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# Independent evaluation of the ILO's strategy and actions for skills development for jobs and growth, 2010–2015

October 2016

EVALUATION  
OFFICE

Independent evaluation  
of ILO's strategy and actions  
to promote skills development  
for jobs and growth (2010–2015)

October 2016

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**EVALUATION OFFICE**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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ACI	Area of Critical Importance
CO	Country Office
CPOs	Country Programme Outcomes
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of the OECD)
DWA	Decent Work Agenda
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
DWT	Decent Work Team
EO	Employers Organization
EU	European Union
EVAL	ILO Evaluation Office
FPRW	Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
GB	Governing Body
HLE	High-Level Evaluation
HQ	Headquarters
ILC	International Labour Conference
ILO	International Labour Organization/Office
IOE	International Organization of Employers
IR	Implementation Report
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
OBW	Outcome Based Workplan
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
P&B	Programme and Budget
PARDEV	Partnerships and Field Support Department
RB	Regular Budget
RBM	Results Based Management

RBSA	Regular Budget Supplementary Account
RBTC	Regular Budget Technical Cooperation
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SPF	Strategic Policy Framework
TA	Technical Assistance
TC	Technical Cooperation
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WO	Workers' Organizations
XBTC	Extra-budgetary Technical Cooperation

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Any errors or omissions are the responsibility of the Evaluation Office.





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose and scope of the evaluation

In November 2015 the ILO's Governing Body mandated the Evaluation Office (EVAL) to conduct an independent high-level evaluation of the ILO's strategy, programme approach, and interventions to promote skills development for jobs growth. High-level evaluations aim to generate insights into the ILO's performance within the context of its results-based management system.

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide insight into the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the skills-related work of the ILO. The evaluation focuses on the period 2010–2015, which falls under the Strategic Policy Framework for that period. It also considers the Programme and Budget (P&B) for 2016–2017 and aims to inform the development of the strategic plan 2018–2021 and facilitate its alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The evaluation concentrates on activities associated with outcome 2 of the Strategic Policy Framework, which is based on the premise that skills development increases the employability of workers, the competitiveness of enterprises and the inclusiveness of growth. In addition, it considers other outcomes and other skills-related efforts of the ILO. The scope of the evaluation, therefore, encompasses the work of the Office as a whole, not just that of the Skills and Employability Branch (formerly Skills and Employability Department). The ILO's contribution to global skills strategies and its collaboration with multilateral partners are also considered.

### Evaluation methodology

The evaluation builds on the approach presented in EVAL's High-level Evaluation Protocol for Strategy and Policy Evaluation. This protocol sets the standards for qualitative research, which draws on multiple sources of information, including: document reviews; analyses of financial and programmatic data; key informant interviews with ILO constituents, staff and multilateral and bilateral partners in skills development; and direct observation from field visits and interviews in nine selected countries. One hundred and eighty-one people were interviewed during the course of this evaluation including ILO staff, government officials, representatives of workers' and employers' organizations, NGOs, and other multi-bilateral donors working on skills development. In addition, a survey was sent to staff in headquarters and regional offices, directors of country offices and Decent Work Teams (DWTs,) skills specialists, and the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) or project staff working on skills projects. The survey was also sent to selected representatives of workers' and employers' organizations, government officials, and other partners who were interviewed as part of the field visit data collection. A separate survey was also sent to partners of the United Nations also working on skills development.

Content analysis of specific issues was also conducted by the evaluation including an analysis of a sample of Decent Work Country Programme documents from the period 2010–2015 to assess demand for skills related support by the member States. The sample of countries analysed was selected through random sampling of all available Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) documents that were finalized between 2010 and 2015. DWCPs that started in 2014 were not included in the sample.

## FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

### Coherence

- The definition and composition of the ILO's skills strategy lacks clarity.
- The skills “strategies” set out in each biennium's P&B described only some elements of the ILO's skills related work.
- A “skills agenda” set out in key ILO Conventions and Recommendations seems to have driven much of the ILO's work in practice, but this agenda was not adequately reflected in the P&B's performance indicators. This incoherence may have led to inconsistencies and errors in reporting.
- Despite deficiencies of the ILO's skills strategy (as expressed in the P&B) as a means of guiding work, the ILO's approach proved in practice to be adaptable and responsive to the differing needs of constituents.

### Relevance

- Although skills development work has clear synergies with other work of the ILO, the P&B processes in place during the reporting period may have unintentionally created a disincentive for collaboration – though less so in the field.
- Externally, the ILO's work in skills is recognized as having a unique value and being complementary to the skills activities of its partners and constituents. In some cases, however, the different priorities of partners may conflict with the ILO's.
- The ILO's tripartite approach is seen as being relevant and appropriate to skills work, but there may be a need to strengthen links with other ministries.
- The ILO's work in skills (if not its “strategy”) aligns well with global strategies and, moving forward, can make important contributions to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### Effectiveness

- Results were reported against P&B indicators in Programme Implementation Reports, though the evaluation team had concerns about the accuracy and validity of some results.
- Based on the evaluation's field visits, the ILO's skills work was regarded as relevant and effective by its constituents and stakeholders. More work however, needs to be done.
- The ILO has engaged with UN partners and other development actors in the skills field and this work appears to have been well coordinated and complementary.

### Efficiency

- ILO work in the area of skills development seems generally to be efficient and cost-effective, but data limitations do not currently allow a detailed analysis.
- A number of significant constraints to operational efficiency and effectiveness were identified through the survey.

### Impact

- Based on site visits, the ILO's skills work has had some impact on policy development, institutional capacity and the extension of training opportunities to certain groups. Impact on the countries' ability to align training supply and demand is not yet evident in practice, but the logic of the reforms seem sound in this respect.

### Sustainability

- Staff and stakeholders perceive the ILO's skills work as having had a sustainable impact on extending access to training systems and services.

## CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

### Conclusions

Skills development is an important part of the ILO's work. It raises the value and output of labour, empowers workers and enriches their lives and improves the productivity, sustainability and competitiveness of enterprises. For many, it is a key that enables them to access the labour market, escape from poverty and gives them the opportunity to adapt to a changing world. **Skills development is a fundamental enabler of decent work.**

The considerable scope and complexity of the ILO's work in skills make any broad judgement of performance in this area very difficult. For example, work in national training system reform is hard to compare with projects that build skills to improve livelihoods in rural communities. Moreover, success in one type of work in one country might be counter-balanced by relative failure in a similar field in another.

The lack of clarity about the global organizational strategy for skills work meant that much of the work performed, though following a recognized agenda set out in key policy documents, did not reflect the Strategic Policy Framework, Programme and Budget (P&B) as well as the indicators used to measure results. The evaluation team was therefore put in the invidious position of evaluating strategic performance with a lack of clarity about strategy and with poorly-defined performance indicators.

Keeping these important factors in mind, the evaluation considered how well the Office performed in skills against the Strategic Policy Framework indicators and through direct observation from the field visits and the survey results, the evaluation draws the following conclusions:

### Relevance

Although some of the ILO's skills work in the period under review found no natural home among the Strategic Policy Framework performance indicators, in all other respects its activities and approach were relevant and appropriate, including with regard to key Conventions, Recommendations and implementation of the G20 Strategy (A Skilled Workforce for Strong, Sustainable and

Balanced Growth). In the countries visited for the evaluation, constituents were supportive of the ILO's tripartite approach, although it was noted that links might need to be strengthened beyond its traditional partner ministries. While skills development has clear synergies with other crosscutting work of the ILO, the P&B processes in place at the time the evaluation was carried out might have created a disincentive for collaboration. The evaluation noted that activities converged well in the field. Stakeholders surveyed saw the ILO as a natural leader in the area of skills work. Moreover, the recognition given by the G20 in asking the ILO to take the lead in developing the G20 Training Strategy has positioned the ILO as a global influence in skills development work. Given the high demand and need, however, further guidance may be needed on organizational priorities, including geographical focus.

### **Coherence**

Action implemented in the field was not always coherent with the strategy expressed in the P&B, which did not adequately describe the full range of activities in which the ILO was engaged to support constituents. This lack of coherence and alignment could have led to inconsistencies and errors in reporting, as country offices might have been faced with the difficult choice of either adhering strictly to the Strategic Policy Framework or adjusting their reporting to fit better with the global results framework. Furthermore, there was a lack of clarity regarding the composition and definition of ILO's skills strategy. Although staff and constituents cited a range of policy documents, there was no consensus among them. The evaluation noted that the ILO's activities harmonized with the strategies of other development agencies and United Nations (UN) partners and, moving forward, could make important contributions to the attainment of the SDGs.

### **Effectiveness**

Performance was examined through the lens of the Strategic Policy Framework. Of the five indicators linked to outcome 2, three were not met and two, on youth employment and employment services were exceeded. The evaluation team expressed concerns about the accuracy and validity of some of the reported results. In the countries visited, some of which had large technical cooperation portfolios, major successes were achieved but were not fully reflected in the Programme Implementation Reports. Generally, in the countries visited activities considered gender concerns although not in a systematic manner. Gender was not reflected thoroughly in the reporting of results. Staff and constituents interviewed had a favourable view of the effectiveness of the ILO's skills work. Although the strategy was deficient in some respects, in practice the ILO's efforts proved to be adaptable, responsive and effective in meeting the differing needs of the constituents.

### **Efficiency**

A comprehensive assessment of the efficiency of the ILO's skills would require data that the Office cannot currently provide. Such an assessment would need to include a review of the cost of all resources used to undertake specific skills activities, in addition to information on how those activities were linked to outputs and contributed to the achievement of outcomes. An examination of expenditure on skills by country raised some questions about relative return on investment. However, no conspicuous signs of inefficiency were observed in the field. In fact, in some cases a great deal had been achieved with very limited resources. Nevertheless, a number of constraints to operational efficiency and effectiveness were identified through the survey, including issues related to access to technical expertise, time required for internal decision-making and funding, including adequate access to both financial and human resources.

### **Impact**

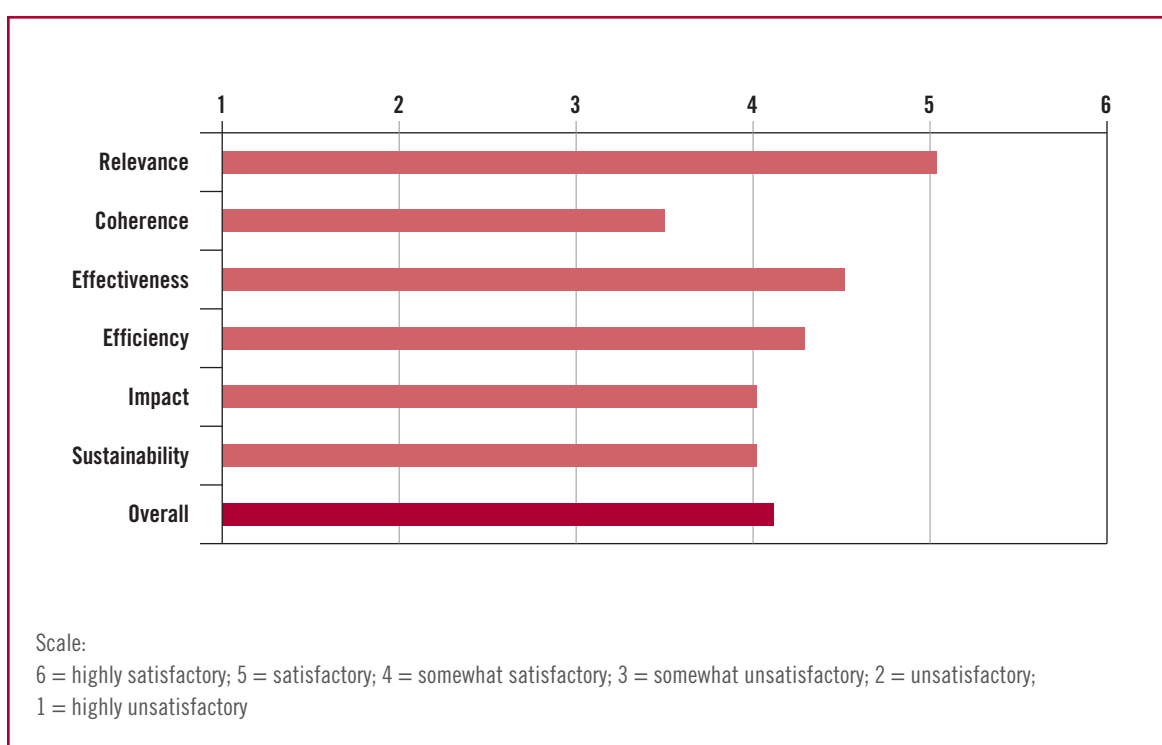
The goal as expressed in the Strategic Policy Framework was that by 2015 over 30 member States will have aligned training supply and demand and extended access to training. However, no data were available on the actual number of countries assessed as having attained this goal. The countries visited had undertaken activities that related to the 2015 goal; constituents in those countries were

generally satisfied and survey data suggested that staff and stakeholders believed that the Office had made a difference. Some staff and stakeholders questioned in the field were often unable to present any hard evidence of impact, especially in respect of “aligning supply and demand” through training system reform.

### Sustainability

Policy development and training system reform offers greater potential for sustainability than that of more community-based approaches that test delivery mechanisms, although such approaches offer more visible and immediate results for beneficiaries. This was observed by the evaluation team, which cited cases where the sustainable results for individuals were positive although the sustainability of the intervention itself was not certain. Staff and stakeholders perceived the ILO skills work as having a sustainable impact on extending access to training systems and services to identified priority groups. However, the field visits did not find much hard evidence of this.

Figure 1. Evaluation Criteria Ratings



### Lessons learned

- Although the process can sometimes be slow, training system reform is a fertile field for the ILO that has the potential to yield sustainable results and advance the Decent Work Agenda.
- While efforts to provide skills to highly disadvantaged groups at the community level can have an immediate impact, sustainability and expansion are hard to achieve.
- It is important to ensure that appropriate attention is given to the input of ministries other than the Ministry of Labour.
- The ILO needs either a more elaborate section on skills in the P&B or a separate document that guides skills work and establishes priorities in the short, medium and long term.
- Performance indicators and their measurement criteria need to reflect more accurately the work that actually leads to the outcomes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1: Enhance coherence between the P&B, key policy documents and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by mapping key skills development activities to the indicators in the strategic plan 2018–2021 and the P&B for 2018–2019.** Mapping activities in this manner will make clear what fits, and what does not. Any gaps should be highlighted and resolved through a high-level decision. Although much of the ILO's work relates to SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), its skills work also relates to SDG 4 (Quality education). The P&B 2016–2017 does not seem to recognize this adequately and the strategic plan 2018–2021 should therefore ensure that the ILO skills activities that relate to SDG 4 are adequately recognized.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS and PROGRAM	High	December 2016	Low

**Recommendation 2: Ensure that adequate technical support is available for areas of growing demand and consider the need to target specific skills-related activities in priority regions or countries.** The evaluation found that demand for different types of skills work can fluctuate and the ILO needs to ensure that it can quickly respond to such changes. It also needs to ensure an appropriate geographical spread in its skills work since for example, it found that Asia currently receives more than three times Africa's share of project funds, despite higher demand from Africa.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS	Medium	June 2017	Medium

**Recommendation 3: Clarify the full scope of the skills agenda and communicate this to ILO offices and constituents. Develop tools and guides that support offices and constituents to better integrate skills activities into the full range of development interventions.** Although skills work touches on many areas of the ILO's operations, the opportunity to include effective skills development elements can sometimes be missed. Practical tools and guides may be needed to assist ILO offices and constituents to better integrate skills into a broader range of activities. These need to be written for a broad audience (not for skills specialists).

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS	Low	December 2017	Medium

**Recommendation 4: Encourage innovation in the ILO's skills work by allocating funds to develop and test new models.** The Office appears to rely heavily on long-standing products and services and should actively pursue innovative solutions that offer sustainability and capacity that can be scaled up. Establishing an "innovation fund" to support the development and piloting of promising new models could be considered. Finding new models that are effective, scalable and cost-effective should be a priority.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS and PARDEV	Medium	December 2017	High

**Recommendation 5: Enhance the capacity of tripartite partners to participate in the ILO's skills work and ensure all relevant ministries are effectively engaged in identifying and addressing skills priorities.** Workers' and employers' representatives have a vital role to play in skills development. The evaluation identified a need to support their capacity to participate in and influence skills development. In addition, as vocational education and training often falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and not the Ministry of Labour, the ILO needs to ensure that country-level analysis and planning processes effectively engage with the Ministry of Education. Skills work also extends to other ministries, which should also have input to the ILO's skills-related work.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS, ACTRAV and ACTEMP /Country and DWT offices	Medium	December 2017	High

**Recommendation 6: Improve the systems in place to review and assess the results reported in the implementation reports and improve the capacity of the ILO's systems to report on the allocations of Regular Budget (RB) resources to outcomes.** The Office should implement a system to make a more realistic assessment of the ILO's contribution to reported results. Results reported against performance indicators need to be reviewed more thoroughly and only included in performance reports when the ILO has made a substantial and verifiable contribution. Technical interpretation, when required, should be performed jointly with PROGRAM and the technical department concerned. As a number of evaluation reports have highlighted, the expansion of the current system should be set up to better capture the use of resources, including regular budget resources, linked to outcomes. This will reflect and more accurately quantify the work undertaken by the ILO, including support to constituents and capacity-building efforts.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DDG/MR, PROGRAM, DDG/P and technical department	Medium	December 2018	High

**Recommendation 7: Improve institutional record keeping to ensure that important information is not lost when key staff leave the Office.** At times, the evaluation was hindered by the inability to access certain information, including the background to and the reasoning behind significant decisions. This was due to the departure of staff members. Some relevant information, kept in emails or personal drives, ceased to be accessible once staff members left. Basic record keeping that retains important decision-making documentation needs to be improved across the Office

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS and PROGRAM	High	December 2016	High





# INTRODUCTION

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## BACKGROUND – SKILLS AND THE ILO

Skills development raises the value and output of labour, empowers and enriches the lives of workers, and improves the productivity, sustainability and competitiveness of enterprises. For many women and men, it provides a key to access the labour market, to escape from poverty, and to adapt to a changing world. It is a fundamental enabler of decent work.

The ILO's work in skills requires an approach that can adapt to constant change. Transformations brought about by globalization, intensified competition and new technology are raising the base level of skills required to access jobs in the formal economy. Even opportunities for individuals to derive an income in the informal sector increasingly require them to enhance their vocational skills.

The ILO must also adapt its approach to the vastly different needs and circumstances of its member States. Economic, labour market and social conditions vary enormously so different responses are required in different places. Some countries with well-established vocational training systems now find they need to modernize or enhance their approach to meet contemporary labour market needs. Some less developed countries need to build these systems virtually from scratch. In other cases, skills work might be required as part of emergency responses, such as post-crisis or post-disaster situations where people sometimes need to develop new skills to survive in a world that has changed completely for them.

While the ILO's work in skills supports opportunities for people to gain decent and productive work, it is not supported by the same imperative for action as its work in promoting fundamental rights. That is to say, that the ILO skills interventions do not involve the implementation of basic principles or normative standards set out in any of the eight «fundamental» Conventions identified by the Governing Body.<sup>1</sup> Rather, the ILO's skills work is underpinned by “technical” Conventions and their associated Recommendations.<sup>2</sup>

In broad terms, the ILO's approach to its skills development work follows the same logic and theory of change that underpins the Office's activities as a whole. By providing analysis, advice, capacity building, and direct support, and by facilitating partnerships, the ILO supports governments to work

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<sup>1</sup> These eight fundamental ILO Conventions cover the following fundamental rights: freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, the effective abolition of child labour and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

<sup>2</sup> These include, in particular, the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No.142); and Recommendation 2004 (No. 195).

with employers' and workers' representatives to pass legislation, revise policies, apply programmes, and introduce initiatives that grow and extend decent work opportunities.<sup>3</sup>

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

In November 2015, the ILO's Governing Body mandated the Evaluation Office (EVAL) to conduct an independent high-level evaluation of the ILO's strategy, programme approach, and interventions to promote skills development for jobs and growth. High-level evaluations aim to generate insights into the ILO's performance within the context of its results-based management system.

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide an insight into the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the skills-related work of the ILO. Although it focuses on the period from 2010–2015 – that of the previous Strategic Policy Framework – it also looks forward, aiming to inform the development of the next strategic framework and its alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Strategic Policy Framework 2010–2015 had a separate outcome for skills – outcome 2. This had four indicators specifically related to skills development and a fifth that included the following elements:

- Indicator 2.1: Number of member States that, with ILO support, integrate skills development into sector or national development strategies.
- Indicator 2.2: Number of member States that, with ILO support, make relevant training more readily accessible in rural communities.
- Indicator 2.3: Number of member States that, with ILO support, make relevant training more readily accessible to people with disabilities.
- Indicator 2.4: Number of member States that, with ILO support, strengthen employment services to deliver on employment policy objectives.<sup>4</sup>
- Indicator 2.5: Number of member States that, with ILO support, develop and implement integrated policies and programmes to promote productive employment and decent work for young men and women.<sup>5</sup>

The Strategic Policy Framework also clearly stated that by 2015, “over 30 member States have aligned training supply and demand, extended access to training opportunities to a wider proportion of workers and have integrated skills development in sector and national development policies and in responses to global drivers of change such as technology, trade, and global warming”.

The ILO's work on skills development touched upon other areas such as support for national employment policies (outcome 1), policy guidance on skills for green jobs, and good practices to promote workplace learning in sustainable enterprises (outcome 3), tools to upgrade informal apprenticeships to combat child labour (outcome 16), training on the regulation of private employment agencies against human trafficking (outcome 15), promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities (outcome 17), skills recognition programmes for migrant workers (outcome 7) and promoting youth employment.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> ILO, ILO Programme implementation 2010–11, International Labour Conference, 101st Session, Geneva, 2012. p.3.

<sup>4</sup> Only aspects related to skills development of indicator 2.4 will be under the scope of this evaluation.

<sup>5</sup> Only skills development aspects of indicator 2.5 will be covered in this evaluation.

<sup>6</sup> Programme and Budget 2012–13 p. 26–27 P&B also notes that, “progress under the areas of critical importance will be measured through indicators attached to the 19 outcomes.” P&B 2014–15, p. 11.

