Membership	100,000/= A flat rate of 30% of one month salary would be charged for all recruitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct web link through www.jobsnet.lk; • First fifteen recruitments FOC • User name and password access to jobseeker database • Preliminary interviews
Gold Membership	50,000/= A flat rate of 30% of one month salary would be charged for all recruitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychometric tests • Special invitee at public events • Vacancies on Hot Jobs section • E-mail alerts to target group
Silver Membership	25,000/= A flat rate of 30% of one month salary would be charged for all recruitments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free Newspaper advertisement
Super Service	One Month salary for every successful recruitment	

*Source: Promotional Brochure JOBSNET The National Sourcing and Delivery System of Sri Lanka

Attachment 5. Comments from Social Partners

Organisation	Business concept	Management
Mr. Prema Cooray Secretary General, The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce	Business concept based on membership and supply of CVs was not sufficiently attractive to CCC members. JobsNet should be more involved on the skilled side.	The original financial projections were unrealistic and with the change in Government there was also a change in focus towards greater participation of the Public sector. This was seen as going against the original scope and terms of reference of the project.
Mr. Gotabaya Dassanayaka, Director-General, The Employers' Federation of Ceylon	Federation considers it would have been good if the EFC was also involved in the project from the beginning in view of the nature and scope of its activities. Views it as critically important for Sri Lanka. Would welcome the opportunity to join Chambers of Commerce and selected Unions as stakeholders. An additional benefit for a JobsNet with such partners is that it would offer a rare opportunity for these stakeholders to work together.	Management to be entrusted to the private participants. It would need to undertake a due diligence study prior to finalizing any arrangement involving its participation.
Mr. Sam Stembo, Federation of Chambers of Commerce & Industry of Sri Lanka	JobsNet is vital for business sector and Federation is prepared to join other social partners as share stakeholders in an independent JobsNet	PPP have so far not succeeded. Government must leave management entirely to private stakeholders
Mr. Harry Sandrasekara, Vice President, Ceylon Workers Congress	It should continue but with a stronger focus on rural opportunities and the regions. It offers a unique opportunity for union members but not enough people know about JobsNet. It should not become an NGO as they do not have a good name. Union is trying to make its members more employable by way of Micro Economic Centres which could collaborate with JobsNet centres	JobsNet should collaborate with <i>Saumya-moorthy Moorthy Memorial Foundation</i> and similar organizations to assist the unemployed to become more employable. JobsNet should be a partnership between Government and social partners and the Union is prepared to play a role in JobsNet's governance.
Mr Lesley Devendra National Trade Union	JobsNet is vital and Union is actively trying to persuade Government to stick with public-private partnership concept. It should be a non profit limited liability company managed along private sector lines. It could be linked with unemployment alleviation programmes and have access to free training.	JobsNet very important and Union is prepared to play a role as a shareholder with unions and other social partners in a future JobsNet
Harsha de Alwis Senior Zonal Manager, Janashakthi Insurance	JobsNet is uniquely valuable as it has created a perception of a Private Organization among Employers. It is a 'must' for employers as it saves both time and advertising costs and offers direct access to jobseekers. JobsNet needs to improve its knowledge and understanding of employer requirements. It should develop a Training Strategy to bridge the gap between Job Seekers and Employers. Training could cover courses such as English, Salesman ship, Basic Marketing & Sales Management.	JobsNet should be managed by a Board comprising representatives from the private sector and social partners. The Government could have a place on the Board but should not have a controlling role.

Organisation	Business concept	Management
Lalith M Peiris, Managing Director George Steuarts Recruitment (PVT) Ltd	The JobsNet is a 'must' for employers as it has the potential to provide quick access to job seekers and is much cheaper and more efficient than advertising in the newspaper.	JobsNet should be run entirely on private sector lines. Government to participate only on Board level. JobsNet performance not up to par. Quality of referral is poor and delivery too slow –Very important that this is improved. Company is willing to help and to pay for good service.
Mr Rizmy, Manager Trans Gulf (PTE) LTD	JobsNet is a very valuable setup for the business sector. With Government support, it can touch the bottom line of people. It should collaborate with training organizations to make unemployed people employable. Trans Gulf prepared to pay on the basis of prospects selected for departure.	JobsNet should improve its evaluation of jobseekers and raise the quality of its database. JobsNet should grade foreign employment agencies and should be managed independently of Government

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