In the 2014–2015 P&B, Areas of Critical Importance (ACIs) were established and these areas identified skills as a cross-cutting issue in:

- Promoting more and better jobs for inclusive growth;
- Jobs and skills for youth;
- Creating and extending social protection floors;
- Productivity and working conditions in small and medium enterprises;
- Formalization of the informal economy.<sup>7</sup>

In the transitional Strategic Plan 2016–2017 a specific outcome on skills is no longer identified separately and is embedded in several outcomes on jobs and skills for young people (outcome 1 – Indicator 1.2, 1.4) and other disadvantaged groups, decent work in the rural economy,<sup>8</sup> gender equality and non-discrimination, and the green economy.

The evaluation concentrates on activities associated with outcome 2 of the Strategic Policy Framework (*“Skills development increases the employability of workers, the competitiveness of enterprises and the inclusiveness of growth”*), but it also considers other skills-related efforts of the ILO and their links to other Strategic Policy Framework outcomes. The evaluation therefore reviews the work of the Office as a whole, not just that of the Skills Department (now called Skills and Employability Branch). The ILO’s contribution to global skills strategies, its collaboration with multilateral partners, and its global knowledge sharing initiatives are also considered.

As specified in the Terms of Reference (see **Annex A**), the evaluation analyses the Office’s “strategy, programme approach, and interventions” in skills development based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria for evaluating development assistance. Key questions under each DAC criterion are:

(i) Relevance:

- To what extent is the design of the ILO skills strategy relevant to global strategies on skills development?
- Does it address the needs of member States, governments and social partners?
- What means are there to ensure continuing relevance vis-à-vis changing needs and new developments?

(ii) Coherence and Validity of Design

- To what extent has the ILO’s strategy on skills development been coherent and complementary (in its design and implementation) to activities being carried out under other ILO Strategic Policy Framework outcome strategies and activities being implemented by other ILO departments?
- How appropriate and useful are the indicators on skills development as described in the ILO’s Strategic Policy Framework 2010–2015? Do they effectively assess its results and progress? Are the indicators measurable and traceable?
- Is the strategy coherent and complementary to similar efforts carried out by constituents, United Nations and other partners?

<sup>7</sup> ILO Programme and Budget for the biennium 2014–2015, Geneva, 2015, pp 19 and 20.

<sup>8</sup> ILO: Internal document based on «Transition from the Strategic Policy Framework for 2010–2015 to the Transitional Strategic Plan for 2016–2017: proposals for re-linking CPOs” PROGRAM 28 October 2015.

## (iii) Effectiveness

- To what extent has the ILO fulfilled its objective in skills development using the Strategic Policy Framework and P&B targets as a benchmark?
- How has ILO external coordination (with constituents, United Nations partners, World Bank and G20) and internal coordination (between sectors, technical departments, regions and sub regions) promoted the realization of skills development?

## (iv) Efficiency

- To what extent have resources been used efficiently and the programme appropriately and adequately resourced?
- What were the costs associated with the interventions? Could there have been alternative designs to render results more efficiently?

## (v) Impact and Sustainability

- To what extent have ILO actions had an impact in the form of increased capacity, necessary tools and policy improvements needed to work towards the achievement of the outcomes and outputs identified within the Strategic Policy Framework on skills development? Is it likely that the results of the interventions are durable and can be maintained or even up-scaled and replicated by constituents?
- What actions and conditions are required for achieving broader, long-term impact?
- To what extent have ILO interventions been designed and implemented in ways that have maximized sustainability at country level?
- Can observed changes and results be causally linked to the ILO interventions? Did the changes result from the ILO interventions? Are there impact assessments that can support attribution of results to ILO, and if not, what other evidence is there?
- What are the tripartite constituents' perceived benefits (differentiated by groups)?

The principle client for the evaluation is the ILO's Governing Body, which is responsible for governance-level decisions on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation. Other key stakeholders include the Director-General and members of the Senior Management Team at headquarters, the Evaluation Advisory Committee, the Employment Policy Department's Skills and Employability Branch, Youth Employment (EMPLAB), Job Creation and Enterprise Development Department (Green Jobs), Governance (child labour and trafficking) Work Quality (disabilities and migrant workers) and Multinational Enterprises and Enterprise Engagement Unit (EMP/MULTI). It should also serve as a source of information for ILO donors, partners and policy makers.

## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

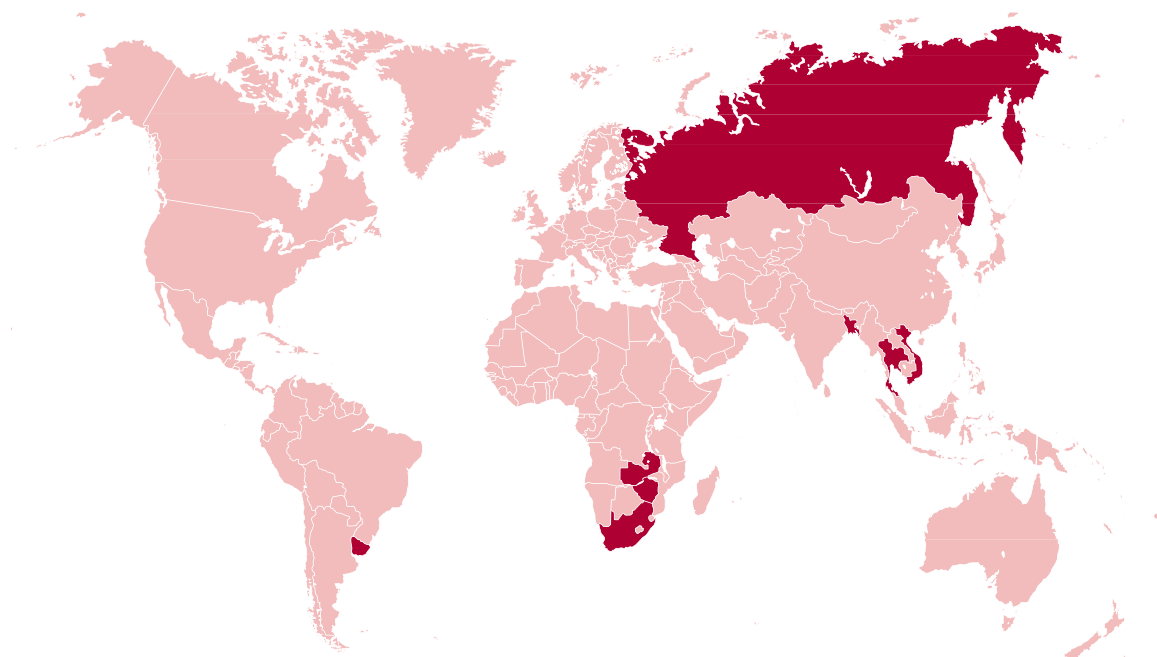
The evaluation builds on the approach presented in EVAL's High-level Evaluation Protocol for Strategy and Policy Evaluation.<sup>9</sup> It is based primarily on qualitative research, drawing on multiple sources of information, including document reviews, analyses of financial and programmatic data, key informant interviews with ILO constituents, staff and multilateral and bilateral partners in skills development, and direct observation from field visits and interviews in nine<sup>10</sup> selected countries. Some 181 interviews were conducted during the course of this evaluation including ILO staff, government officials,

<sup>9</sup> ILO. Evaluation Office: *Protocol 1: High-level evaluation protocol for strategy and policy evaluation*, (Geneva, 2015), available at: [http://www.ilo.org/global/docs/WCMS\\_215858/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/docs/WCMS_215858/lang--en/index.htm).

<sup>10</sup> The field visit countries were Armenia, Bangladesh, the Russian Federation, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe, with additional interviews in Uruguay (CINTERFOR), the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, and the ILO Decent Work Team (DWT) for Eastern and Southern Africa and Country Office for South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland.

representatives of workers' and employers' organizations, NGOs, project participants and multi-bilateral donors working in skills development. (See Annex B for a full list of interviewed people).

### Field visit and case study countries



The selection of field visit countries was based on geographic spread, the extra-budgetary technical cooperation (XBTC) resources that had been spent in the countries, and focused on ensuring that skills interventions undertaken during the period under review were included in the evaluation. While much of the work deals with issues at the global level, the evaluation also includes findings from case studies from Armenia, Bangladesh, Benin, the Russian Federation, Viet Nam, Zambia, Uruguay (CINTERFOR), and Zimbabwe, and the Skills for Employment Knowledge Sharing Platform.

A survey was conducted of ILO staff in headquarters and regional offices, directors of country offices and DWTs, skills specialists and CTA/project staff working on skills projects. The survey also requested participation from selected representatives of workers' and employers' organizations,<sup>11</sup> government officials, and other partners who were interviewed as part of the field visit data collection. The survey was sent to 238 people and the response rate was 46.2 per cent. Survey respondents (94.5 per cent) reported that they were involved in skills work in one or more countries making the respondent pool highly relevant to the ILO's skills work. A separate survey was sent to the Inter-Agency Working Group on Greening Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), which consists of members of the United Nations and multi-bilateral donor agencies, in an effort to receive feedback about how ILOs work in skills development is perceived by its partners. The Inter-Agency Working Group brings together expertise from a wide range of international organizations working in the field of TVET, skills development and the green transformation of the society and economy. The response rate for this survey was 53.8 per cent. Eighty-five per cent of respondents noted that skills development was a "very important" part of their work while 14 per cent said it was

<sup>11</sup> The survey was also sent to the representatives in Geneva of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and the International Organization of Employers (IOE).

“important”, making these respondents a highly relevant group as well. Survey questions for both surveys are available upon request.

Content analysis of specific issues was also conducted by the evaluation team including an analysis of a sample of Decent Work Country Programme documents from the period 2010–2015 to assess demand for skills related support by the member States. A classification of skills related activities from the DWCPs into intervention types was carried out to provide a more nuanced picture of the demand for skills related support. The sample of countries analysed was selected through random sampling of all available DWCP documents that were finalized between 2010 and 2015. DWCPs that started in 2014 were not included in the sample. A detailed analysis of all country programme outcomes reported in the biennial Implementation Reports was also conducted. This analysis sought to check the accuracy of reported results in terms of the defined measurement criteria.

### Methodological limitations

As has been noted in previous high level evaluations the lack of financial and reporting data on the use of regular budget resources linked to outcomes has meant that much of the work undertaken by headquarters on skills development (missions, support to constituents through advisory trips, good practice exchange trips) is not quantifiable. This is an area of systemic concern to the Office and consequently the evaluation does not have the full set of data for assessing the efficiency of ILO work in this area

Staff turnover between the periods of 2010–2015 has also made recollection of what occurred earlier in the period under question more difficult. Given that the ILO's skills development work is not confined to one department, institutional memory is diffused across the Office and is often held by individuals. When these individuals leave, important information leaves with them – especially historical knowledge of why particular decisions were made and why tasks were carried out in a particular way. As often no institutional records appear to have been kept, the evaluation team asked some important questions for which no answers could be found. See **Recommendation 7**.

## THE ILO'S WORK IN SKILLS – 2010–2015

*This section provides insight into the range, nature and rationale of ILO's skills-related activities and interventions in the period under review. It considers the wide range of problems and opportunities that the ILO's work in skills is intended to address. It begins by outlining the ILO's allocation of resources in the period and the extent of activities supported by technical cooperation funds. It then examines the broad focus areas of this work, describes the types of interventions that these areas include and provides examples drawn from the evaluation field visits.*

### ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES TO THE ILO'S SKILLS WORK

**The overall funding available to skills work linked to outcome 2 in the period was significant with around half of the total funds sourced from and spent on extra-budgetary technical cooperation projects**

*Table 1* shows that total funding allocated to outcome 2 – including regular budget, regular budget supplementary account (RBSA) and XBTC projects attached to outcome 2<sup>12</sup> – over the three biennia exceeds US\$ 282 million. This represented about 8.3% of total organizational expenditure.<sup>13</sup>

Table 1: Expenditures for outcome 2

Type of expenditure	2010–2011	2012–2013	2014–2015	TOTAL
Regular Budget (RS)	42,117,743	45,903,903	43,809,336	131,830,982
Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA)	1,961,346	895,334	2,901,818	5,758,498
Extra-Budgetary Technical Cooperation (XBTC)	56,044,080	46,975,400	41,656,007	144,675,487
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,123,169</b>	<b>93,774,637</b>	<b>88,367,161</b>	<b>282,264,967</b>

Source: Programme Implementation Reports

Outcome 2 extra-budgetary technical cooperation (XBTC) projects represented about half of the total expenditure in the period (51 per cent). Funding spent from this source and attached to outcome 2 appeared to decline over the three biennia – down by 26 per cent or US \$14.4 million. The outcome's share of the ILO's total XBTC funds also declined from 13.2 per cent in 2010–2011 to 9.7 per cent in 2014–2015.

<sup>12</sup> This does not include XBTC projects where Skills Branch has been identified as a collaborating unit – See **Table 3**.

<sup>13</sup> Based on 2012–2013 and 2014–2015. 2010–11 financial data were presented in a somewhat different format.



## Current ILO management and reporting systems do not make it easy to measure the extent of skills-related project investment across all outcome areas

The majority of skills development activity took place at the country level in line with agreed CPOs. Skills works is a highly decentralized part of the ILO's operations. Projects funded through XBTC and RBSA were mapped to a particular CPO in each country and were, in turn, mapped to a Strategic Policy Framework outcome.<sup>14</sup> As mentioned earlier, under the 2010–2015 Strategic Policy Framework, CPOs could only be attached to one outcome, meaning some projects with significant skills elements might be “hidden” elsewhere. In other words, neither projects nor CPOs were coded based on whether they included skills activities. Getting a comprehensive picture of skills-related project investment – one that is based on actual *activities* – would require a detailed analysis of all of the CPOs and projects active between 2010 and 2015, a large task that was outside the scope of the evaluation.

**By applying proxy measures, the evaluation found that around a quarter of a billion dollars of project funds (XBTC) were invested in skills-related projects in the period. Over half of these funds were for projects in Asia while around 17 per cent were for projects in Africa.**

In the absence of more precise data sources, the evaluation sought to delve deeper into the issue of skills-related projects by using an alternative, proxy measure. A search of projects data recorded in the ILO's Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS) was conducted which included a range of criteria designed to reveal a skills link (either in name, mapped outcome or through the involvement of organizational units<sup>15</sup>).

**Table 2** sets out details of (a) projects which had “SKILLS” or “EMP/SKILLS” recorded as being the “technical unit” responsible; and (b) projects which had other parts of the ILO recorded as being the “technical unit” but which recorded “SKILLS” or “EMP/SKILLS” as being the “collaborating unit”. To provide insight into the geographic focus of these projects, the projects were

Table 2: Expenditure 2010–15 on XBTC Projects

Admin Unit	Projects with Skills as Technical Unit (USD)	%	Projects with Other ILO as Technical Unit (USD)	%	Combined Total (USD)	Combined %
Africa	21,856,879	15.2	19,327,281	18.6	41,184,160	16.7
Americas	7,879,721	5.5	1,660,276	1.6	9,539,997	3.9
Arab States	8,858,078	6.2	1,670,359	1.6	10,528,437	4.3
Asia	78,520,095	54.7	55,340,023	53.4	133,860,118	54.2
Europe	11,086,838	7.7	5,168,040	5.0	16,254,878	6.6
Global/HQ	13,580,995	9.5	20,510,751	19.6	34,091,746	13.8
ITC/Turin	1,683,512	1.2	0	0	1,683,512	0.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>143,466,118</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>103,676,733</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>247,142,851</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS)

<sup>14</sup> Full list available upon request.

<sup>15</sup> Specifically, projects from the reporting period which met one or more of the following criteria: the Administrative Unit is EMP/SKILLS or SKILLS; the Technical Unit is EMP/SKILLS or SKILLS; the Backstopping Unit is EMP/SKILLS or SKILLS; the Collaborating Unit in IRIS is SKILLS; the project is mapped to “old” P&B outcome 02: Skills Development; the project is mapped to the “new” P&B outcome 1: More and Better Jobs and were previously mapped to P&B outcome 02: Skills Development; and where the project title contains the word “skills”. The resulting report was analysed and any obvious errors or inconsistencies were corrected.

segmented by “admin sector”, which included projects implemented in specific regions as well as global/HQ-administered projects.<sup>16</sup>

At around 54 per cent, the high share of expended funds supporting skills-related projects in Asia is especially noteworthy given Africa’s much lower share (around 17 per cent) and the priority status<sup>17</sup> apparently afforded Africa by the Office in the Strategic Policy Framework. PARDEV data show that the relative share of total expenditure of XBTC funds (i.e. for all outcomes) for Asia and Africa are not as skewed towards Asia but may be trending in that way – for example, in 2013 Asia had 29.1 per cent of all XBTC funds and Africa had 28.7 per cent; in 2015 the shares were 37.2 per cent and 24.9 per cent respectively.<sup>18</sup>

The data above raise a number of questions that should be considered in future skills strategy development and programme planning. Does the apparent focus on Asia simply reflect the priorities and interests of donors? Is it because Asian countries have reached a stage of economic development where they are especially “hungry” for skills development compared with Africa? Are the skills development responses currently offered by the ILO more relevant and more readily implemented in Asia than in Africa? Is the demand for skills in Africa, as articulated in the Decent Work Country Programmes, really lower than in Asia? While the current evaluation is not able to answer these questions definitively, the analysis of the DWCPs showed that the sampled African countries had higher demand for all interventions areas compared to the Asian countries and therefore the resource flow to Asia does not seem to be based on demand. Future work on skills should be carefully targeted to ensure that ILO support is responsive to demands of the constituents and skills specialists in headquarters and in the regions should work to bridge donor preferences and country demands (see **Recommendation 2**).

### The number of specialist skills staff employed by the organization in the period remained stable in both headquarters and the field

In 2010–2011 and 2012–2013, under the Regular Budget, there were 10 staff employed in the Skills department based in Geneva headquarters and seven staff (equivalent full-time) in the field, including three in Asia, two in Africa, 0.5 in Europe-Central Asia and 1.5 in the Americas. In 2014–2015, the number of staff in Skills in HQ declined to seven, but this was due to four roles being transferred to other units (two employment services specialists and two disability specialists.)

Table 3: Staff (regular budget) of skills department/branch

	2010–11	2012–13	2014–15
<b>HQ</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>7</b>
male	3	3	5
female	7	7	2
<b>Field</b>	<b>7<sup>19</sup></b>	<b>7<sup>20</sup></b>	<b>7<sup>21</sup></b>

<sup>16</sup> A full list of projects is available upon request.

<sup>17</sup> The priority status is assumed in that specific targets were set for Africa in the Strategic Policy Framework 2010–2015. Of outcome 2’s five indicators, four had targets for Africa. The evaluation sought an explanation for the justification of the specific targets for Africa but did not receive a clear response from the Office.

<sup>18</sup> ILO Extra-Budgetary Development Cooperation Annual Report 2015 – Expenditure and Delivery, Partnerships and Field Support (PARDEV, February 2016,) Table 2.

<sup>19</sup> Five full time posts in Bangkok, Cairo, Manila, New Delhi, Port of Spain and Pretoria. The posts in Moscow and San Jose were 50 per cent skills specialists which was counted as one post above.

<sup>20</sup> Five full posts of which two in Bangkok and one in Cairo, New Delhi, Pretoria, and Port of Spain and two 50% posts in Moscow and San Jose.

<sup>21</sup> Same as 2012–2013 above.

Considering the size of Africa and the complexity and diversity of the challenges faced in African countries, having only two skills specialist field staff based there (one in Pretoria and one in Cairo) may have been insufficient. Not having enough skills development experts supporting the four Decent Work Teams in Africa might also have been a contributing factor in its lower share of skills projects compared to Asia (described above).<sup>22</sup>

## THE ILO'S SKILLS WORK IN THE PERIOD

### The ILO has supported the development of skills policy and enabling legislation

Support for the development of national policies (or strategies or plans) for skills development was an important part of the ILO's work in many countries. These policies can provide a basis for improving access to decent work, meeting the skills needs of the labour market and supporting economic development and diversification. They provide direction, focus and coherence to the skills system. By developing a national skills policy, a country can improve the coherence of its skills system, redefine institutional arrangements and establish a training reform agenda. This can, in turn, provide the ILO with a framework for its skills development work in the country.

ILO involvement in this area is supported and informed by key policy documents. R195 (2004) asks member States to develop and implement human resource development policies which promote employability, facilitate the development of training delivery systems, develop national qualification frameworks and improve or enable access to identified groups.<sup>23</sup> The 97th session of the International Labour Conference (2008) adopted conclusions concerning skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development that encouraged member States to develop skills policies that focused on matching skill supply to demand, helping workers and enterprises adjust to change and to build and sustain competencies for future labour market needs. These conclusions adopted by the ILC subsequently became the foundation of the ILO/G20 training strategy of 2010.<sup>24</sup> The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008) and the Global Jobs Pact (2009) also highlight skills development as central to improving productivity, employability and social inclusion.

The Strategic Policy Framework indicator relevant to the ILO's work in supporting skills policy development was Indicator 2.1 – “Number of member States that, with ILO support, integrate skills development into sector or national development strategies.” While the wording of this indicator and its measures might be open to interpretation (for example there is a difference between supporting a country to “integrate” skills in its development strategies and supporting it to “develop a skills policy”), policy support work is considered as core business for the Office and fitted reasonably well here.<sup>25</sup>

The ILO's most significant activity in the period to support skills policy development was global in its reach – the development of ***G20 Training Strategy: A Skilled Workforce for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth***. Developed in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis, and recognizing the need to focus on skills development as a vital part of building an employment-oriented framework for economic recovery and growth, the G20 Training Strategy followed a request from G20 leaders

<sup>22</sup> In 2016, an additional two skills specialist were appointed in Francophone Africa, one in Dakar and one in Kinshasha, raising the total number to four.

<sup>23</sup> These groups are youth, migrants, people with disabilities, older workers, indigenous people, ethnic minorities, workers in small and medium-sized enterprises, and those in the informal economy, the rural sector and in self-employment.

<sup>24</sup> ILO: *A Skilled Workforce for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth: A G20 Strategy*, (Geneva, 2010).

<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that the policy development indicator for outcome 2 for skills was less outcome-focused than the corresponding indicators for some other outcomes. For example, the relevant indicator under outcome 3 was “Number of member States that, with ILO support, reform their policy or regulatory frameworks to *improve the enabling environment for sustainable enterprises*” while under outcome 6 “Number of member States that, with ILO support, adopt policies and programmes to *promote improved safety and health at work*.”

for the ILO “to convene its constituents and NGOs to develop a training strategy for [their] consideration”. The strategy was presented at the G20 Summit in Toronto in June 2010, and, in November that year, leaders pledged to support developing countries in implementing national strategies for skills development, building on the approach it advocated.

The strategy described the major global opportunities and challenges for training and skills development as well as a broad framework “to bridge training and the world of work”. To guide the development of national skills development policies, it set out a number of “building blocks” – key elements that needed to be included in national skills policies and strategies:

- Anticipating future skills needs;
- Participation of social partners;
- Sectoral approaches;
- Labour market information and employment services;
- Training quality and relevance;
- Gender equality;
- Broad access to training;
- Financing training; and
- Assessing policy performance.

The G20 Strategy led to a number of follow-up actions, including the first Technical Cooperation project funded by the Russian Federation. These will be considered in the next section of this report.

The ILO was also very active in supporting skills policy development at the country level. While the ILO's country-level support for skills policy development is not especially apparent in its project activity (with one notable exception being Bangladesh), DWCPs frequently highlight this work. The evaluation's analysis of a sample of 47 DWCPs indicated that 25 countries included CPOs associated with supporting skills policies (including five targeting youth). **Table 4** sets out some examples of reportable activities (i.e. “Target” CPOs) drawn from the P&B implementation reports includes. **Case Studies 1 and 2** below provide examples that are more detailed.

Table 4: Examples of Skills Policy Development Activities – Reported CPOs -2010–2015

Country	Description	Code/Biennium
Albania	Assisted drafting of National VET and Lifelong Learning Strategy with both Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Education	ALB130 (12-13)
Botswana	Advice to integrate a skills strategy into the National Development Plan	BWA102 (14-15)
Haiti	Technical support for a new national TVET policy including an apprenticeship policy	HTI127 (14-15)
India	Advice on employment and skills elements of the 12th five-year Plan and on strategies to re-engineer India's skills system	IND102 (12-13)
Malawi	Advice to constituents developing the National Employment Policy and the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II, which both include skills policies	MWI105 (11-12)
Mozambique	Technical assistance for the employment and skills component of the government's five-year plan	MOZ102 (14-15)
South Africa	Technical inputs into the draft National Development Plan including skills development	ZAF104 (12-13)
South Sudan	Support to the Ministry of Labour in finalizing and validating the vocational training policy and in unifying the country's TVET approach	SSD102 (12-13)
Tanzania	Technical assistance for the review of the TVET policy and apprenticeship policy	TZA103 (12-13)
Zimbabwe	Technical guidance for the National Employment Policy Framework (NEPF) and the National Skills Development Policy	ZWE101 (10-11)

Source: Programme Implementation Reports

### Case Study 1: Skills Policy Development in Bangladesh

The ILO played a key role in developing a Bangladesh national policy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Through a partnership with the European Union and the Government of Bangladesh, the TVET Reform Project (TVET-R) commenced in 2008 seeking to review and strengthen the country's skills development policies, and systems. It aimed to enable legislation that would lead to a “market-oriented and flexible TVET system which responds to the demand for competitive skills of the modern sector, as well as to the needs of youth and under-privileged groups.”

The project's policy development phase proved to be a long and complex task, involving the consideration of different models and extensive consultations with a wide range of stakeholders. Drafting and re-drafting of the policy continued through 2010 and 2011 before being formally approved by the National Skills Development Council, which is chaired by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

The national policy closely aligns with the key policy documents, Conventions and Recommendations and, the ILO has established itself as the key developmental partner in skills development in the country. The policy has proved to be a springboard for many subsequent skills-related activities and projects championed by the ILO in the country (and described in the evaluation). Elements of the policy include:

- Demand-Driven, Flexible and Responsive Training Provision;
- Nationally Recognised Qualifications;
- Competency-Based Training and Assessment;
- Programmes and Providers Quality Assured;
- Strengthened Role for Industry Sectors in Skills Development;
- Accurate Skills and Labour Market Data for Planning and Monitoring;
- Competent and Certified Instructors and Trainers;
- Effective and Flexible Institutional Management;
- Strengthened Apprenticeships;
- Recognition of Prior Learning;
- Improved Access for Under-Represented Groups;
- Private Training Provision;
- Enhanced Social Status of TVET;
- Industry Training and Workforce Development;
- Skills Development for Overseas Employment;
- Financing;
- Implementation;
- Monitoring & Evaluation.

Developing the policy, of course, does not guarantee successful implementation and each of the elements outlined above pose specific challenges. Continued technical cooperation and support from the ILO will be required in the future and there are still significant gaps that need to be filled – especially extending the benefits of training reform to the 89 per cent of the population who currently work in the informal sector. However, stakeholders are confident in the ILO's capacity to assist. As one constituent said:

***“The ILO is a very committed partner. In skills, others often push their own agenda and parameters and ignore the country's needs. The ILO puts the country's needs first. It's what differentiates it from other development partners.”***

### Case Study 2: TVET Legislative Reform in Viet Nam

Although not as common, ILO support in skills policy development in the period sometimes goes further, providing technical input into legislative reform relating to TVET. The evaluation team's field visit to Viet Nam learned that support for the re-writing of the TVET Law in that country was a key activity of its DWCP.

The evaluation found that the support of the ILO in updating and restructuring the TVET legal framework (revising the TVET Law, development of supporting decrees and decisions, and development of the TVET Strategy 2011–2020) were highly valued by the constituents and other key stakeholders in Viet Nam. This revision represented a major reform for Viet Nam. In recent times, vocational training in Viet Nam has been split between two ministries – the General Department of Vocational Training under the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MoLISA) has

provided short-term training courses leading to certificates and vocational diplomas for skilled workers, while the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) has provided courses leading to higher level technical qualifications. This led to a fragmentation of the national training system.

The ILO's support included:

- Analysis of current drawbacks in TVET system operating under the TVET Law 2006;
- A report on demand driven vocational training and recommendations on how it might be incorporated in the revised TVET Law;
- A paper on the Modular Training Approach and recommendations on how it might be incorporated in the revised TVET Law;
- A paper on Student Streaming and Career Guidance;
- Organization and support for consultations on specific TVET Law provisions and compilation of inputs from stakeholders for consideration;
- Technical inputs to a report from a study tour to Manila with lessons learnt from the Philippines.

The revised law was approved 27 November 2014, putting in place a framework for a single integrated vocational training system. Among the many improvements that the ILO helped to introduce was the inclusion for the first time of an important role for the Vietnamese employers' and business associations.

There are, however, continuing challenges. The ministry ultimately responsible for the single system has not yet been agreed – the revised Law talks in general terms about 'the government' responsibilities and there are some unresolved issues between ministries on which will take the lead. Until there are clear accountability and clear mechanisms for monitoring vocational training, difficulties in implementing the legal framework and establishing a quality vocational training system will continue.

The ILO will continue to play a role in resolving these and other issues to ensure that the skills development arrangements in Viet Nam work well.

### The ILO has supported the development and enhancement of formal training systems and institutions

While skills policies can provide the architecture of reform, success depends on the capacity of countries to build effective national training systems, institutions and programmes. In this respect, the ILO was again very active in the period, providing technical advice and support, sharing knowledge and experiences of various approaches, introducing or testing models through technical cooperation projects and helping to establish or to build the capacity of key institutions.

The ILO's work in training systems development is central to all the key policy documents and is best summarised in C142 – Human Resources Development Convention, 1975: *“each member shall gradually extend, adopt and harmonize its vocational training systems to meet the needs for vocational training throughout life of both young persons and adults in all sectors of the economy and branches of economic activity and at all levels of skill and responsibility.”* The breadth and complexity of this work was not, however, well reflected in the Strategic Policy Framework and this made it difficult to properly align associated CPOs with the framework.<sup>26</sup>

The ILO's work in this area had to respond to the varying needs of different countries in developing their skills systems. For example, the need to:

- Address skill shortages in high-growth sectors by improving training quality and certification and ensuring that their skills systems meet defined industry standards (for example Bangladesh);
- Harmonise national skills development systems with international standards to allow the skills of outbound migrant workers to be recognized in identified destination countries (or across a regional economic cooperation zone);

<sup>26</sup> A few specific skills systems elements are among the measures (for example “tripartite institutions operate at national or local levels to link skills supply and demand”), but the majority relate to either policy (for example for people with disabilities, in rural communities, youth) or to “training programme” development for these groups. Development of national systems and capacities to implement policy or effectively deliver programmes were not mentioned.



- In some countries with well-established but outdated vocational training systems, to modernize them in response to changing market needs (for example see *Case Study 3*);
- Address various types of “skills mismatch” problems;<sup>27</sup>
- Improve the effectiveness of Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs), often delivered through Public Employment Services (PES), as adjuncts to the formal skills system;
- Develop ways of more accurately forecasting the skills required to diversify economies and to improve national competitiveness through a more highly skilled and adaptable workforce.

The ILO responded to these needs in many ways, sometimes playing a leading or coordinating role and sometimes adding value where it could to evolving training systems. It provided advice and tools in many different technical areas, including apprenticeship systems (both formal and informal), the development of occupational standards and competency-based curricula through Industry Skills Councils, the introduction and administration of National Qualification Frameworks, meeting the skills needs of the Green Economy, recognition of prior learning, and skills anticipation and forecasting.

The reform of formal skills systems has not always been the focus of the ILO's skills work. Some countries looked to establish complementary systems and programmes, outside or only partly linked to the formal training system, to support people to develop the skills they need to derive a livelihood. The ILO's activities in these situations will be discussed separately later.

The “showcase” example of the ILO's achievements in supporting skills development systems in the reporting period was its work in **Bangladesh** – described by one stakeholder as representing the ILO's “gold standard” in this area. Building on the National Skills Development Policy described earlier, the ILO worked in partnership with the Government of Canada, the EU, and other development agencies to support the Government of Bangladesh to introduce a new skills system in the country, one that incorporated all of the elements recommended in the ILO's guiding policy documents. Operating with 19 dedicated project staff based in a separate Skills Development Office in Dhaka, the ILO provided support at all stages in the country's reform of its skills systems and institutional arrangements. This support included:

- Technical advice and support to the peak skills policy coordination body in Bangladesh, the National Skills Development Council (NSDC);
- Assistance in the establishment and capacity-building of Industry Skills Councils, which brought training institutions and industry together to ensure that delivery was driven by demand and that industry had direct access to skilled workers;
- Facilitating the establishment of “Centres of Excellence” in four industry sectors, which act as both a mechanism to foster best practice in training and to deliver training in their own right;
- The development of a National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework (NT-VQF), based on national competency standards, to support skill development pathways;
- A national competency assessment and certification system which included mechanisms for the recognition of prior learning;
- A trainer accreditation system;
- A “dual apprenticeship” model that integrated on-the-job learning with institutional training;
- Initiatives to support skills development for Green Jobs, such as the development of nationally-recognized qualifications in solar panel installation and service;
- Improving access to, or links with the formal skills system for people in the informal sector, in rural communities or with low levels of literacy and numeracy. This would be done by linking a proven ILO model (TREE) with the formal system through pre-vocational entry points.

<sup>27</sup> See for example, ILO, Skills Mismatch in Europe – Statistics Brief, (Geneva, September 2014).

During the period, the ILO worked on skills system development in other countries, though nowhere as comprehensively as in Bangladesh. The analysis of DWCPs showed 38 of the 47 countries in the sample had included at least one activity in DWCP outcomes that related to skills system development. An analysis of P&B implementation reports highlighted some reportable activities relating to the development and enhancement of skills systems and institutions, but they were surprisingly few in number and add weight to the argument that this core part of skills work was not well measured by the Strategic Policy Framework<sup>28</sup> – see **Table 5. Case Studies 3 and 4** below provide more detailed examples.

It was not possible for the evaluation to examine every technical cooperation project in the period to determine the extent to which each developed or enhanced skills systems and institutions. In some cases, project titles provide an indication and **Table 6** lists a sample of these projects with SKILLS recorded in IRIS as the technical unit. In many other projects, however, skills projects may have included work focused on systems reform or institutional capacity building. At the very least, it is reasonable to assume that the sustainability strategy of many such projects would require (or, at least, encourage) the institutional mainstreaming of activities and approaches that were introduced or tested.

Table 5: Examples of Skills System Development Activities – Reported CPOs -2010–2015

Country	Type and description of activity	Code/Biennium
Guyana	Systems – Advised TVET Council on CBT using occupational standards	GUY151 (12-13)
Iraq	Institutions – Prepared the Terms of Reference for National Committee for TVET	IRQ102 (10-11)
Jordan	Systems – Support for skills assessment and certification systems Systems – Piloted project to upgrade informal apprenticeships	JOR104 (12-13) JOR104 (14-15)
Lebanon	Systems – Implemented demonstration project for CBT in construction sector	LBN102 (10-11)
Mexico	Systems – Technical advice on competency-based training for two sectors	MEX102 (10-11)
Pakistan	Systems – Supported TVET reform including CBT and an apprenticeship model	PAK104 (14-15)
Rwanda	Systems – Piloted workplace-based training programme to reinforce skills acquired in a TVET institutional setting	RWA104 (14-15)
Sudan	Institutions – Guidance on the organizational setup of the TVET Department	SDN101 (10-11)
Tanzania	Systems – Design and piloting of RPL system	TZA107 (10-11)
Timor-Leste	Systems – Technical assistance for design of entire TVET system	TLS103 (10-11)
Yemen	Institutions – Improved capacity of MoL training centres to deliver CBT	YEM156 (14-15)

Source: Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS)

Table 6: Examples of projects related to formal skills systems or institutions -2010–2015

Country	Type and description of activity	Budget (USD)
Afghanistan	Skills Assessment and Certification Systems	4,522,286
Bangladesh	Sectoral Centre of Excellence for TVET	1,147,592
Bangladesh	TVET Reform	16,581,311

<sup>28</sup> To further highlight the mismatch between what the organization's results-based management system *records* as results and what the organization seems to *value* as results, none of the multitude of activities described above and implemented in Bangladesh and widely acclaimed as good practice feature in or are counted by the P&B implementation reports. The reports only count two results over the three biennia – one relating to the NSDC (counted in both 2010–2011 and 2011–2012, perhaps erroneously) and one relating to disability inclusiveness.



Country	Type and description of activity	Budget (USD)
Bangladesh	Strengthening National Skills Development Council Secretariat	169,870
Cambodia	Skills for Trade & Economic Diversification (STED)	881,687
Cambodia, Lao & Myanmar	Mutual skills recognition (2 projects)	238,940
Egypt & Tunisia	Strengthening skills for trade and economic diversification	447,049
Europe	Applying the G20 Training Strategy (Regional component)	3,272,540
Global/HQ	Knowledge sharing on early identification of skill needs	601,327
Global/HQ	Applying the G20 Training Strategy (Global & Management components)	3,803,201
Global/HQ	Skills for Trade & Economic Diversification (STED – 2 components)	1,220,186
Global/HQ	South-South cooperation on work-based learning	181,641
Jordan	TVET monitoring and evaluation systems	265,487
Malawi	Skills for Trade & Economic Diversification (STED)	588,546
Myanmar	Role of business in skills matching and anticipation	18,750
Myanmar	Skills for Trade & Economic Diversification (STED – 2 projects)	996,731
Regional (Asia)	Study on assessment	50,885
Regional (Arab States)	Enhancing vocational rehabilitation for disable persons (2 components)	215,179
Regional (Asia)	Mutual Recognition of Skills for AEC	431,188
Uruguay	Updating occupational standards and job descriptions	202,095
Uruguay	Institutional capacity building of TVET institutions	975,588

Source: Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS)

### Case Study 3: Training System Reform in the Russian Federation

In recent years, the Russian Federation has accelerated its efforts to modernize its Skills Development Systems and the ILO has been a valued partner in this process. In line with the experience in many other developed countries, the Russian Federation has struggled with a number of labour market challenges that directly relate to the quality and quantity of training system outputs. These include mismatches between the current skill needs of employers and the skills being taught in the system, too little demand in vocational and technical training enrolments (linked partly to a perception of it being of lower status) and too much in some university disciplines, emerging skill shortages as a generation of people trained under the old Soviet system approach retirement, and a general failure of the skills system to base itself on contemporary needs.

Because of the importance of training system development, it became a priority in the Programme of Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the ILO (2013–2016), which stated that “the contents and structure of vocational education” needed to “match labour market needs”, “vocational education programmes need to be modernized to meet labour market requirements” and that this would involve a “national qualifications framework.”

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection had been working towards modernizing standards in occupations covering some 600,000 members of the workforce, but, in 2014, the scope of this work suddenly grew when the President announced a far more ambitious overhaul of the system that would cover around 25 million workers. This would involve a massive re-engineering of the system, the establishment of 22 employer-led Councils for Professional Qualifications, a peak National Council and a coordinating taskforce to drive the reform.

The challenge facing the ministry was therefore considerable and, as one of its senior managers told the evaluation team, “it is why we couldn’t get along without the ILO and its international experience in this field.” According to the ministry, specific supports included:

- Expert advice and reports on the application of National Qualification Frameworks worldwide;
- Input into a new draft law on assessment mechanisms;

- Advice and international models on the operations of the Councils for Professional Qualifications;
- Industrial relations support through the ILO's specialists in Employers' Activities and Workers' Activities;
- Support for a Government-funded project examining new RPL mechanisms for use by workers from neighbouring CIS countries and for local people whose skills have not been recognized;
- A study tour of Ireland to see first-hand its system in operation.

The ILO's process of sharing with the Russian Federation its knowledge of different systems highlighted an important consideration of this work. Rather than advocate any particular model, various models were shared – the German, Spanish, Australian, New Zealand and others. The ILO might have strongly promoted one particular model, but this would have been a mistake as each is underpinned by certain country-specific practices or cultural norms that might be unworkable in the Russian Federation. For example, the Russians were surprised by the highly deregulated nature of the skills assessment system in Ireland – something that they could only imagine being delivered by a government entity in the Russian Federation. Similarly, the willingness of employers in Ireland to volunteer their time to skills system development processes was something that was thought to be unlikely to be replicated in the Russian Federation.

The system has not yet been fully implemented and faces many challenges given the scale of the changes and the lack of existing institutional experience. The practicalities of getting employers to define and articulate their skills needs are proving to be particularly challenging. In addition, while over 800 new standards have been developed, the task of developing the capacity of vocational training institutions and their teachers to adapt to the new standards has hardly begun.

The ILO's ongoing support will be required. As one employer organization representative put it:

*“We will need ILO to be quickly responsive to day-to-day problems and changes.”*

#### Case Study 4: Strengthening Training Institutions in Armenia

Armenia was one of five countries selected as part of the “Implementing the G20 Training Strategy” project, which was funded by the Russian Federation. Under this project, country-level activities included pilot initiatives to improve the management of TVET bodies and institutions and to increase the participation of social partners in skills development. A wide range of activities was run over a three-year period to November 2015, including training of TVET institutional managers using a computer-based simulator developed by the Moscow School of Management (SKOLKOVO), the conduct of a Skills Foresight exercise (also by SKOLKOVO), and various institutional capacity building initiatives.

Following initial presentations to stakeholders by SKOLKOVO in June 2013 and a workshop on the TVET Simulation tool conducted in Moscow in March 2014, two Skills Foresight Workshops were conducted in April and June 2014 that focused on the Food and Precision Engineering sectors. Follow-up activities to identify competencies took place in 2015. Training of moderators in the use of the TVET Simulation tool occurred in October 2015, with a total of 30 TVET staff ultimately trained (including 8 trainers from the State Informatics College who were trained as program moderators).

As the project progressed, the focus increasingly turned to activities designed to improve the TVET system and its connections to employment service delivery. This took the form of a broad program of support and capacity building for the Ministry of Labour, the State Employment Service, TVET Institutions, employer and worker organizations and specific sectors.

Capacity building activities for the Ministry of Labour (including its State Employment Agency) occurred at a time of significant systemic reform in Armenia, including a movement from passive to Active Labour Market Programs – such as retraining programs for the unemployed and internship/on-the-job training programmes for recent graduates. Support was provided to improve program monitoring and evaluation of these new ALMPs (a workshop with ILO experts and support for the conduct of a labour market survey); vocational guidance provision (training at the ILO International Training Centre in Turin and a workshop delivered by a Russian expert); and to enhance State Employment Service effectiveness (technical support for the development of an online job brokerage system and training for employment service staff).

Apart from the staff development provided to TVET College staff through the SKOLKOVO elements of the project, the project also supported a training needs analysis for members of the management boards of 21 TVET colleges. The capacity of Trade Unions in TVET system development was supported through a seminar delivered as part of a subregional conference on transitioning from the informal economy. Employer organizations were also strongly engaged in the project via the SKOLKOVO Skills Foresight element.

The project in Armenia demonstrated that ILO support for skills system development is not restricted to the formal training system. The role of Public Employment Services in the delivery of ALMPs is also important, filling in skill development gaps, often through the provision of short courses, education-to-work transition programmes and career guidance services.

**The ILO's skills work was responsive to the needs of young people, the poor and the marginalized. It successfully embedded skills development in activities that improved the employment and income generation capacity of people in the informal economy and in rural communities.**

Although formal training systems play a vital role in ensuring the skill needs of the labour market are met, many developing countries have very large numbers of people working in the informal economy, including many in rural communities, who have little or no contact with these systems. In many of these countries, the formal skills development systems have not been orientated towards the needs and circumstances of these people, despite general acceptance that skills and capacity building are of fundamental importance to the development process and to the fight against poverty. Their systems simply do not have the resources to address these needs, given the massive scale of the problem and the competing demands of the formal sector.<sup>29</sup>

In developing the vocational skills of this vulnerable group, the ILO faced the same challenges of scale and lack of resources. The Strategic Policy Framework and ACIs emphasized the importance of focusing effort on people in rural communities and in the informal sector (as well as on young people and people with disabilities, both of whom are well represented in these groups). The key policy documents reinforced this focus too. Importantly, they recognize the limitations of formal training systems – as C142 – *Human Resources Development Convention, 1975* puts it, members “shall establish and develop open, flexible and complementary systems of general, technical and vocational education... *whether these take place within the system of formal education or outside it.*” In practice, as will be shown below, the ILO worked both “within” and “outside” the training system with this group.

Working “within the system”, the ILO’s work generally took the form of improving pathways into the system for those who have been traditionally outside it. In **Bangladesh**, for example, where the ILO was very active supporting the development of the formal skills system, 89 per cent of the population are employed in the informal sector.<sup>30</sup> These people have generally had few or no opportunities to access the formal training system. The ILO’s efforts in Bangladesh to address this situation included building into the National Qualifications Framework two “**pre-vocational**” qualifications. These provide pathways for people whose educational disadvantages might otherwise prevent them from accessing the higher-level training available in the formal skills development system. The initiative is still in its infancy, but the vision is to make accredited pre-vocational training programmes available nationally at a minimal cost to participants. NGOs and other providers of non-formal skills training will be encouraged to use the new qualifications and learning materials to increase the employability of beneficiaries, thus allowing their entry into higher-level training aligned with the needs of the formal economy.

**Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** was also a focus area for the ILO in some countries in its efforts to improve access to the formal training system by people from these groups (and others, including migrant workers). RPL is a process of formally recognising competencies currently held, regardless of how, when or where the learning occurred, including through formal or informal

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Paul Bennell, *Learning to change: Skills development among the economically vulnerable and socially excluded in developing countries*, ILO, Geneva 1999: “Of particular concern is that, while the number of people living in absolute poverty continues to grow, the capacity of the state to support appropriate training appears to be declining in many developing countries. More generally, given dwindling resources and other pressing demands for training services from other sectors, there is a sense of being overwhelmed by the enormity of the skills challenge in support of the poor.” p2.

<sup>30</sup> Asian Development Bank and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *The Informal Sector and Informal Employment in Bangladesh Country Report 2010*. Mandaluyong City, 2012.

training and education, work experience or general life experience.<sup>31</sup> In theory, RPL has much to offer people who have been denied the opportunities afforded by the formal education and training system, allowing their acquired competencies to be recognized on their merits. In practice, however, the process can be difficult to implement, even in relatively well-resourced developed countries.<sup>32</sup> RPL mechanisms are generally built into the ILO's activities supporting TVET sector reform. For this reason, the evaluation's analysis of DWCPs only showed 7 of the 47 countries with specific references to RPL. It is likely, however, that RPL technical support is being sought from the ILO far more often than this figure suggests (for example, the evaluation learned that the Southern African Development Community has been working closely with the ILO's Senior Skills Specialist in the region to improve the application of RPL among its 15 member states.)

Working “outside” the formal skills system (though sometimes linking with it), the ILO continued to use such methodologies as **TREE (Training for Rural Economic Empowerment)**, a well-established ILO “global product” designed to augment existing employment and training systems by providing new opportunities for people in rural communities. TREE starts by identifying economic development opportunities in rural communities and then supports participants to convert these into employment, income generation and viable small businesses. Importantly, it embeds vocational skills training in a broader package of capacity building including entrepreneurship training, business mentoring and value chain development. The ILO has introduced the TREE approach in many countries over the years and, in the period 2010–2015, a five-year project funded by the Danish Africa Commission introduced it to Benin, Burkina Faso and Zimbabwe training thousands of young people in the process. *Case Study 6* provides details of Zimbabwe's experience.

Recognising the need to address the skill needs of young people outside the formal training systems and the fact that many in developing countries acquire their skills informally on-the-job,<sup>33</sup> the ILO's skills work also included projects designed to enhance the quality of **informal apprenticeships**. Under these arrangements, “apprentices in micro- and small businesses learn technical skills from master craftspeople and practitioners at the workplace and are inducted into a business culture and a business network which makes it easier for them to find jobs or start businesses”.<sup>34</sup> The ILO's approach was to focus on improving the quality of training provided through informal apprenticeships, as well as the level of skills acquired by participants, the conditions under which they work, entrepreneurship skills, overall employability and access to non-traditional occupations for young women. Again, the ILO has been active in this field for many years and, in the period under evaluation, the project in Benin, Burkina Faso and Zimbabwe included activities of this type. A member of the evaluation team visited a project site in a former industrial area of Harare in Zimbabwe, where some 450 young people had been trained by master craftspeople in various furniture manufacturing skills, supplemented by external training courses. An on-site training and production facility had also been built, though this was not yet in operation. *Case Study 5* describes a project in Benin that included informal apprenticeships.

The problem with working “outside” the formal system is sustainability. Good practices to develop the skills of people in rural communities and the informal economy can be demonstrated through technical cooperation projects and these can raise their capacity to access decent work and incomes. However, sustaining these practices is challenging. The ILO's website highlights only Pakistan and

<sup>31</sup> Australia. New South Wales. Department of Education and Communities. *Skills Recognition: A Guide for Registered Training Organisations*, 2014, p.8.

<sup>32</sup> Aggarwal, Ashwani. *Recognition of prior learning: Key success factors and the building blocks of an effective system*, ILO, Pretoria, 2015.

<sup>33</sup> 90 per cent of the national skills provision in some. ILO: ILO Training Center: *Study on the reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and groups through informal apprenticeship*. (EMP/SKILLS and IPEC, Geneva, 2010).

<sup>34</sup> ILO. *Upgrading informal apprenticeship: a resource guide for Africa*; International Labour Office, Skills and Employability Department. Geneva: ILO, 2012. p. iii.

the Philippines as countries that have “mainstreamed” TREE into their policy and programme responses and it is unclear what enduring impact the ILO’s work in informal apprenticeships has had either in expanding the availability of training and employment available through this mode or in improving quality.

Another ILO model that came to the attention of the evaluation team, but which seems to sit outside the prevailing delivery paradigm, is **C-BED (Community-Based Economic Development)**. Although it sits in the Enterprise branch of the ILO, like TREE, it is best delivered as part of a package of supports, including vocational skills development. What sets it apart from other delivery models is the fact that it is based on structured **peer-to-peer learning**, facilitated through partner organizations (including government ministries, NGOs and educational institutions). As training does not require external experts, it is a very low-cost intervention – requiring as little as a tenth of the cost of conventional training responses. To illustrate the sustainability and scalability of the model, the Ministry of Agriculture in Indonesia is training more than 65,000 agricultural extension workers to facilitate C-BED training among more than 7,000,000 rural entrepreneurs and farmers. They have trained over 2,000 staff so far with only technical support – no financial support – from ILO. The impact of C-BED has been externally evaluated and the results are impressive. From a sample of the more than 16,000 participant entrepreneurs in the Philippines, 93 per cent had improvements in units sold, 92 per cent in revenue, 92 per cent in profit, 89 per cent in cost management, 90 per cent in output per hour and 94 per cent in product quality.

#### Case Study 5: Informal apprenticeships in Benin

“Informal apprenticeship systems are the most important training system in many informal economies. In Africa, but also in parts of Asia, informal apprenticeships have a long history and are deeply rooted in society. A master craftsperson (MC) fulfils a social and economic function by passing on his/her skills to the next generation. The graduation of an apprentice in West and Central Africa is often a community affair, which underlines the social importance of apprenticeships.”<sup>35</sup>

(Land and Baier-D’Orazio, 2015: 6)

In Benin, ILO supported the strengthening of the “end of apprenticeship assessment” (French: EFAT) which involved community leaders, was grounded in local social practices and included recognition through the national certification system (CQM Certificat de Qualification au Métier – Occupational Skills Certificate). The CEJEDRAO project reported that 6,343 jobs had been created through the project and that 1,964 master craftspeople had been trained. Other notable achievements included:

- The establishment of a National Tripartite Steering Committee (CONAP);
- An effective partnership with all members of CONAP;
- The establishment of 25 Village Development Committees (VDCs);
- The introduction of the TREE methodology in Benin and its translation into national languages (Fon, Batonou and Lokpa) which served as an educational tool and allowed communication, training and extension of the TREE methodology to disadvantaged rural areas
- Youth have been trained and placed in the six sectors identified for economic empowerment of rural communities;
- The integration of green employment, gender and HIV-AIDS as cross-cutting themes in the project activities;
- Centres for training, production and marketing created and operational;
- Some 728 institutions benefited from capacity building;
- Partnerships between key actors National Confederation of Artisans Benin CNAB/Inter departmental Union of Chambers of Trade UCIMB/CEJEDRAO Direction of Apprenticeships and professional training DAFoP/Direction of Apprenticeships for professional training DAMA.

Given the amount of TC funding involved in the CEJEDRAO project the sustainability of the project could have been stronger. It remains to be seen how ILO will capitalize on this project (now closed) and how the lessons and good practices from the project will be used to advocate the implementation and mainstreaming of the model by the Government of Benin.

<sup>35</sup> R. Lang and M. Baier-D’Orazio: *Assessing skills in the informal economy: A resource guide for small industry and community organizations* (Geneva, ILO, 2015).

### Case Study 6: TREE in Zimbabwe

Part of a five-year project funded in three African countries by the Danish Africa Commission, the Skills for *Youth Employment and Rural Development Programme* supported both the implementation of TREE and efforts designed to improve the quality and outcomes of informal apprenticeships in Zimbabwe. The TREE component in Zimbabwe came from strong demand from the Government of Zimbabwe for “action on the ground” to address youth unemployment in rural areas. The ILO sought to avoid past supply-driven training approaches that used the formal system to train people, but which resulted in too few finding productive work.

In line with the TREE approach, in Zimbabwe, the project identified community assets and opportunities with economic potential and combined skills training (developed and delivered in response to these opportunities) with other supports, including business mentoring, guidance in the use of production technologies, facilitating access to credit and value chain development. It involved local stakeholders in the identification, design and delivery of the programme. Business activities included aquaculture, poultry, piggery, dairy, horticulture, honeybees and, through a partnership with the Dutch development agency SNV, solar sales and maintenance.

The evaluation observed project activities in Mutoko, a town in the Mashonaland East province, where 211 local youth (aged 15 to 35) had been engaged in horticultural production of tomatoes, carrots, butternut, beans, squash and potatoes. An under-utilized, but irrigated area was identified as a community asset that could be used. A local training institution, the Tabudirira Centre for Business Development, provided the skills training component at the site of the production. The ILO's Decent Work Agenda was pursued wherever possible (for example, there was evidence that the project had addressed gender balance issues, Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) and environmental sustainability throughout the design and implementation of the project.)

A member of the evaluation team attended a meeting of local implementation partners where day-to-day challenges being faced by the participants were discussed – training needs, meeting the production demands, marketing, cooperative approaches, financing etc. The ILO Project Coordinator addressed all these issues, demonstrating the importance and breadth of the technical advice being supplied.

Stakeholders reported that TREE had led to “remarkable changes in the lives of the young people”. Some had progressed from dire poverty to being in a position to build new homes and buy cars. Value-added services (for example, packaging) had not been as successful so far, but they were optimistic of improvements.

In terms of sustainability, the government has earmarked in its budget US\$75000 for each province. The model is widely praised, but the primary challenge will be increasing its scale to make an impact on what is an immense problem – as one constituent said, ***“We are trying to move a mountain with a teaspoon”***.

A senior government official summarized the need ***“The conventional training system is not suited to this group at present. They need specific short-courses that are directly related to employment. We need mass skilling for employment creation, not for 5,000 people, but for four million plus.”***

### The ILO has engaged in activities designed to make skills development more inclusive of people with disabilities

People with disabilities often face multiple challenges to developing the skills they need to secure work. They face the same difficulties in escaping from poverty as others in developing countries, but often also have difficulties accessing basic education and essential services and overcoming low societal expectations, outdated and unhelpful labour regulations and the low self-esteem that can arise from their continuing marginalization. In terms of vocational training systems, they are often excluded altogether or directed instead to “special education” facilities that reinforce preconceived, outdated ideas about what jobs disabled people can or cannot do.

In the Strategic Policy Framework, Indicator 2.3 measured progress in making “relevant training more readily accessible to people with disabilities” and so was intended to be a major focus for the ILO's work in the period. Disability inclusiveness is an important value for the ILO and activities focused on broader skills development goals often have specific disability strategies and targets built in. However, an analysis of the technical cooperation projects in the period showed that 14 per cent of all projects that had the Skills Branch as the technical unit were clearly focused on the disability issue. **Table 7** provides details of these projects. **Case Study 7** provides a detailed example. (During the period, two disability specialists were part of the Branch, but their function has since been moved to a different part of the Office.)



Table 7: Examples of Skills Projects Related to People with Disabilities -2010–2015

Country	Type and description of activity	Budget (USD)
Azerbaijan	Promoting Rights and Opportunities for People with Disabilities – Equality through Legislation (PROPEL – Azerbaijan)	64,571
China	Promoting Rights and Equality for Persons with Disabilities	202,786
Costa Rica	National Plan for Labour Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Costa Rica	115,503
Ethiopia	Disability Ethiopia: Irish Aid-ILO Partnership Programme, Phase II, 2014–15	357,030
Global	People with disabilities in Fiji and Vanuatu have greater opportunity to secure decent wages and self-employment to achieve a livelihood	60,000
Global	Global Product Disability	496,157
Indonesia	Promoting Rights and Opportunities for People with Disabilities through Legislation	189,781
Indonesia	Promoting rights of people with disabilities in Indonesia -under UNPRPD	185,810
Mongolia	Promoting Livelihoods for Persons with Disabilities in Mongolia	209,854
Palestinian O.T.	Sheikha Fatima Vocational Rehabilitation Centre	507,305
Palestinian O.T.	UN Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD)	70,000
Serbia	Strengthening capacity for inclusive local development in Southern Serbia	958,448
Tunisia	Decent Work for Tunisians living with disability	58,625
Viet Nam	Promoting Rights and Opportunities for People with Disabilities: Equality Through Legislation	215,966
Viet Nam	Strengthening role of Disabled People's Organizations to advance disability rights	84,113
Viet Nam	Promoting Decent Work for People with Disabilities through a Disability Inclusion Service	1,960,834
Viet Nam	Promoting /Employment of People with Disabilities through effective Legislation	1,839,383
Zambia	Promoting Rights and Equality for People with Disabilities through Legislation	540,462

Source: Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS)

### Case Study 7: Inclusive Training for Young People with Disabilities in Zambia

Zambia has an extensive vocational training system with around 35,000 students enrolled in TVET courses in more than 300 institutions. People with disabilities, however, have traditionally been excluded from this mainstream training system and been placed instead in “special schools” which deliver training in a narrower range of occupations and at lower skills level. This acts as a barrier to fully realizing their employment potential.

From 2012, through a technical cooperation project funded by Irish Aid, “Promoting Rights and Opportunities for People with Disabilities in Employment through Legislation” (PROPEL), the ILO worked with Zambia's Technical Education Vocation and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA) to improve the inclusiveness of the mainstream training system. The project selected a pilot group of five institutions to participate. Activities included the conduct of accessibility audits to identify and address barriers in the physical environment of the colleges; review of curricula to ensure their flexibility to meet the learning needs of disabled students; disability awareness/sensitization training for college managers, teachers and other staff; and a longer (5 weeks in total) in-service course for 20 teachers, delivered by a consultant from the UK.

Following this preparatory work, colleges initially complained that no students with disabilities were enrolling. The project investigated and discovered that the colleges had done virtually no promotion to the target group. In one case, the college was adjacent to a Catholic School that specialized in the general education of disabled children, but had not thought to engage with it to encourage students to enrol. A valuable lesson from the project was the need to reach out to disability networks to actively promote the fact that these institutions now welcome and make accommodations for people with disabilities.

A member of the evaluation team visited the Lusaka Business and Technical College, one of the pilot locations, and interviewed staff and disabled students. The college had little previous experience in accommodating the needs of disabled students, but now had 20 deaf and hea-

ring impaired students. They had started with one or two, but their inclusive approach soon became known in this community and enrolments soon multiplied. The male and female students interviewed were all very pleased to be learning in this mixed environment and their non-disabled classmates were happy as well – one had even taken the initiative to learn sign language and was supporting the teacher in class.

ILO staff indicated that, although the project had made some real progress with only limited project funds, “ILO needs ten years to embed this type of cultural change in the system”. Momentum and good will have been created within TVETA and in other government agencies, but technical advice is still needed to build local capacity: “People want to move ahead, but without technical capacity they might move in the wrong direction.”

### The ILO delivered a number of “Global Products” and “Global Outputs” designed to support skills development among member States

A “**global product**”, according to the ILO’s Results-based Management Guidebook (2011:14), “consists of a series of specific outputs that, taken together, deliver a major ILO product or package of services. These are global in nature and are not directed to any specific country or series of countries. A global product is costed upfront and then delivered using all ILO means of action and the combined resources of headquarters and field units as well as those of global technical cooperation projects.” During the evaluation period, there were three global products delivered as part of the ILO’s skills development activities – TREE (Training for Rural Economic Empowerment), STED (Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification) and the Skills for Green Jobs Programme.

**TREE** – TREE is an alternative model for the delivery of vocational training and has been available since 2002 in its current form.<sup>36</sup> TREE promotes income generation and local economic development, emphasizing the role of skills and knowledge for creating new employment opportunities for the poor, the unemployed, informal economy workers and other disadvantaged people. By linking training directly to economic opportunities identified in the community, TREE ensures that skills developed are relevant. Activities in the period included:

- Implementation of a five-year project funded by the Danish Government that established TREE in Burkina Faso, Benin and Zimbabwe (for the latter, see *Case Study 5*);
- Introduction of TREE in Liberia and Mozambique;
- Continuation of TREE (or elements of the approach) in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Viet Nam, Cambodia, Kiribati, Nepal, Timor-Leste, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Vanuatu;
- Conduct of a TREE Knowledge-Sharing Workshop in Addis Ababa in May 2013 to strengthen country-level activities by sharing knowledge across countries.

**STED** – STED is a methodology developed by the ILO that provides strategic guidance for the integration of skills development in sectoral policies. It is designed to support growth and decent employment creation in sectors that have the potential to increase exports and to contribute to economic diversification. Application of the approach in the period included:

- Ukraine (Metal Industry and Tourism) in 2010;
- The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Tourism and Food) in 2011;
- Kyrgyzstan (Garment Sector) in 2011–2012;
- Jordan (Pharmaceuticals and Food) and Viet Nam (Tourism), as part of the “Implementing the G20 Strategy” project, funded by the Russian Federation in 2012–2015;
- Malawi (Horticulture) in 2015.

<sup>36</sup> It built on an earlier model, established in the early 1990s, called “Community Based Training”.



**Skills for Green Jobs** – To support countries to transition to a greener economy and to generate more green jobs, the ILO promotes skills for green jobs through the publication of policy documents, development of tools and guides, research work, as well as capacity building activities. During the period, the ILO produced many publications and practical guides<sup>37</sup> in this relatively new field. The ILO also supported policy-makers, social partners and practitioners by conducting capacity building activities and regular training at the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC-ILO) in Turin as well as tailored courses on request. It has also made some course materials available online. Examples of training and capacity building included:

- ITC-ILO green jobs training course “Promoting green jobs policies: Employment potential and skill needs in a greener economy”;
- A green economy module delivered as part of the Skills Development Academy (see below);
- Through its engagement with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the PAGE (Partnership for Action on Green Economy) Academy, the ILO delivered an elective course in skills needs assessment and development;
- An ITC-ILO e-learning course on green jobs (Skills component).

In addition to these global products, the P&Bs also describe some “**global outputs**” for programming purposes. In the period, these included:

- 2010–2011 – **Research on identification of skills and occupational needs for green jobs, as part of the ILO’s Green Jobs Initiative** – The report, *Skills for green jobs: A global view*, analysed changes in demand for skills and occupations in the transition to a green economy, and proposed policy recommendations for skills development based on 21 country studies.
- 2011–2013 and 2015 – **ILO Skills Development Academy** aimed to assist government officials and social partners to build effective skills-development systems responsive to current labour market and economic challenges. It provided a platform for examining existing challenges and discussing effective and innovative approaches to improving skills-development systems and policies. Courses covered a wide range of topics related to skills development systems including anticipation of skills needs, skills for green jobs, enhancing the employability of disadvantaged groups, involving the social partners, workplace learning, and planning, monitoring and evaluation. Attendance figures were: 2011 – 66 participants from 25 countries; 2012 – 80 participants from 27 countries; 2013 – 101 participants from 32 countries; 2015 – 104 participants from 23 countries.
- **The Inter-Agency Working Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)** (which includes the ILO, European Commission, European Training Foundation, OECD, UNESCO, World Bank and the regional development banks) identified areas for collaboration among agencies at headquarters level, in terms of research and coherent policy advice, and at country level, in terms of joint policy reviews and activities. This cooperation contributed to the development of the G20 Training Strategy and delivered a common report on indicators for assessing TVET. In addition, as a member of the Policy Board and Management Committee of the UN Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD), the ILO promoted a combined rights and livelihoods perspective in the activities to be supported by the UNPRPD at the global, regional and country level.
- The creation of the **Skills for Employment Knowledge Sharing Platform (KSP)** – a Public-Private Partnership designed to share the approaches and experiences of international organizations, governments, employers and workers – see *Case Study 8*.

<sup>37</sup> Full list available upon request.

### Case Study 8: Skills for Employment – Global Public-Private Knowledge Sharing Platform

Following requests from ILO constituents at the 2010 International Labour Conference for the ILO to make its wealth of knowledge in skills development more readily accessible for member States, and building on the G20 Training Strategy's promotion of training system reform, the ILO initiated the development of a multilateral, inter-agency knowledge sharing platform, the Global Public-Private Knowledge Sharing Platform (Global KSP). Working with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank, the ILO led and administered this project, which pooled the relevant knowledge products on skills of each partner.

Information is categorized in a hierarchy that includes skills policy options, international standards and strategies, national policies and initiatives, advocacy and information materials, research papers and syntheses, evaluation reports, case studies and good practices, and statistics. It can be searched by keyword, issue, product type, country, source and language.

Since it became active in June 2013, there have been:

- 60,000 individual visits to the site;
- Around 1,800 skills related items (documents only) made available;
- 2,500 unique visitors per month;
- 5,230 downloads over the last year.

The development of the KSP in the period laid the foundations for future more interactive knowledge-sharing, such as the hosting of online virtual discussions that allow experts, practitioners and representatives from a range of institutions and enterprises from around the world to raise questions, share experiences and address challenges related to skills. (This e-discussion facility of the KSP is now operational.)

The evaluation's survey of staff and stakeholders showed that awareness and use of the Global KSP are not as widespread as it should be. Some 37 per cent of ILO staff overall indicated that they were unfamiliar with it. Some 64 per cent of non-ILO staff (including constituents, partners etc.) were unfamiliar. Of all respondents who indicated that they were familiar with the KSP, about one third had used it in the last six months.

### The ILO has produced and disseminated global knowledge products and publications relating to skills and has been a leader in facilitating knowledge sharing

Skills development is a diverse and complex policy area and, during the period of the evaluation, the ILO produced and shared a large number of publications and information resources and facilitated knowledge sharing in various ways. During the evaluation field visits, stakeholders indicated that they saw the ILO as a leader in this field and able to extend their understanding of the policy and programme options in the area of skills development.

Key activities included:

- Some 159 publications – see *Table 8* for a breakdown by theme;<sup>38</sup>
- The **Skills for Employment Knowledge Sharing Platform (KSP)** – see *Case Study 8* above;
- Regional skills-related knowledge sharing initiatives such as the **Asia Pacific Skills and Employability Network**;
- The **ILO Skills Development Academy** – see above under “global products”;
- Various **other knowledge sharing and capacity building programmes** on skills-related subjects run in the **ITC** – including skills needs anticipation and matching (2012, 2014) and career guidance policies and practices (2013, 2014);
- The evaluation's survey indicated that around half of respondents had participated in sub-regional, regional or global workshops or seminars that were related to exchange of good practices or knowledge sharing.

<sup>38</sup> Full list is available upon request.

- **CINTERFOR** (Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training) – a specialist centre of the ILO, established in 1963, that provides a knowledge management platform for 65 institutions from 27 countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Africa. See *Case Study 9*.

Table 8. Publications by Theme

	2010–2011	2012–2013	2014–2015	TOTAL
Disability	17	10	15	42
Green Jobs	31	2	1	34
Skills Systems	6	5	21	32
Youth/Apprenticeships	8	7	16	31
Employment Policy/Services	2	11	3	16
Gender	1	1	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>159</b>

Source: www.ilo.org (Publications) supplemented by information provided by staff

### Case Study 9: Sharing Knowledge of Skills Development through CINTERFOR

CINTERFOR (Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training) was founded in 1963 in response to demand from Latin American countries as they developed national institutes of vocational training. Long before the idea of south-south cooperation had taken hold, CINTERFOR pioneered this type of relationship by networking among the different institutions of vocational training in the region.

CINTERFOR provides technical advice, personnel and resources to the subregional and national offices in Latin America and the Caribbean. When programmes at the country or subregional level focus on training and skills development CINTERFOR contributes its expertise. It provides direct technical support in a number of specialist skills areas, including skills anticipation, for which it has developed a methodology, RPL, for which it has provided technical advice and implementation support, and occupational standards and competencies, for which it has developed an online database of best practice.

Specific activities included:

- Activities in various countries (for example, Chile and El Salvador) supporting the harmonization of employment, education and training policies, through the design and implementation of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs);
- General technical support in training system development (for example, Brazil, Colombia and Uruguay);
- Support for regional skills recognition arrangements (for example, between Argentina and Chile);
- A technical cooperation project in Uruguay designing occupational standards in the building and paper industries;
- A technical cooperation project to develop competencies for Central American micro, small and medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the knowledge and information economy;
- A study of apprenticeship regulatory arrangements in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In recent years, CINTERFOR has begun to focus on innovation in the provision of skills training through Information and Communication Technology (ICT). CINTERFOR has also increased its own research efforts focusing on work and youth education dynamics in the 21st century in the region. Using such knowledge in the right way, and combining it with its comparative advantage regarding vocational training, CINTERFOR hopes to position itself as a leading player in this field in the region.

### New focus areas for skills work emerged in the period and these may grow in importance in the future – Skills Anticipation and Quality Apprenticeships

During the period, interest from constituents has grown in certain areas of skills development policy and practice. While one is by definition forward-looking – Skills Anticipation – another represents renewed global interest in a model that has existed for centuries – Apprenticeships.

**Skills Anticipation** – the ability of national skills development systems to better anticipate and match skills and jobs is of growing concern globally and was raised in every country visited in the evaluation. In their efforts to attract foreign investment and to ensure the continuing competitiveness of existing industries, governments are increasingly aware of the need to understand emerging skills needs and to ensure their skills policies and systems can plan for, and adapt to these needs. Changes brought about through globalization, new technology and demographics also demand a proactive response. The prevalence of current skills mismatches, where employers cannot find the skills they need despite unemployment levels being high, further drives governments to better match training supply with employer demand.

Skills Anticipation or forecasting broadly refers to “activities to assess future skills needs in the labour market in a strategic way, using consistent and systematic methods”.<sup>39</sup> It is an important part of the skills policy development process and this has been reinforced in key ILO recommendations and in the G20 Strategy. The global tool STED (described earlier) is an example of the ILO’s technical assistance in this area, but other projects and activities can also be linked to demand for this type of support – including, for example:

- the development and piloting of a skills anticipation tool as part of the “Implementing the G20 Strategy” project, funded by the Russian Federation;
- the conduct of establishment skills surveys in some countries participating in the “Work4Youth” project overseen by the Youth Employment Branch;
- the development of labour market information systems in some countries (for example, Armenia).

In addition, the ILO has produced a range of publications<sup>40</sup> relating to skills anticipation and has provided direct technical assistance in response to constituent demand (for example, in Columbia and Azerbaijan). Also, interest from donors in skills anticipation was reported by Skills Branch staff as growing.

**Quality Apprenticeships** – in response to global concerns about escalating youth unemployment rates, ILO member States and social partners were reported to be increasingly asking for advice on the development and expansion of apprenticeship systems. Apprenticeships combine learning in the workplace with learning in a VET institution under an employment contract or indenture. There is an observable correlation between improved youth employment outcomes and the existence of strong formal apprenticeship systems in countries and this undoubtedly has rekindled interest in them as a skills policy option. Skills branch staff indicated that requests for technical assistance in this field have gone from “virtually zero” prior to 2013 to being so much in demand that the ILO is struggling to respond. The fact that these systems are generally based on tripartite mechanisms means that they harness a key organizational strength of the ILO.

Some of the activities in the period of the evaluation included:

- Influencing global policy on apprenticeships – for example, the ILO produced a paper on apprenticeship 3zing tripartite workshops to promote dialogue in quality apprenticeships – for example, in 2013, a subregional workshop on Apprenticeship Systems in Europe and a regional seminar in the Arab States region;
- Capacity building of constituents – for example, in 2015 a dedicated elective course on quality apprenticeships was run as part of the Skills Academy;

<sup>39</sup> ILO, Guidance Note: Anticipating and matching skills and jobs, International Labour Office, Skills and Employability Branch, Geneva ILO, 2015. p.3

<sup>40</sup> For example see ILO Publications: *Skills for trade and economic diversification: A practical guide* (2012); *Anticipating skill needs for green jobs: A practical guide* (2015); *Guide for anticipating and matching skills and jobs* (2015).

- Research and involvement in academic conferences – for example, a comparative analysis of apprenticeship systems conducted in partnership with the World Bank and attendance at various conferences as keynote speakers;
- Projects – including projects supported by the European Commission in Portugal, Latvia and Spain, the introduction of new apprenticeships in the sugar and tourism sectors in Mexico, and a project funded by Norway for apprenticeships in the hotel industry in Tanzania.

Both Skills Anticipation and Quality Apprenticeships are clearly of growing importance to the ILO's skills work and future planning and resourcing need to take this into account (see **Recommendation 2**).

## EVALUATION CRITERIA – FINDINGS

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### RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE

#### There is a lack of clarity about the definition and composition of the ILO's skills strategy.

As the evaluation was intended “to provide insight into... the ILO’s strategy, programme approach and interventions to promote skills development”, the evaluation team was surprised to find that there was little agreement on what the ILO’s skills strategy actually was. In the usual understanding of the word, an organizational strategy is something that sets priorities, focuses energy and resources, ensures a shared understanding of goals and intended results, and adjusts the direction in response to change. In short, a strategy shapes and guides the Office’s actions.

In this sense, some management and staff pointed to various key documents that they saw as shaping and guiding action. These included “*R195 – Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004*” which was described by members of SKILLS as “our bible”. R195 describes a wide field of endeavour including pre-employment training, development of competencies, inclusive training, recognition and certification frameworks, career guidance, lifelong learning and other activities. Other “shaping and guiding” documents included the conclusions adopted by the 2008 International Labour Conference concerning skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development, and the G20 Training Strategy, developed by the ILO at the request of G20 leaders, which sets out a number of what it calls “building blocks” for training and skills development. The key elements of these documents are summarised in *Annex C*.

While these documents are helpful, they cannot be considered to be the ILO’s strategy as such – at least, they have not been officially adopted nor have any formal place in the ILO’s planning and management processes. Rather, they seem to be used to populate a menu of interventions that are applied in different circumstances as required.

The evaluation’s survey of staff and stakeholders confirmed the lack of clarity about the ILO’s skills strategy. Only 54 per cent of ILO staff respondents (96.43 per cent of these respondents who answered in the survey that skills is an “important” or “very important” part of their work) claimed familiarity with “the strategy”, but these people had different views on what this strategy was. Asked to name it, 25 respondents provided responses:

- Ten named the G20 Strategy;
- Four named the P&B;
- Two named Report V of the 2008 ILC;

- Four indicated that there were a number of documents that somehow collectively comprised a “strategy”;
- Five named various other documents, including local (DWCP) and regional plans.

It should be noted that previous high-level evaluations have had similar difficulties identifying the organizational strategies that related to their own areas of focus. For example, the high-level evaluation of the ILO's work in labour inspection that was conducted in 2015 spoke only of an “implicit strategy” that was inferred from a discussion of outcomes in the P&B.<sup>41</sup> However, given the complexity and diversity of the ILO's skills work, “reverse engineering” a skills strategy in this way from the P&B is not so straightforward and, in any case, risks basing strategy on action rather than basing action on strategy.

### The skills “strategies” set out in each biennium's P&B described some elements of the ILO's skills work but the strategic intent of this work was not always made clear

Despite the lack of clarity about what, in practice, the ILO's skills development strategy may have been, all high-level evaluations are required to assess strategies as described in P&B.<sup>42</sup> The biennial P&Bs approved by the Governing Body or International Labour Conference for each of the three biennia under review were based on the Strategic Policy Framework. The P&Bs are supposed to define strategic objectives and intended outcomes, indicate how results will be measured, and present an estimated budget, including the regular budget (RB), regular budget supplementary account (RBSA), and extra-budgetary resources for technical cooperation (XBTC). Importantly, they are meant also to *describe the activities that will be undertaken to achieve results*. Outcome 2 covered the ILO's core work in skills, but as described earlier, other outcomes included important skills development elements.

In each P&B, a “strategy” of sorts was described for outcome 2 but in different ways and in different formats. They mainly comprised an outline of key issues faced by the organization in the skills area and broad descriptions of the approach to be taken. In 2010–2011 and 2014–2015, reference was made to the key policy documents mentioned above,<sup>43</sup> but not in 2012–2013.<sup>44</sup> There was little if any coherence between what was described and the performance measures (see below).

The third P&B (2014–2015) used a simpler format and included, for the first time, a reference to the strategic intent of skills work under the heading of “Strategy goal and focus” – this was to “improve the efficiency and impact of skills systems” and to “ease transitions to decent work for young people by improving training, skills utilization and work conditions in occupations and small businesses entered following vocational training.”

<sup>41</sup> ILO: *Independent evaluation of the ILO's strategy and actions for strengthening labour inspection systems (2010–15): a summative and formative evaluation to inform ILO's future strategy on workplace compliance*. (Geneva, 2015). P.7.

<sup>42</sup> ILO: *Results based strategies 2011–15: Evaluation strategy – Strengthening the use of evaluations*. Governing Body, 310th Session, Geneva, Mar. 2011, GB.310/PFA/4/1. p.5.

<sup>43</sup> In 2010–2011, the approach was described as “making policy advice and tools available to constituents so that they can better apply, taking into account their own circumstances, the policy guidance in Human Resource Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), and the International Labour Conference resolutions concerning skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development (2008), and youth employment (2005).

<sup>44</sup> In 2012–2013, “The Office will continue to pursue an approach that combines skills development, work experience, employment services and entrepreneurship awareness and training”.



**A “skills agenda” set out in key ILO Conventions and Recommendations seems to have driven much of the ILO’s work in practice, but this agenda was not adequately reflected in the P&B’s performance indicators. This incoherence may have led to inconsistencies and errors in reporting.**

In practice, the ILO’s work in skills in the period was broader in scope and more complex in nature than the Strategic Policy Framework and its performance indicators would suggest. Outcome 2 in the Strategic Policy Framework explicitly supported only two types of skills-related activity: *high-level policy* activities that integrate skills into national development plans; and activities that improve the access to training of youth, people with disabilities and in rural communities.<sup>45</sup>

A literal adherence to the wording of the Strategic Policy Framework might have changed the nature of the ILO’s work in (perhaps) unanticipated ways. Some of the basic tenets of the ILO’s skills work – as set out in the key policy documents mentioned earlier – found no natural home in the outcome 2 indicators and could have been downplayed or even jettisoned altogether.<sup>46</sup> Organizational performance against these indicators will be assessed later (see *Effectiveness* below), but the point to be made here is that the coherence between these indicators and the strategies and means of action described in the P&Bs (including the extensive scope of work referenced in R195, the 2008 ILC resolutions etc.) was poor or, at least, ambiguous.<sup>47</sup>

For example, it is not immediately clear where such focus areas of R195 as the promotion of life-long learning, the recognition of prior learning, developing qualification frameworks, or developing career guidance and training support services might be counted under the indicators. Arguments can be made, of course, about where these *might* fit, but, as the evaluation’s analysis of performance in the next section shows, such arguments were sometimes questionable and have resulted in some square pegs being forced into round holes.

- . Speaking with the staff in the field responsible for mapping CPOs and projects to the Strategic Policy Framework indicators, the evaluation found that, while this was sometimes problematic, in practice, the Office (or individuals) found ways to re-present or re-engineer these activities so that they somehow fitted (or seemed to fit) the criteria and could be included in the P&B. Sometimes this fit was poor.
- . The evaluation noted a lack of coherence between the Strategic Policy Framework outcomes and the skills agenda set out in the key policy documents flowed through to the programming of work at a country level through their Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs). DWCPs include outcomes which are used to align country activities with the outcomes defined in the P&B. While the biennial P&B Implementation Reports are meant to display the key results achieved, many significant activities and achievements were not reported. This appears to be particularly the case with activities linked to ILO’s large number of skills-related technical cooperation projects.<sup>48</sup> Examination of some of the results reported and counted in the P&B Implementation Reports technically should not have been included as they failed to meet the specified criteria.

<sup>45</sup> Other activities covered by outcome 2 related to employment services and youth policy and programmes. While these, of course, might conceivably include skills-related elements (for example, short-term training courses organised through public employment services; and youth-focused skills training or school-to-work transition initiatives), none of the indicators listed for these sub-outcomes mentioned anything about such activities or indeed skills at all. Expressed in the way they were, they had no logical connection with the outcome’s goal (“Skills development increases the employability of workers, the competitiveness of enterprises and the inclusiveness of growth”).

<sup>46</sup> A full list of the indicators and measurement criteria are available upon request.

<sup>47</sup> The Terms of Reference for the evaluation recognised this issue. Footnote 15 points out that “there are some gaps and no clear linkage found between the outcomes of the Strategy 2010–15 and the relevant goals and actions to be taken set out in the 2008 Declaration and the Follow-up to the Declaration” and indicates that the evaluation should “make necessary suggestions for the new Strategy”.

<sup>48</sup> Full list available upon request.



### From the Interviews

*"We have to be directed by the P&B – when the office is assessed at a global level, these indicators are what we are judged on. They can be a challenge, **but the money is in the indicators** – budgets follow these results." (Country Office)*

*"There are **two realities** – what you're trying to do and what the P&B says you're trying to do." (Country Office)*

*"The P&B did not provide a coherent picture of the skills agenda. It does not seem to have been written by someone who understood the nuances. It **provided no framework for ILO action** and made it hard to report what the ILO was actually doing in skills." (Headquarters)*

*"The Strategic Policy Framework and its measurement criteria **did not allow us to report** on some very important skills activities. Outcome 2 was especially difficult. It talked about policy and some target groups, but it was not balanced and had both gaps and overlaps." (Regional Office)*

*"We 'retrofit' what the constituents want us to do into the P&B – **we write a storyline that fits**." (Country Office)*

*"Skills development must be one of the core priorities of the Employment Department. It is expected of us, even if it is imperfectly reflected in the Strategic Policy Framework." (Country Office)*

### Despite the deficiencies of the ILO's skills strategy (as expressed in the P&B) as a means of guiding work in this area, the ILO's approach proved in practice to be adaptable and responsive to the differing needs of constituents

The evaluation field visits showed that the focus of the ILO's work varied significantly based on country needs. **Zimbabwe** did little or no work on enhancing formal training systems, focusing instead on supporting rural economic development through TREE and informal apprenticeships in urban areas. **Bangladesh** included such activities, but in the context of a comprehensive redevelopment of the policy, program and delivery arrangements of the formal system. **Zambia** focused on disability inclusion, the **Russian Federation** on modernizing its occupational standards and competencies, **Armenia** on strengthening institutions, and **Viet Nam**'s broad approach included quite intensive support reviewing TVET legislation.

Given this diversity of needs and approaches, it could be argued that the ILO worked well *without* a highly prescriptive operational strategy for skills. The circumstances of the countries where it works are so diverse as to make the advocacy of a consistent global approach undesirable. This is acknowledged in some of the key policy documents,<sup>49</sup> but contrasts starkly with some other types of ILO work, which are highly normative in approach and which are defined in terms of the attainment of global standards. Importantly, compared with skills, organizational performance in such work areas perhaps can be more readily measured with the type of simple counts that underpin its RBM system – for example, how many extra countries ratified a convention.

One country director interviewed for the evaluation pointed out that, by having a separate skills strategy (or, for that matter, a separate strategy for any of the ILO's main areas of work such as employment, social protection, labour standards or social dialogue), the Office might end up approaching issues from the wrong angle or by asking the wrong questions. The first question should always be "where are the opportunities or entry points for the ILO to help the country advance?" Activities or projects designed to harness these opportunities can then consider if and how there is a place for skills development, enterprise support, or any other technical support. At the same time, the ILO can advance its other agenda and values as part of this (for example, disability inclusion, improving Occupational Health and Safety, gender, HIV etc.) There is evidence that this opportunity-based ap-

<sup>49</sup> See for example the section entitled "Diverse realities, common and different challenges" in ILO: *Skilled Workforce for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth: A G20 Training Strategy* (Geneva, 2010) p.15.

proach works – embedding skills into projects in this way has been shown to get better results than running projects based on a “stand alone strategy”.<sup>50</sup>

Although this opportunistic approach to skills work – with ILO “doing what it can, when and where it can” – does not involve the step-by-step implementation of a standard, one-size-fits-all *strategy*, it can be *strategic* nevertheless. Reflecting current practice, ILO skills work involves helping constituents to select, adapt and apply models and approaches, tested in the field in various circumstances, and based on agreed Conventions and Recommendations. The use of these “building blocks” – the term used in the G20 Strategy – is probably the most apt description. They can be used in different circumstances to build capacity – sometimes to construct the whole “edifice”, as in Bangladesh.

The catch, however, is that it becomes very difficult for the ILO to monitor performance and to equitably allocate resources to areas like skills that have such a “moveable feast” of approaches and activities. Skills might not be something that can be “rolled out” as a standardized service model in every country – each focusing on much the same thing – but there needs to be more clarity about global priorities to better determine what resources are needed. It would at least be an improvement if a future STRATEGIC POLICY FRAMEWORK broadly reflected the priority areas of skills work, including in policy support, system and institutional development and access.

None of the above should be read as implying that the ILO should restrict itself to a fixed and unchanging repertoire of interventions. Innovations in delivery need to be encouraged and tested and there may be new “building blocks” that are needed (see *Efficiency* and **Recommendation 4**).

Diagnostic tools to support the incorporation of skills “building blocks” into country activities and interventions would also be helpful. Skills is seen as being technically complex and some countries may need such support to better understand the skills response options and where they might best fit in what they are trying to achieve. These tools need to be as practical as possible and show how specific skills elements can be incorporated into different types of projects – not complex plans to transform whole systems. Efforts to ensure that regional skills specialists are not marginalized in this process and can contribute their expertise would also support this (see **Recommendation 3**).

#### From the Interviews

*“Because of countries’ different development levels and available resources, we need the strategy to be **adaptive**.” (ILO Headquarters)*

*“We don’t need a skills strategy at all – we need **an organizational strategy that includes skills**.” (Country Office)*

*“In the field, you can’t afford the luxury of focusing on one thematic area. **An approach is needed that weaves ILO work together** (for example, RPL for migrants requires training system reform). The issues are inter-related and technical assistance needs to be too – addressing multi-faceted nature of the problems.” (ILO Headquarters)*

*“The skills needed at the **community level is the important thing**. There’s a place for policy level work, but it needs to link to action. Sometimes it is successful action that leads to better policy – not the other way around.” (Country Office)*

*“The **ILO needs to be a step ahead** when it comes to skills, but the last real discussion was the 2008 ILC. So much has changed since the financial crisis, but only the G20 Strategy has been produced in response.” (ILO Headquarters)*

*“**Are we stuck to old fashioned, circular activities?** Can we be more innovative, particularly in crisis countries? We tend to offer packages and have limitations in evaluating needs and what really fits.” (ILO Headquarters) From the Interviews*

<sup>50</sup> ILO. Decent work results of ILO employment promotion interventions: Lessons learned from evaluations, 2003–2013; International Labour Office, Evaluation Office, Geneva: ILO, 2014, p.11.

### As described in outcome 2, the strategies and performance indicators associated with Employment Services had no apparent link with skills development

The inclusion of Indicator 2.4 under outcome 2 represented a poor fit in terms of programme logic. It related to the strengthening of employment services to deliver on employment policy and included such measures as Public Employment Service revitalization, job matching services, plans to promote employment of disadvantaged groups, and national legislation regulating private employment agencies. None of these issues directly relates to skills development. The indicator appears to have been “tacked on” to the outcome for reasons related to organizational structure – at the time, Employment Services were part of this department in Geneva (although a subsequent restructure saw them attached to another branch for the 2014–2015 biennium).

This is not to say that Public Employment Services cannot play an important role in skills development. They can and do through, for example, their implementation of Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs) that address skills needs or through their role in identifying and responding to current skills in demand from employers. Activities described in Armenia provide an example of this (see *Case Study 4*).

#### From the Interviews

*“Sitting in Skills narrowed the role of Public Employment Services as labour market institutions. There is now [after restructure] a better alignment between employment policy development and core functions of PES and active labour market programmes. But Employment Services do play a role in skills – especially in response to economic crises” (ILO Headquarters)*

### The indicators used to measure performance under outcome 2 did not reflect the relative “degree of difficulty” of different interventions and might have discouraged more ambitious reform efforts

The indicators also failed to adequately reflect the relative effort required to achieve different types of results. For example, based on a simple “count”, the development from scratch of an entirely new national training system – countable (some might say only arguably so) under 2.1 – would have as much weight as, say, establishing a small scale pilot training program in a single rural location – countable under 2.2.

The same can be said for some individual measures. For example, under indicator 2.2 would placing five people “in wage or self-employment on completion of skills training” count the same as placing 5,000? It may be that the Office’s planning processes in practice address the potential for such distortions, but care is needed to ensure that performance indicators do not unintentionally create incentives to “think small” and to avoid more ambitious reforms.

### Although skills development work has clear synergies with other work of the ILO, the P&B processes in place at the time may have unintentionally created a disincentive for collaboration– though less so in the field.

While the primary objective of outcome 2 in the 2010–2015 Strategic Policy Framework, to increase “the employability of workers, the competitiveness of enterprises, and the inclusiveness of growth”, is an important focus for the ILO’s skills work and for its specialist staff, the evaluation found that skills development has made – or has the potential to make – vital contributions to the achievement of other organizational objectives. For example, through the field visits, the evaluation team saw:

- Skills development facilitating the transition from informal to formal employment (outcome 1) – for example, in Bangladesh, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe;

- Skills development leading to employment and self-employment in the green economy, a component of the ILO's work in promoting sustainable enterprises (outcome 3) – for example, Zimbabwe;
- Support for the development of skills recognition programmes that can assist migrant workers to access productive and decent work (outcome 7) – for example, the Russian Federation (in-bound migrants) and Bangladesh (in-bound and out-bound migrants);
- The *strengthening of tripartite constituents'* capacity to contribute to national skills development policy and systems is an integral part of the ILO's skills work (outcomes 9, 10 and 12) – all countries visited;
- The development of sector-specific training strategies, including the development of industry skills councils, can support the ILO's work in promoting decent work at a *sectoral level* (outcome 13) – for example, Bangladesh, the Russian Federation, Viet Nam;
- Informal apprenticeship arrangements can be used to combat child labour and to bridge *the gap between basic education and productive employment* (outcome 16) – for example, Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, and Zambia;
- Promoting the inclusion in skills development of persons with disabilities, women, indigenous people and other vulnerable groups helps in the *elimination of discrimination* (outcome 17) – for example, Zambia.

In recognition of these synergies and as a means of both focusing organizational effort and of encouraging a more collaborative approach, the 2014–2015 P&B introduced eight “Areas of Critical Importance” (ACIs),<sup>51</sup> many of which identified skills as a “principal outcome” or included it as part of their description. While the intent of this was good, other organizational processes operating at the time may have limited its impact. For example, during the period of the 2010–2015 Strategic Policy Framework, as CPOs could only be “attached” to one outcome, a CPO might be recognized as either a skills activity or an enterprise activity, but not both. By not adequately reflecting the interrelated and mutually supportive nature of much of the ILO's work, this may have discouraged internal collaboration at some levels because of associated resource allocation implications. In terms of the P&B Implementation Reports, it may also have resulted in skills work being less apparent in other outcome areas – and vice versa.

There were different perspectives between Headquarters and the field when it came to issues of operational synergy across different outcome areas and of collaboration between different departments. Headquarters staff expressed some concerns relating to the allocation of projects to different outcomes (during the period of the evaluation only one could be chosen) and backstopping units (i.e. who took responsibility for quality, conduct of missions, negotiations with regional offices on costs to cover their support etc.) Some concerns were also expressed about sending mixed messages about skills policy when skills experts were not consulted in the development of new products (for example, guides which have sections on skills). For Regional and Country Offices, such issues were generally not raised. In the field, issues seemed to converge at the implementation stage.

Some of the weaknesses described above have been already recognised by previous strategy evaluations (although on a different outcome) and have led to changes in the Transitional Strategic Plan and current P&B processes. There are, however, also some continuing weaknesses and irregularities

<sup>51</sup> As the 2014–2015 P&B introduced the ACIs: “A limited number of areas of critical importance detailed below are defined for priority action in 2014–2015. Each of these areas combines work from across several of the 19 outcomes of the ILO strategic framework, and is linked to these outcomes through their indicators, by which results will be measured.” The ACIs were: Promoting more and better jobs for inclusive growth; jobs and skills for youth; creating and extending social protection floors; productivity and working conditions of SMEs; decent work in the rural economy; formalization of the informal economy; strengthening workplace compliance through labour inspection; and protection of workers from unacceptable forms of work.

which may need to be addressed in preparing the next Strategic Policy Framework. Of central importance is the need to ensure that the ILO's unique capabilities and expertise in skills development are harnessed by the organization as a whole to achieve both its own objectives and the SDGs. This is discussed later in the final section of the evaluation.

#### From the Interviews

*"While there are processes for project documents to go through the Skills Branch for vetting, other documents (for example, guides with sections on skills) often don't. This can send mixed messages regarding skills. We need to make the most of the organization's expertise and ensure the links are there. Employment Services needs skills input, but it is in a different area." (ILO Headquarters)*

**Externally, the ILO's work in skills is recognized as having a unique value and being complementary to the skills activities of its partners and constituents.**

**In some cases, however, the different priorities of partners may conflict with the ILO's.**

To some extent, skills development work can be described as a "crowded field". Many development partners, NGOs and other United Nations agencies are very active in skills. Unlike some other focus areas of ILO work, such as those associated with fundamental principles and rights at work; the ILO is not always in the position to be the main driver of change or improvements in the area of skills. Many factors influence how, where and when the ILO can add value. This may involve the institutional relationships in a particular country, the nature of past projects and the momentum they have created, the availability of funding from different sources; and even the expertise, interests and contacts of individual staff.

Despite this crowded field, the ILO has a unique comparative advantage that is recognized by stakeholders and which distinguishes ILO from other agencies. Expertise in and knowledge of skills systems and approaches used in different parts of the world, strong relationships with the social partners, and the capacity to develop, adapt and apply effective tools and models all combine to give the ILO a special place in discussions and negotiations.

Nevertheless, the ILO also has limitations. For example, the ILO's is not in the position to resource the large-scale implementation of the skills development models and systems that it develops. There are good examples of countries expanding and sustaining these models and systems with their own resources or in close cooperation with donors or other development agencies. In many situations where the ILO is, at best, a "supporting player", adding value where it can, while the greater share of skills development activity is carried out by others.

This can lead to situations where the ILO's own skills development objectives are frustrated. For example, in Bangladesh, the example was given of some development partners that were pushing for unaccredited short courses to be used in a major project rather than a program aligned with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). In this case, the problem was ultimately resolved (in favour of the NQF model) but such outcomes are not guaranteed. The imperative of some partners to spend their project budgets sometimes conflict with quality training outcomes.

As its knowledge and expertise in skills is an important organizational asset, ILO knowledge sharing activities need to be given a higher priority in strategic and operational planning. Initiatives like the Global Knowledge Sharing Platform can support the ILO and member States to identify skills development solutions. It should be noted that the staff and stakeholder survey suggested that awareness and access levels were low (64 per cent of those outside the ILO were unfamiliar with it). The role of CINTERFOR in supporting knowledge sharing (and other strategic objectives) needs to be articulated more clearly.

### From the Interviews

*“The ILO can show us what’s worked elsewhere, why it worked, and how we might make it work here.” (Government Representative)*

*“In Armenia, it was ETF that was the godfather of training system reforms.” (Government Representative)*

*“We are currently in discussions with the ILO about seeking a co-funding arrangement with the EU. We already work closely together, often use the same experts. It would be much easier and would help coordination.” (Development Agency)*

## The ILO’s tripartite approach is seen as being relevant and appropriate to skills work, but there may be a need to strengthen links with other Ministries

The ILO’s relationship with its constituents also distinguishes it from other actors in the skills field. These relationships enable constructive social dialogue that can identify needs and influence the development of countries’ skills systems that meet the needs of employers and workers. This tripartite approach is also reflected at a sectoral level through Industry Skills Councils, which play a key role in defining occupational standards and competencies.

In the area of skills policy and programs, the Machinery of Government arrangements in many countries need special consideration within this tripartite approach. The ILO’s counterpart institution in government is usually the Ministry of Labour, but in many countries it is the Ministry of Education that has responsibility for TVET. While it is the responsibility of the Ministries of Labour to liaise with other Ministries, direct input from Ministries of Education may help clarify or elevate national skills development priorities. In Armenia, for example, there is a DWCP working group that meets to determine such priorities, but it does not include the Ministry of Education. In some places, there can be a lack of communication between the Ministries or unresolved demarcations (see **Case Study 2**, for example). The ILO needs to ensure that its country-level analysis and planning processes effectively engage with the Ministry of Education and, indeed, other Ministries that may have an important role in shaping skills policies and programmes, including Economic Development, Trade and sectoral Ministries (see **Recommendation 5**).

### From the Interviews

*“The ILO’s links to employers and unions are a strength. We are the only ones with these links.” (ILO Headquarters)*

*“The Ministry of Labour would generally expect to get more out of the DWCP than other Ministries.” (Country Office)*

*“Our connections with the ILO have been weak in skills – but they can play a role helping us to build a bridge between education and the labour market.” (Ministry of Education Representative)*

## The ILO’s work in skills (if not its “strategy”) aligns well with global strategies and, moving forward, can make important contributions to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Probably the closest thing there is to a “global strategy” for skills – the **G20 Strategy** – was itself developed by the ILO. It seems odd then to report that the ILO’s own strategy, as expressed in the P&B, does not align with it in a clear way. However, as has been explained, its actions do and the G20 “building blocks” have been used in many countries.

The OECD published in 2012 **Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives: A Strategic Approach to Skills Policies**. Designed “to provide a basis on which governments can begin converting ‘better



skills policies' into jobs, growth and 'better lives'", the strategy shares with the ILO a common focus on anticipating skill needs and overcoming skill mismatches (pp.17–62), on the need include people with disabilities, women and the disadvantaged (pp.63–78 – though framed less in terms of equity and more from the perspective of "human resource utilization" and "labour market activation"), on youth (pp.85–8), on skills for economic diversification and improved competitiveness, and on the need for improved policy integration (p.95).

The **World Bank's** 2010 framework, *Stepping Up Skills for more jobs and higher productivity*, is structured around different life stages – from preschool stage (to establish the foundations for learning and socialization), through the school age and youth stages and onto working age. It maps different skill development interventions to these stages, includes some issues that are outside the ILO's normal role (for example, early childhood nutrition and remedial education in schools), but otherwise includes skills development activities that are compatible with the ILO's approach (for example, apprenticeships, skills certification systems, entrepreneurship training, et al.) It is not so much a strategy as a "framework that can help countries understand the challenges they face" and "a call for a comprehensive approach that resists the temptation of seeking single minded solutions" (p.2).

UNESCO's 2012 publication, *Youth and skills: Putting education to work*, is not a strategy either, but a "global monitoring report". It does, however, have a substantial section on youth transition to work and a number of the issues it highlights are part of the ILO's activities on the ground, including formal apprenticeships (p.243), alternative vocational training pathways (p.250), recognition of prior learning (p.252), education to enhance earnings in the informal sector (p.260) including in informal apprenticeships (p.271), prioritizing skills for rural youth (p.283) and training in green skills (p.294). One area that it does cover and which is not currently a focus of the ILO, is diversification of the school curriculum to include some TVET content. This issue was raised in some of the field visits and, although there are some practical constraints, might warrant consideration by the ILO in the future.

Looking to the future and the next Strategic Policy Framework, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* includes goals towards which the ILO will be expected to make important contributions. Its work in skills policy, systems, institutional capacity and inclusiveness will provide a sound base for future alignment. Because of its mandate and its tripartite governance structure, the ILO's priorities and approach are determined in a somewhat different way to other United Nations agencies, but in the case of skills, the linkages between the SDGs and the ILO's own goals are very clear. (see **Recommendation 1**)

**Sustainable Development Goal 4**, which relates to education, includes four targets that specifically mention vocational skills and training. **Goal 8**, which relates to economic growth and employment, includes another seven targets which will require some form of skills development response:

Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning. Relevant targets:

- By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and *quality technical, vocational and tertiary education*, including university
- By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant **skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship**
- By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure *equal access to all levels of education and vocational training* for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
- By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, Small Island Developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, *including vocational training*.

Goal 8: promote inclusive and sustainable growth, employment and decent work for all. Relevant targets:

- Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through *diversification, technological upgrading and innovation*, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors
- Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, *decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises*, including through access to financial services
- By 2030, achieve *full and productive employment and decent work for all* women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
- By 2020, substantially *reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training*
- Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including *migrant workers, in particular women migrants*, and those in precarious employment
- By 2030, devise and implement *policies to promote sustainable tourism* that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products
- By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization

## EFFECTIVENESS

**Results were reported against P&B indicators in programme Implementation Reports, though the evaluation team had concerns about the accuracy and validity of some results.**

Table 10 summarizes the results reported for the period against the outcome 2 performance indicators.

Table 10. Reported Results – outcome 2 (Total)<sup>52</sup>

	2010–11	2012–13	2014–15	TOTAL	TARGET	Target v Performance	
						Difference	%
2.1	7	12	17	36	39	–3	92
2.2	5	7	8	20	21	–1	95
2.3	2	3	5	10	20	–10	50
2.4	7	8	11	26	18	+8	144
2.5	14	14	23	51	43	+8	119

Source: P&B Implementation Reports (detailed versions with commentaries)

There were five indicators for outcome 2, four of them related directly to skills work in an explicit way. The evaluation team understands the link between indicator 2.4 on employment services and skills development but the actual indicator and measurement criteria did not make the theory of change explicit. Against three of the four skills-related indicators, reported results were below target, significantly so in the case of Indicator 2.3 (relating to training being more accessible for people with disabilities). Against the fourth (2.5), which related to youth, targets were exceeded. Against

<sup>52</sup> The targets in this table are the adjusted targets (not the original targets set out in the Strategic Policy Framework). The original targets were: 2.1 (22); 2.1 (28); 2.3 (17); 2.4 (15); 2.5 (35).



indicator 2.4, which related to employment services (but for which no explicit skills-related measures were established) the target was significantly exceeded.

The evaluation team had concerns about the accuracy and validity of some of the reported results. ILO staff recognized the limits of the current system with one describing it as “more art than science”. In some cases, results described actions that seemed quite removed from the apparent intent of the indicator – i.e. results were allocated to indicators that did not match their description. Some results were counted without having met the required measurement criteria. In other cases, the ILO contribution to the result was relatively minor (for example, in one case, a two-day workshop was all that was done).

The rules governing the reporting of results were sometimes perplexing. For example, while the wording of the indicators in the Strategic Policy Framework suggested that reports reflected “*the number of member states*” to have achieved results under each indicator over the period of the Strategic Policy Framework, in practice, this was not the case. According to a guidance note provided to regions by PROGRAM, individual CPOs linked to indicators could be counted multiple times, provided certain criteria were met.<sup>53</sup> This meant that in some Strategic Policy Framework outcomes, the final count of “number of member States” to achieve a result was in fact far higher than the total number of ILO member States (for example, outcome 18, Indicator 18.1 counted 228 “member states” achieving the result – 41 more than the total number).

The evaluation attempted a comprehensive analysis of the results reported in the Programme Implementation Reports to derive a more accurate picture of effectiveness. However, it soon became clear that there was so much room for subjective judgement in the interpretation of the reports that an analysis would itself be of questionable accuracy. A number of errors were identified, however, and so the reported results can be said to be overstated. (Given the issues described above, it may not be restricted to outcome 2.)

The indicators and criteria strictly limited what countries could report and this meant that the ILO reported just a small amount of the actual activities and results achieved. The indicators covered the results for skills efforts related to youth, people with disabilities and rural people. These are priorities, but the ILO's skills work is broader than this and covers the needs of other vulnerable groups (such as refugees, retrenched older workers needing retraining) and industry. It is noteworthy, that Bangladesh is showcased as the “gold standard” in ILO skills work in terms of the breadth and depth of its work, but is only counted twice in the reports.

Given the above, the question to be asked is whether the system in place at the time for reporting results was “fit for purpose” as a measure of organizational effectiveness. It is difficult to see how it has generated any insights that would influence strategy, approach or action in order to improve results. Indeed, the reports that are generally available are stripped of most of the qualitative data. What remains is a table of numbers that are of questionable relevance and, it could be argued, provides a misleading picture of performance (for example, the “number of member States” issue).

At the very least, there is a need to strengthen processes for the verification of results presented in the Programme Implementation Reports. Reported results need to be reviewed more thoroughly and only be included where the ILO has made a substantial and verifiable contribution. Many of the results are not supported by any evidence or outcome data. Some countries provide data (for example, numbers of people employed) to support assertions that post-training job placement has been achieved. However, many results have no data or evidence and are very scantily described. As the results are currently reported, it would be very difficult to verify them. (See **Recommendation 6**).

<sup>53</sup> That is, if the result is substantively different or if different measurement criteria apply.

**Data on other targets included in the Strategic Policy Framework and P&B were collected, but do not appear to have been given much attention in organizational review of performance.**

The Strategic Policy Framework included some sub-targets for outcome 2 that related to achieving results in Africa. The background and rationale for setting these targets do not appear to have been documented and they are difficult to make sense of on their own (for example, there is a target for each biennium for Indicator 2.1, targets just for 2010–2011 for 2.2, 2.4 and 2.5, and none at all for 2.4). The evaluation notes that given its inclusion in the Strategic Policy Framework targets, there was an intention at some point to provide the Africa region with focussed attention. Unfortunately, Implementation Reports are silent on this aspect of performance and it seems to have been ignored or forgotten. The evaluation team requested clarification but due to staff turnover, did not receive an answer.

**Table 11** sets out the results. Areas shaded in grey had no targets set. (The total target figure cannot therefore be compared with total results as it only includes the years with targets.)

Assessment of performance based on these figures is not very enlightening, but does raise the issue whether the ILO needs to consider the geographical reach of its skills development work and to more fully and proactively explore how skills might support the achievement of decent work goals in “priority regions or countries”, whatever they might be (see **Recommendation 2**).

Table 11. Reported Results – outcome 2 (Africa Only)

	2010–11	2012–13	2014–15	Total	Target
2.1	2	4	6	12	9
2.2	3	4	4	11	4
2.3	1	1	2	4	0
2.4	2	1	6	9	2
2.5	4	4	6	14	6

Source: P&B Implementation Reports (detailed versions with commentaries)

The Strategic Policy Framework also included another measure under outcome 2 that appears not to have been monitored or reported on. This “Position to be reached by 2015” seems to have been an attempt at defining an overall strategic goal and was:

*“Over 30 member States have aligned training supply and demand, extended access to training opportunities to a wider proportion of workers and have integrated skills development in sector and national development policies and in responses to global drivers of change such as technology, trade, and global warming.”*

No specific data were collected that related to this (it had no link to the other performance data that were) so there was no way of measuring the results of the ILO’s work towards this goal. However, the evaluation will consider this goal again when it assesses impact later in the report.

**Based on the evaluation’s field visits, the ILO’s skills work was regarded as relevant and effective by its constituents and stakeholders, but more needs to be done**

A detailed analysis of the effectiveness of the many skills-related projects and activities carried out globally by the ILO was outside the scope of this High-Level Evaluation. Based on the six countries

visited, constituents and stakeholders in these countries were satisfied with progress, but there are still many gaps that demand the continuing attention of the ILO.

**Bangladesh** – Local stakeholders and constituents painted a detailed picture of the extent of ILO involvement in reform of the training system in Bangladesh, one which contrasts with the relative small effects captured in the Implementation Reports summarized above. The situation prior to ILO involvement was described as one where employers had “lost faith” in the capacity of the system to meet their skills needs. Now, thanks to the reforms, in some sectors at least, the relationship is much stronger.

Stakeholders described examples of the effectiveness of the ILO's work in the period. The scope of this work has already been discussed earlier in this report, but constituents especially highlighted the importance of ILO support in the development of a new national skills policy, sector-specific support in four industries (including establishing Industry Skills Councils to align training with demand, and creating 51 new qualifications and skills standards), the introduction of competency-based training (“we knew nothing about this before”), systems and documentation for Quality Assurance, a national qualification framework, recognition of prior learning and training provider accreditation processes, and assistance with a Management Information System. Work was done too in establishing prevocational courses for the educationally disadvantaged, including programs targeting women and people with disabilities, and in supporting skills development and recognition for departing and returning migrant workers and for developing a new Quality Apprenticeship strategy. Government officials especially highlighted the importance of ILO expertise and support in policy development, not just the National Skills Policy, but also in related areas such as policies supporting the participation of women and people with disabilities in TVET and for a Youth Action Plan

An employer representative described the ILO as being a “very committed partner” that is focused on meeting the country's needs. It had provided a “continuity of support” through the long process of reform. Some ILO staff had been there throughout the reform process (8 years) and this allowed the formation of deep relationships and knowledge.

In terms of perceived results to date, there was agreement that “we are not there yet”. Systemic challenges remain. Broader inroads need to be made in engaging the private sector. Employers pointed out that the private sector would only fully embrace the new training system if its benefits are tangible and understandable. In some respects, the model is still theoretical – “nobody knows what it really looks like yet or how it really works”. The idea of an employer-driven training system led by Industry Skills Councils is theoretically sound, but, as one stakeholder said, “they can turn into bureaucrats if they don't have real links with employers” – that is, there was a risk that the wrong people would be involved and that they become too process-driven. Institutional capacity was still low, and although some government people have been trained, these are not necessarily the people delivering the training.

There was general agreement that much more needs to be done for the 89 per cent of people in Bangladesh in the informal economy. One senior government official described this group as “the black hole of the economy of Bangladesh”. Many of these people are illiterate and currently have no opportunity to access training in the formal training sector. “You have to go to the poor places – pilot programs there, look at creating informal apprenticeships.”

This was a perspective shared by the unions, which indicated that they were supportive of the direction of training reform but commented on the relative lack of attention given to the informal sector. The unions would also like to see the reforms become a vehicle for the promotion of other aspects of the decent work agenda – for example, by ensuring that Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) is embedded in skills training – “there are many people in Bangladesh who don't know how to operate industrial machines properly or safely.”

**The Russian Federation** – The ILO’s work supporting the Russian Federation in the modernization of its training system was described earlier in *Case Study 3*. Constituents clearly valued the ILO’s support in this large and complex undertaking, and saw it as the latest stage of a long history of co-operation with the Moscow Office.

At the government level, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection said, “all of the topics of interest to the ILO in skills are very important for us”. The ministry detailed a list of these topics that it said demonstrated “why we couldn’t have got along without the ILO” in skills system development – the establishment of new skills advisory institutions; the establishment of a new National Qualifications Framework; the processes used for developing standards and skills descriptions; how to ensure proper engagement with constituents, especially employers, to better understand skill needs; and assessment methodologies. Across all of these areas, the Ministry said the ILO shared its expertise, highlighted various international models and provided practical advice.

From the Employers’ perspective, efforts were initially hampered by the lack of a local dedicated specialist in Employers’ Activities in Moscow, but this has since been corrected. The new specialist has a very good understanding of the training reform agenda in the Russian Federation and the peak employer body reported that the ILO “did the utmost to engage” with it. Employer cooperation in the period also included a major youth employment initiative conducted through a ground-breaking technical cooperation agreement between the ILO and LUKOIL, one of the Russian Federation’s largest oil companies. Commencing in January 2013, the project aimed to support youth policy and programme development in three countries (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation) and included skills components such as skills anticipation, skills-based ALMPs delivered through the Public Employment Service and the establishment of a new Quality Apprenticeship model.

Moving forward, development of the TVET system in the Russian Federation was described as being of great importance, but it faces many challenges. In the Soviet era, TVET served two roles – it provided vocational skills to the young, but it was also perceived as the option for those who were not academically strong or who were “problem kids”. As one stakeholder said, it was spoken of as an inferior outcome for students – a lesser place where young people might end up if they did not work hard in their studies. This entrenched an image and a status problem for TVET and so, when the old system ended, there was an exponential growth in university enrolments at the expense of TVET. As the existing skilled workforce ages, skill shortages now loom as a result. As one stakeholder put it, in the future: “If you need a skilled tradesperson, you might have to settle for a recent migrant from Tajikistan – or a local economics graduate.”

**Armenia** – Aspects of the ILO’s skills work in Armenia were outlined earlier in *Case Study 4*. The ILO’s presence in Armenia is very small (a National Coordinator and a Project Coordinator) compared with other country offices visited as part of the evaluation, but it has good relationships with the constituents and other stakeholders and its work in skills is seen as making a difference. Skills work is fairly new to the ILO in Armenia – the G20 Project provided it with its first real opening in this field.

Work included the institutional capacity building described earlier, development of policy papers, relating to disability inclusion, labour market information management, the governance of TVET Colleges, and monitoring and evaluation of State-run ALMPs (including skills); creating a system of “peer review” of policies between Armenia and similar countries in the region; a labour market study looking at skill supply and demand mismatches; support for Public Employment Service in the implementation of ALMPs; support for career guidance and professional orientation services linked to the effective operation of TVET systems; and the implementation of the SKOLKOVO tools relating to Managing TVET institutions and to skills anticipation.

All the constituents and many of the other stakeholders highlighted the benefits of the ILO’s tripartite approach in its work in Armenia. Trade Unions expressed support for training system reform

and said that a well-functioning training system addressed two of their concerns – stability of labour relations and better understanding of worker rights through training. They believe that many young people are working outside the formal labour market in the “grey economy”, a problem exacerbated by an ineffective labour inspection system, which had been merged with the sanitation department of the Ministry of Health and had lost its focus as a result.

Officials of the Ministry of Labour said that the ILO was very professional, easy to work with and its work had led to positive results. Much of the work so far has focused on the Labour Ministry's institutions and programmes, however – the Ministry of Education had been involved, but the ILO had not been as involved in shaping reform in their jurisdiction.

Employer representatives similarly valued the ILO's work, bringing a “new culture and understanding” of skills to Armenia – something that many employers need to understand. The G20 introduced new methods and, through its skills foresight tool, highlighted skill gaps that need to be filled to foster economic development. Much more needs to be done, however.

Moving forward, some stakeholders saw an opportunity for the ILO to do more to help “build the bridge between education and employer demand”. Development of a “point-by-point” agenda for training system reform in Armenia, one that outlines possible ways forward and brings all the stakeholders together might lead to an agreed position that could be presented to political decision makers – “the ILO can help shape this” and link it to the Sustainable Development Goals. Additional work in skills anticipation was also seen as needed, especially in sectors where Armenia sees itself as having certain competitive advantages, such as the IT sector.

**Viet Nam** – As mentioned earlier, the support of the ILO in updating and restructuring the TVET legal framework (revising the TVET Law, development of supporting decrees and decisions, and development of the TVET Strategy 2011–2020) was highly valued by stakeholders. This revision represented a major reform for Viet Nam.

Most government and social partners, as well as other development partners, indicated that the ILO was a crucial player in the skills field. As the official United Nations Agency responsible for labour, other partners recognized the ILO's major role in terms of technical assistance for development of policy and legal framework, and this role was highly valued. There was an understanding that the tripartite nature of the ILO, particularly the strong link with employers, gave it a special role and value, both in policymaking, and at the local level in piloting tools and models. In addition, the normative role of the ILO was acknowledged and valued.

Support for other skills-related priorities in the period included input into the development of the National Qualifications Framework, and capacity building for vocational training centres. Viet Nam was also a site for the “Implementing the G20 Project” which applied (somewhat idiosyncratically) the STED model for the development of skills in the tourism sector in two provinces. The ILO office is supporting the General Department of Vocational Training (GDVT) with mutual recognition processes in the region. The most progress seems to have been made in the Tourism sector, with the establishment of a Viet Nam National Professional Board and incorporation of ASEAN standards into vocational courses.

In terms of gaps, several informants were concerned that there is tension between responding to what the country requests, and “guiding” it to be more forward looking and positioning it for the future. In particular, for middle income countries such as Viet Nam where growth was built on cheap labour, there may be insufficient focus on preparing for the implications of mechanisation on low-skill manufacturing jobs and adjusting for the economy of the future – low carbon, IT and robot intensive opportunities, etc. The DWCP for Viet Nam does not specifically address this issue – rather Viet Nam is aiming to become a ‘modern industrialized country which seems to ignore the challenges of increased globalization and integration.



The opportunities of IT and new technologies for vocational training, such as distance delivery, virtual reality, activity based learning, etc. were also observed to be missing from the country's skills strategies. Viet Nam (and other countries in the region) still tends to be largely focused on traditional centre-based training. While there is increasing emphasis on industry-based and on-the-job training in the laws and policy documents, in practice it is still very limited. Alternative methods of training, such as community based training, peer to peer training, etc. are generally considered an alternative or 'add on' for specific (usually marginalized) groups, rather than part of mainstream TVET systems. For example, in Viet Nam the C-BED entrepreneurship training has only been supported by ILO with people with disabilities, reinforcing views that people with disabilities are unable to access mainstream TVET and need specialized, separate services, and that the activity based learning approach is mainly appropriate for marginalized groups.

**Zambia** – The evaluation's mission to Zambia focused exclusively on its activities in improving the disability inclusiveness of its TVET system and *Case Study 7* outlined the key activities and results.

Government stakeholders saw the ILO as having made a very important contribution – in the words of one “it opened our eyes to the importance of inclusiveness” – and this led directly to the assessment of the system as a whole, revision of curriculum, institutional reform and teacher training and sensitization. The government had committed to new Disability Policy prior to this, but it was the technical expertise provided by the ILO that helped turn this into practice in TVET.

Moving forward, there was some concern expressed that, without continuing guidance in this area, the cultural change that had started in the Zambian TVET system might not be completed. The project has created good advocates within the key institutions, but there is a need for the ILO to continue to reinforce the reforms and to offer technical assistance into the future.

The senior union representatives consulted in the evaluation had not had much involvement in the project, but spoke more generally of the ILO's role and the importance of skills. They particularly highlighted the need for better policy cohesion between the Ministry of Labour and other ministries in the area of skills, perhaps through a policy framework of some type. They believed that the ILO could play an important role in this, facilitating tripartite forums and identifying practical ways forward in skills, including improvements in connecting providers to employers and using apprenticeships to help young people develop skills and transition to work.

**Zimbabwe** – The main ILO work in skills in the period related to the implementation of a Danish-funded project – see *Case Study 6* – that saw a fairly large-scale application of TREE throughout rural provinces and the upgrading of training in urban areas through Quality Informal Apprenticeships. The project far exceeded its participation targets – 5,547 were engaged through TREE (50 per cent above target) and 1,450 were engaged in Informal Apprenticeships (80 per cent above target).

Government representatives were enthusiastic in their assessment of the effectiveness of the ILO's work through this project. Creating meaningful income generating opportunities for the considerable numbers of unemployed young people in rural and urban areas was a clear focus. The conventional training system was described as being unsuited to these young people. They need short courses that are directly related to available work opportunities. What is being implemented is working, according to the stakeholders. The demand from districts for the approach to be extended to them is growing.

The effects were described as life changing for the young people involved enabling those who had been struggling to subsist to improve their lives, build houses and cars and buy biogas and solar technology. It has empowered women to escape from abusive relationships. It has allowed some to employ others in the community and to develop their businesses.

The union representative described the project as “perfect” and that it showed great insight, clarity and planning to be able to achieve such a good result. One employer organization described the project as

“amazing” for its success in equipping young people with the skills they needed to make productive use of the available resources. One beneficiary had increased his income from zero to US\$900 per year. Another had used previously unused land and was now producing 4.5 tonnes of potatoes a year.

### There were other indications that the ILO's work in skills was regarded as being effective and of good quality

The survey of staff and stakeholders included a number of other indications that the ILO's skills work was relevant and effective. These included the following:

- Satisfaction with relevance and level of support provided by the ILO to support formal training system – 61.11% were satisfied or very satisfied; 9.26% were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Do Not Know
0.93% (1)	8.33% (9)	19.44% (21)	41.67% (45)	19.44% (21)	10.19% (11)

- Satisfaction with relevance and level of support provided by the ILO to support informal training system – 44.86 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied; 13.08 per cent were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Do Not Know
2.8% (3)	10.28% (11)	26.17% (28)	35.51% (38)	9.35% (10)	15.89% (17)

- Satisfaction with relevance and level of support provided by the ILO to support other mechanisms for skills development (including ALMPs, PES etc.) – 55.27 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied; 12.85 per cent were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Do Not Know
0.92% (1)	11.93% (13)	24.77% (27)	41.28% (45)	11.01% (12)	10.09% (11)

### Some comments by survey respondents...

#### Support for formal and informal training systems

*“Skills development is a very crowded field at the country level. The ILO's approach at the country level tends to follow the «on-off» approach and because of the lack of funds, is **fragmented** in its approach. **Country offices are isolated and not equipped to engage with various partners** to strategically position ILO's comparative advantage. Why not? Lack of knowledge and awareness about trends and progress on the issue and awareness of new tools being developed.*

*“I think that overall the ILO's **support for formal training systems is more ad-hoc than it should be**, relying **too much on the individual capacity of field specialists**, and **not enough on a common fund of knowledge** on good practice that spans the ILO. The capacity of SKILLS in Geneva to coordinate this has significantly dissipated over time.”*

*“A great many developing countries need to reform their TVET systems, and the ILO's capability to support this at the scale of the whole system is patchy and **dependent on raising substantial funds in competition with other development partners**. Work in this area should be based firmly on **a clearly articulated development theory of change**, rather than on the presumption that the introduction of improved practices will lead to a desirable impact.”*

*“We now have some evidence that **sectoral approaches** to skills development systems can form the basis for meaningful targeted system improvements **that do not aim to directly reform the whole system.**”*

*“There is only so much we can do to trigger change if resources are not available, especially in the field of skills where **ILO expertise is sometimes pushed aside for those donors who come with budget support.**”*

*“Nine times out of 10 support is **relevant, but the level of support is inadequate** 50 per cent of the time .”*

*“The **formal training systems have adequate support** because of the already established structures and systems. The **informal training systems sometimes lack established structures** which can provide smooth support.”*

*“Need practical solution and support for implementation. There is **too much paper!**”*

### Support for other mechanisms

*“ALMPs and PES do **not occupy the place they deserve** in the priority agenda of the department*

*“**Too little is done** in this area.”*

*“The **support diminished** in 2015 when the function was transferred to another unit in Employment Department.”*

*“More collaboration [is needed] with **DEV/INVEST.**”*

*“When it comes to Active Labour Market Policy, often ILO publications seem to be **too prescriptive.** For instance, the advice to encourage investment is to focus on specific sectors. The advice that would be more appropriate is for investment to be encouraged by market data which is **different for each country.**”*

*“This goes to the heart of the **extent to which different units in the ILO engage with the skills branch** as a source of technical inputs. I think it **could be improved** and the best way to do that is by having **explicit indicators and results** criteria included within the programming framework.”*

- Satisfaction with the **design of ILO technical cooperation projects** against a number of criteria was good. Satisfaction with coordination with partners and constituents in design was relatively lower, but overall still good.

	Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Do Not Know
Stated Objectives	0.93% (1)	3.74% (4)	9.35% (10)	49.53% (53)	26.17% (11)	10.28% (11)
Underlying Logic	0.94% (1)	4.72% (5)	15.09% (16)	46.23% (49)	21.70% (12)	11.32% (12)
Sequencing of Activities	0.93% (1)	2.8% (3)	24.3% (26)	42.99% (46)	17.76% (12)	11.21% (12)
Coordination with partners & constituents	0.93% (1)	10.28% (11)	17.76% (19)	33.64% (36)	25.23% (13)	12.15% (13)

- Respondents perceived ILO **technical cooperation projects** as being **successful in addressing constraints** to building good skills systems – 68.52 per cent said they were successful or very successful and only 2.78 per cent said they were unsuccessful.

Very Unsuccessful	Unsuccessful	Neither unsuccessful nor successful	Successful	Very Successful	Do Not Know
0.0% (0)	2.78% (3)	16.67% (18)	50.93% (55)	17.59% (19)	12.04% (13)



- A high proportion of respondents perceived ILO **global products** as being of high quality – 73.37 per cent said they were of high or very high quality and only 2.75 per cent said they were of low quality.

Very poor quality	Poor quality	Neutral	High quality	Very high quality	Do Not Know
0.0% (0)	2.75% (3)	12.84% (14)	55.96% (61)	17.43% (19)	11.01% (12)

- A high proportion of respondents perceived ILO support and technical cooperation projects as being effective in developing **inclusive skills development** systems and/or services – 70.37 per cent said effective or very effective and zero said it had been ineffective.

Very Ineffective	Ineffective	Neither ineffective nor effective	Effective	Very Effective	Do Not Know
0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	15.74% (17)	53.70% (58)	16.67% (18)	13.89% (15)

### Some comments by survey respondents...

#### Project Design

*"Constituents are not early-enough informed and **consultation is ad hoc.**"*

*"If you include other dimensions like: **Period of analysis and evaluation of a project** = Unsatisfied. Bureaucracy involved in evaluation of a project = Unsatisfied. Time to respond in terms of analysis and evaluation of a project = Unsatisfied."*

*"**Skills Specialists play a key role** in the design and development of TC Project."*

*"The ILO does have competent staff who are fluent with log frames, but often times, these people are not very conversant with **theory of change.**"*

*"It appears the designers were considering the reform process of the TVET System only as a purely 'technical' exercise, whereas the **social aspects of the proposed reform** are by an order of magnitude more complex, challenging and time-consuming."*

*"The project design and appraisal process in theory provides opportunities for **inputs from technical units** within the ILO but it seems that the **process is not consistently followed** across the regions."*

#### Project Effectiveness

*"Most ILO project interventions are focused on the strategic level. For Tunisia we **need more practical interventions.**"*

*"**Depends on the project.** Taking skills-related projects as a whole, some seem to be systemically effective. Others seem to have low systemic impact."*

*"Very successful where sufficient resources were mobilized. **Building systems requires time and resources.**"*

#### Global Products

*"We do not have yet **an assessment tool for national skills development systems** that reflect ILO principles. ILO global products, while of good quality, lack often the big picture ETF, OECD and WB analyses provide at country level."*

*“We need support for the **adaptation of these products** to the country specifications.”*

*“While the product quality is high, the **product marketing, client buy-in and overall execution** require substantial improvement.”*

*“We need more ILO products that focus on **practical application at the country/sector/company** levels.”*

*“Do we have any global products on skills development?”*

### Inclusion

*“Support has to be continuous, based on developments in Armenia.”*

*“The projects have been effective in integrating inclusion of persons with disabilities, support to youths withdrawn from worst forms of child labour, and skills for rural youth, but **the ILO needs to work further on systemic inclusion of other vulnerable groups** such as the poor, those impacted on by HIV, the typically excluded by virtue of remote rural residence, illiteracy and other factors, etc.”*

## The ILO has engaged with United Nations partners and other development actors in the skills field and this work appears to have been well coordinated and complementary.

As mentioned earlier in the discussion of “global outputs”, the ILO has taken a lead role in the Inter-Agency Working Group on Greening Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). This includes the ILO, European Commission, European Training Foundation, OECD, UNESCO, World Bank and the regional development banks). Collaboration and coordination in research and policy advice was good and contributed to the G20 Training Strategy. The strategies of the respective organizations are compatible and the evaluation visits suggested that implementation of skills-related activities in-country are also complementary.

The survey of staff and stakeholders indicated a generally positive perception of the level of complementarity between the ILO, partners, multilateral and bilateral organizations. 66.66 per cent of respondents saw work as being complementary or highly complementary while 2.78 per cent saw it as not very complementary.

Not at all complementary	Not very complementary	Moderately complementary	Complementary	Highly complementary	Do Not Know
0.0% (0)	2.78% (3)	14.81% (16)	44.44% (48)	22.22% (24)	15.74% (17)

The survey conducted among the members of the Inter Agency Working Group on TVET showed an even more positive perception of the level of complementarity between the ILO, partners, multilateral and bilateral organizations. 85.71 per cent of respondents saw ILO’s work as being complementary or highly complementary while no respondents saw it as moderately or not complementary.

Not at all complementary	Not Very complementary	Moderately complementary	Complementary	Highly complementary	Do Not Know
0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	57.14% (4)	28.57% (2)	14.29% (1)

## EFFICIENCY

### ILO work in the area of skills development seems generally efficient and cost-effective, but data limitations do not currently allow a detailed analysis.

The ILO's existing information systems do not allow an analysis of the regular budget costs associated with specific activities and reported results. This type of analysis would require data on the cost of all resources used to undertake activities, information on how these activities were linked to outputs and how they contributed to the achievement of outcomes.

While comparisons between countries are very difficult to make,<sup>54</sup> especially in the diverse field of skills, the ILO currently has a limited view of efficiency and cost-effectiveness from this perspective. Based on the evaluation's visits and review of documented country outputs and achievements, the US\$21.5 million expended in Bangladesh over the three biennia was the largest investment in outcome 2, but much has been achieved there. In contrast, the fifth largest investment, and the largest outside Asia, was in Benin. It expended \$8.5 million, but, based on the desk review case study, the evaluation was unable to find sufficiently detailed information on results. The system should better document institutional memory so that the experiences are preserved. (see **Recommendation 7**).

The survey provided a qualitative perspective on the issue, with 71.15 per cent of respondents saying that they thought ILO support and projects were either efficient or very efficient and only 3.82 per cent saying they were inefficient or very inefficient. (However, the fairly high number of people who thought the ILO was “neither inefficient nor efficient”, does suggest that there is some room for improvement):

Very Inefficient	Inefficient	Neither inefficient nor efficient	Efficient	Very Efficient
0.96% (1)	2.88% (3)	25.00% (26)	68.27% (71)	2.88% (3)

### A number of significant constraints to operational efficiency and effectiveness were identified through the survey.

According to the survey, the biggest constraints on operational efficiency and effectiveness were “**number of staff in country/regional office with requisite technical expertise**” (52.7 per cent), the “**time required for internal decision making**” (46.3 per cent) and the ability to **secure RBSA and XBTC funding** (42.06 per cent for each).

	Not a Constraint	Minor Constraint	Moderate Constraint	Substantial Constraint	Very Substantial Constraint	Do Not Know
No of staff in country/region office with requisite technical expertise	7.41% (8)	10.19% (11)	17.59% (19)	29.63% (32)	23.15% (25)	12.04% (13)
Time required for internal decision-making	8.49% (9)	8.49% (9)	20.75% (22)	24.53% (26)	21.70% (23)	16.04% (17)
Ability to secure RBSA funding	4.67% (5)	12.15% (13)	14.02% (15)	20.56% (22)	21.50% (23)	27.10% (29)
Ability to secure XBTC funding	5.61% (6)	11.21% (12)	19.63% (21)	21.50% (23)	20.56% (22)	21.50% (23)
Ability to secure Regular Budget (RB) funding	4.72% (5)	6.60% (7)	20.75% (22)	21.70% (23)	19.81% (21)	26.42% (28)

<sup>54</sup> Full details of expenditures (RBSA, RBTC and XBTC against outcome 2 are available upon request.

	Not a Constraint	Minor Constraint	Moderate Constraint	Substantial Constraint	Very Substantial Constraint	Do Not Know
Ability of HQ staff to commit sufficient time to providing assistance	10.38% (11)	14.15% (15)	19.81% (21)	27.36% (29)	8.49% (9)	19.81% (21)
Number of staff in HQ technical units with requisite technical expertise	12.15% (13)	14.95% (16)	17.76% (19)	18.69% (20)	14.95% (16)	21.50% (23)
Ability to recruit qualified external collaborators (consultants)	12.04% (13)	24.07% (26)	18.52% (20)	22.22% (24)	9.26% (10)	13.89% (15)
Ability to recruit qualified chief technical advisors (CTA)	12.04% (13)	15.74% (17)	21.30% (23)	15.74% (17)	12.96% (14)	22.22% (24)
Ability to draw on ILO knowledge-base	15.74% (17)	14.81% (16)	26.85% (29)	20.37% (22)	9.26% (10)	12.96% (14)

**While promoting proven approaches in skills development are important, the ILO could instead lead the way, exploring new approaches that might be less costly, more readily scaled up, and easier to sustain.**

Some ILO staff consulted during the evaluation questioned whether the organization was wedded to certain traditional approaches and was too risk-averse when it came to introducing different ways of promoting and achieving skills development. The implication was that there might be a cycle where the ILO sourced funding from donors, made progress for a period of time in a particular country, then moved on to try the same approach somewhere else. As one person in Headquarters asked:

*“Are we stuck to old fashioned, circular activities? Can we be more innovative, particularly in crisis countries. We tend to offer packages and have limitations in evaluating needs and what really fits.”*

Finding new models that are effective, scalable and cost effective should be a priority. For example, the Community-Based Enterprise Development (C-BED) approach used in the Asia-Pacific region, operates through a highly decentralized model that facilitates self-directed, “peer-to-peer” learning without the need for external trainers. The ILO develops the learning materials, which it makes freely available to partner organizations, who host and facilitate the learning, but without experts or “master trainers”. It operates under a very different paradigm to the traditional model of ILO action in the field, but it is one that has been shown by evaluations to work. Moreover, it can be scaled up, massively so in some cases – for example, the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture is training 65,000 agricultural extension workers in the model to support the skills development of 7,000,000 rural entrepreneurs and farmers.

It is clear that the application of this particular model to vocational skills development (as opposed to enterprise skills) might be more limited, but it is raised here as an example of the type of innovation that is possible. Other novel approaches, including technology-based solutions, need also to be considered. CINTERFOR, for example, is actively exploring the vocational learning possibilities flowing from the age of “ubiquitous learning” that the Internet has created – accessible from anywhere and at any time, in the contents, interactions and learning activities required by the user. Even in poorer countries, access to the Internet, particularly among youth, is growing and the ILO needs to be a leader in this field. For example, in Africa, there were 226 million smartphone connections to the Internet at the end of 2015 and this is forecast to grow to 720 million by 2020.<sup>55</sup> (see **Recommendation 4**).

<sup>55</sup> Cisco. Cisco Visual Networking Index: Global Mobile Data Traffic Forecast Update, 2015–2020 White Paper. Available at <http://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/collateral/service-provider/visual-networking-index-vni/mobile-white-paper-c11-520862.html> (Accessed 26 July 2016).

**The relative cost effectiveness and the time required to achieve results of different ILO approaches to skills need to be assessed. This information should be used in the determination of future priorities.**

There was also some debate, both in Headquarters and in the field, about the relative cost-benefits of approaches that focused on the development of formal training systems and those that were more community-centred, shorter in duration and targeted to the needs of the poor and less educated. Although people recognize the benefits of formal training system modernization in some countries (for example, Bangladesh and the Russian Federation) this is a lower priority in other countries (for example, Zimbabwe). Both are of value and are supported by key ILO policy documents, but what offers the best return for the investment of the ILO and its donors? To what extent do short and medium term results for individuals and communities take priority over long-term results in systems' reform. As one survey respondent put it:

*"The ILO needs to make decisions where it wants to invest its time and efforts in SKILLS and where it will not work on SKILLS. Current capacity is not sufficient."*

This raises the issue too of geographic focus. Is there a need for a more proactive approach to skills development in some regions? Is the balance of investment overall geographically right? The evaluation is not in a position to answer such questions, but they are important considerations for a future Strategic Policy Framework. It could be that the type of skills-related projects that are needed in places such as Africa require a different emphasis by the ILO – more TREE and less STED, for example. It could also be that doing more in these places is harder and requires a much bigger investment, but this needs to be offset by the potential benefits, especially in the context of the SDGs. Skills expert Paul Bennell explains that:

*"Although the most economically vulnerable are generally the hardest to reach, the potential 'pay-offs' of being able to reduce significantly the number of people who are living in the greatest poverty are enormous."*<sup>56</sup>

## IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

**Based on the site visits, ILO's skills work has had some impact on policy development, institutional capacity and the extension of training opportunities to certain groups. Impact on the countries' ability to align training supply and demand is not yet evident in practice, but the logic of the reforms seem sound in this respect.**

Because of the inadequacy of the performance indicators as a measure of progress towards the ultimate goal of "alignment of the training supply and demand and extending access to training", it is not possible to say how many countries reached the impact target (which was set rather ambitiously and without a baseline at 30). This is reinforced by the fact that biennial Implementation Reports were silent on progress towards this target and whether it was ultimately achieved.

Based on the sample of countries visited in the evaluation, there are signs of progress in different aspects of the goal. This includes policy development and improved institutional capacity to

<sup>56</sup> Bennell, P. Learning to change: Skills development among the economically vulnerable and socially excluded in developing countries. Employment and Training Papers, No. 43. (ILO, Geneva, 1999).

implement new methods, but “alignment of training supply and demand” has, in practice, not been achieved. The situation in these countries is summarized below:

- **Bangladesh** – the ILO has acted as the designer and engineer for much of the new training system machinery that has been put in place, but more needs to be done to fully realize the vision behind the reforms. There is confidence and pride among constituents that the model is right and that it will significantly improve alignment of formal sector labour supply and demand, but there is no real evidence yet of impact in this respect.<sup>57</sup> Careful steps have been taken to build into the model improved access for people from disadvantaged groups, including people with disabilities and those in the informal sector, but again no evidence of substantial impact in terms of participation is yet apparent. The size of the informal sector in Bangladesh – 89 per cent – and the low level of education of a significant proportion of this group present major barriers to their engagement with the formal sector.
- **Russian Federation** – the ILO has provided much-valued technical support and advice to the Russian Federation to support its efforts to overhaul and to modernize their vocational training system. The country has set a very ambitious pace for this reform process and is learning as it proceeds. The ILO’s input has been significant, providing it with different models from around the world, including the conduct of a study tour to Ireland. This has been highly valued by the constituents and has influenced their decision making. However, the Russian Federation is still in the early stages of modernizing its system, and there are no observable improvements as yet in better aligning supply and demand. The ILO has also provided significant input in the Lukoil-funded technical cooperation project that focuses on youth employment and training and there are some promising results coming from the pilot programmes conducted, including a new apprenticeship model.
- **Armenia** – The G20 project which started in 2012 was the first real skills project in Armenia and, compared with other countries visited, had a small budget. Impact under these circumstances has therefore been modest, but progress has been made in policy development (including ILO input on disability policy, labour market information, monitoring and evaluation, and VET college governance) and institutional capacity building (career guidance, public employment services and, through the SKOLKOVO tools, TVET college management and skills anticipation). In the short term, a second phase of this project will consolidate this progress.
- **Viet Nam** – Institutional reforms created by the new legislation (involving the consolidation of the TVET function in one ministry) have considerable potential to improve system effectiveness, but this has not yet been implemented fully. ILO sectoral level work, especially tourism, has had good impact including the formation of a new industry training advisory body and improved cohesion with ASEAN standards. The “Implementing the G20” Project has seen the STED model implemented and training recommendations implemented and piloted in the tourism sector in two provinces.
- **Zambia** – Key government TVET institutions are very committed to improving the inclusiveness of vocational training delivery in Zambia and a new model has been tested in five colleges. At the college visited as part of the evaluation, it was clear that it had already earned a reputation for its services for people with disabilities and that numbers of students from this group had increased. Since the end of the project, the local office has less ability to support further expansion, but there is commitment from the constituents to maintain momentum.

<sup>57</sup> Anecdotal information was provided that indicated that in the Bangladesh garment sector, training under the new arrangements had a 90 per cent job placement rate. Training system performance data was not made more generally available.



- **Zimbabwe** – Very significant impact was evident at a community level from the implementation of TREE among rural youth and Quality Informal Apprenticeships with urban youth. Impact on beneficiaries was evident and all constituents agree that there is immense potential to extend these models across the country. Despite the government having difficulties with its budget, it has responded to strong demand from provinces to expand by allocating US\$75,000 per district to replicate the model nationally. This money has yet to be allocated, but once it does, there is an established institutional structure that can be used at the national and district level to mainstream the initiative. ILO support has, however, been very intensive and it remains to be seen if Zimbabwe is ready to run these programmes on its own and if government funding will be sufficient.

### **Sustainability is always considered in the design of ILO skills interventions, but achieving sustainable change may be easier when working with government systems**

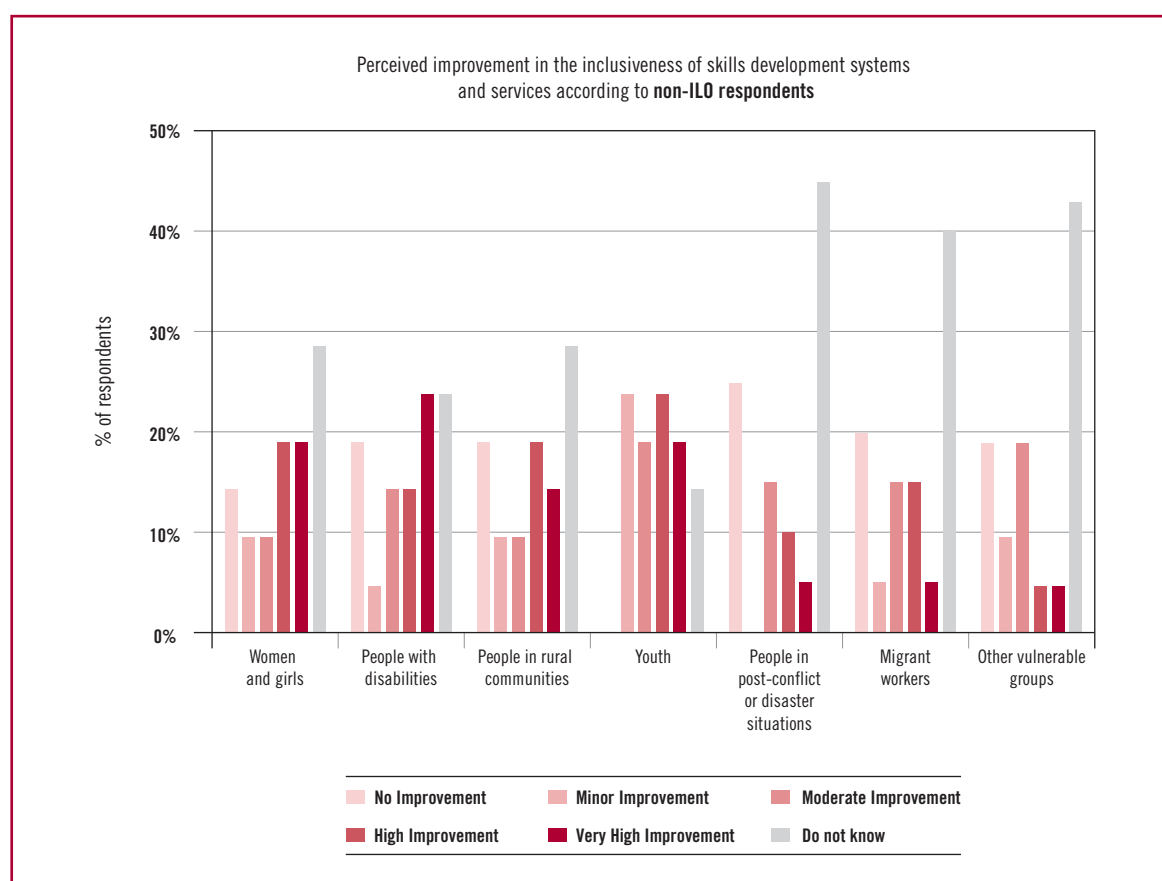
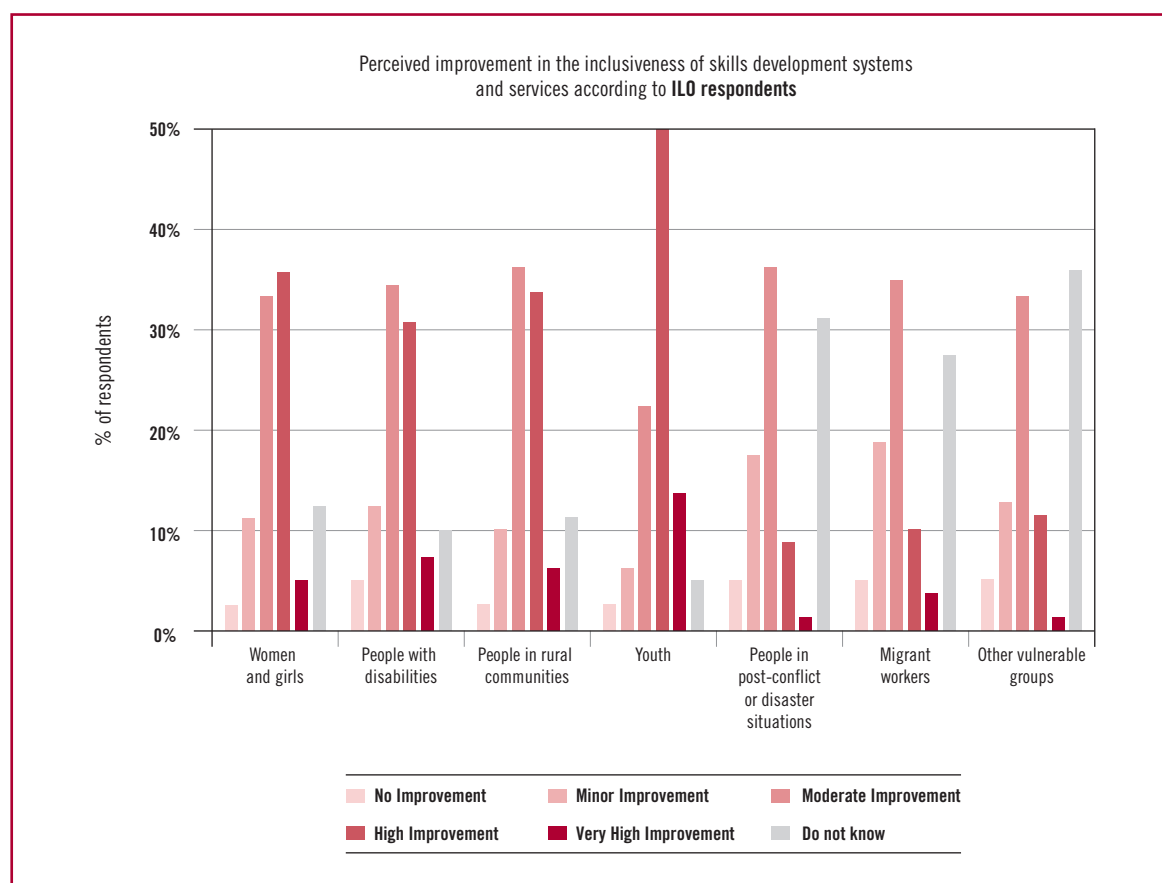
Sustainability of ILO interventions is considered in the design and implementation process, but its achievement is never guaranteed. Work in skills policy development and training system reform probably offers the best prospects for sustainability. These both involve working mainly with government stakeholders in developing new processes and procedures. If successful, these processes and procedures become a permanent and enduring marker of the ILO's work. The skills work in Bangladesh is certainly in this category, and there is potential too in the Russian Federation, Armenia, Viet Nam and Zambia for the ILO's policy, legislative and systems development support to create a similar legacy.

On the other hand, when the ILO's work is focused more on community economic development and the skills needed by individuals to elevate them from poverty, sustainability is more "hit or miss". Although Zimbabwe is completely sold on the benefits of TREE, has a potentially good network structure to adopt it as a mainstream programme, and has even allocated a modest budget for its expansion, the evaluation was nevertheless left with some doubts about its sustainability. The fact that TREE has reportedly only been mainstreamed into the national budgets of two countries (Pakistan and the Philippines) suggests that sustainability is hard to attain.

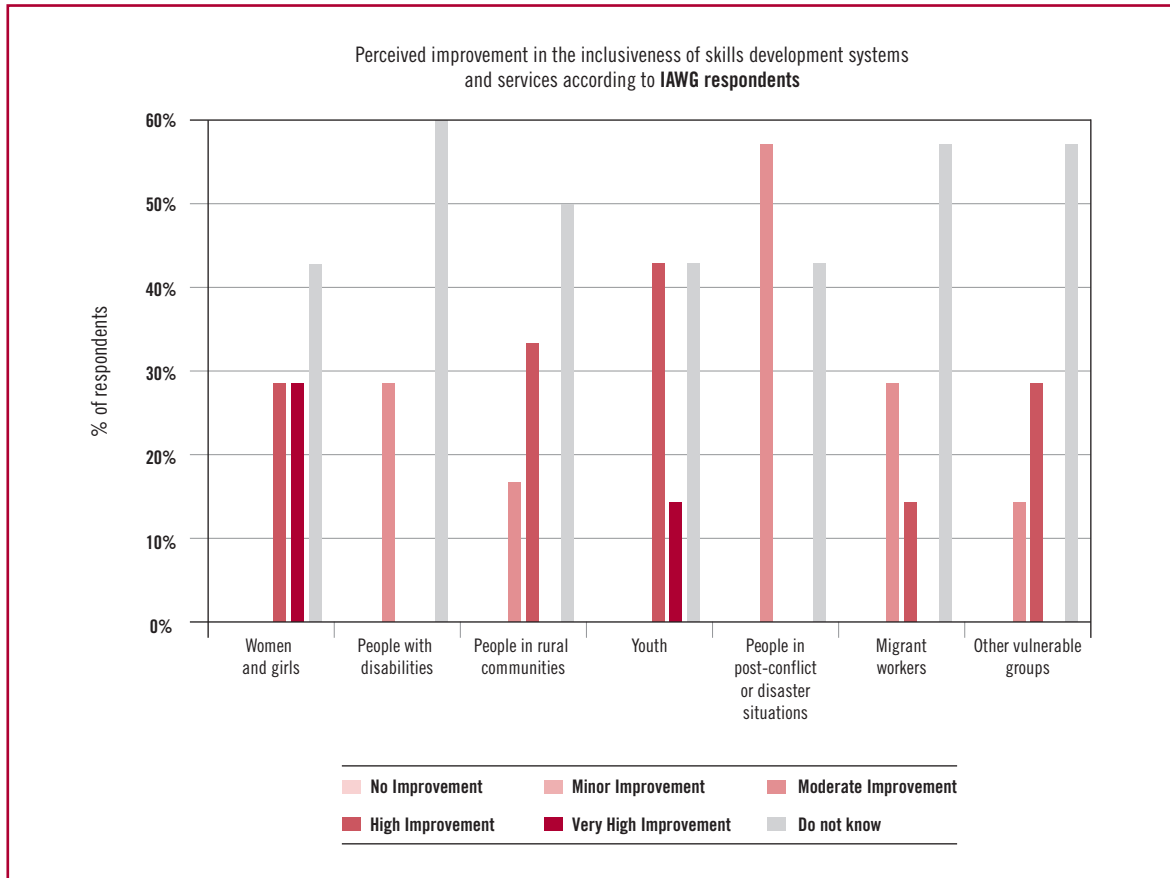
Yet, compared with all of the other site visits, it was only in Zimbabwe that the evaluation saw significant numbers of people whose lives seemed to have been changed as a result of an ILO intervention. Policy work elsewhere might one day have this effect too, but it is hard not to be attracted to an approach that is having an immediate result for people in need rather than to the long term improvement of a government system. The results of programmes like TREE might very well be sustainable for individual participants, but without ongoing support, the intervention itself might not be.

### **Staff and stakeholders perceive the ILO skills work as having had a sustainable impact on extending access to training systems and services**

Regarding the impact and sustainability of ILO skills work on different groups of people, staff generally considered the ILO's skills work as having achieved moderate or high levels of improvement in the inclusiveness of skills development systems for some groups, but especially for youth. External stakeholders, including Inter-Agency Working Group members, often were unaware of the impact and sustainability of these interventions, but the responses they did make were quite different to those of ILO staff. The sample size from these groups was relatively small and may reflect other factors, such as awareness of some interventions, but not others. Results for three groups (ILO staff, IAWG members and non-ILO) are summarized below:







## CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### CONCLUSIONS

The considerable scope and complexity of the ILO's work in skills make any broad judgement of performance in this area very difficult. For example, work in national training system reform is hard to compare with projects that build skills to improve livelihoods in rural communities. Moreover, success in one type of work in one country might be counter-balanced by relative failure in a similar field in another.

The lack of any coherent organizational strategy for skills work globally meant that much of the work performed, though following a recognized agenda set out in key policy documents, did not reflect the Strategic Policy Framework, P&B and the indicators they used to measure results. The evaluation team was therefore put in the invidious position of evaluating strategic performance with no clear strategy and with performance indicators that were poorly defined.

Keeping these important factors in mind, the evaluation considered how well the organization performed in skills against the Strategic Policy Framework indicators and through direct observation from the field visits and from the survey results, and draws the following conclusions:

**Relevance:** Although some of the skills work done by the ILO in the period found no natural home among the Strategic Policy Framework performance indicators, in all other respects, including commitments made by the ILO to key Conventions and Recommendations and to supporting countries to implement the G20 Strategy, the activities and approach were relevant and appropriate. In the countries visited in the evaluation, constituents were clearly supportive of the ILO's approach. While there are many other development agencies and United Nations partners working in the field of skills, ILO activities were seen to be complementary and harmonizing well with the strategies these organizations had adopted. ILO was seen as a natural leader in the area of skills work by surveyed stakeholders and the recognition by the G20 in asking the ILO to take the lead to develop the G20 Training Strategy has placed ILO as a global influencer in skills development work.

During the reporting period, internal collaboration and synergy between different branches of the ILO might have been constrained to some extent by the inability of the planning process to assign activities to more than one outcome in the Strategic Policy Framework, but this does not seem to have been a problem in the field as the various activities seem to converge more naturally there. At the strategic management level, there is a need to provide more guidance as to the priority areas for intervention both in terms of the level of intervention (for example, long-term training system reform

or short to medium term community based action) and, perhaps, geographical focus. None of this guidance, however, should be in the form of a highly prescriptive strategy.

**Coherence:** The coherence of action implemented in the field and the strategy expressed in the biennial P&Bs was poor. This issue has been discussed in detail in the report, but the difficulties experienced in accurately linking the two through the Implementation Reports is a testimony to the gap between them. Countries might have been forced into a difficult choice of either adhering strictly to Strategic Policy Framework (in the process maximizing resource allocation, but inadequately responding to constituent needs and to the “skills agenda”) or adjusting its reporting to better fit with the global results framework.

**Effectiveness:** Performance was examined through the lens of the Strategic Policy Framework. Of the five indicators linked to outcome 2, three were not met and two on youth employment and employment services were exceeded. The evaluation team had concerns about the accuracy and validity of some of the reported results. In the countries visited, some of which had large technical cooperation portfolios, major successes were achieved but were not entirely reflected in the implementation reports. Generally, activities in the field visit countries took gender concerns into its implementation but this was not systematic. Gender was not thoroughly reflected in the reporting of results. Staff and constituents interviewed had a favourable view of the effectiveness of the ILO's skills work. Despite some deficiencies of the strategy as a means of guiding work, the ILO's efforts in practice proved to be adaptable, responsive and effective in meeting the differing needs of the constituents.

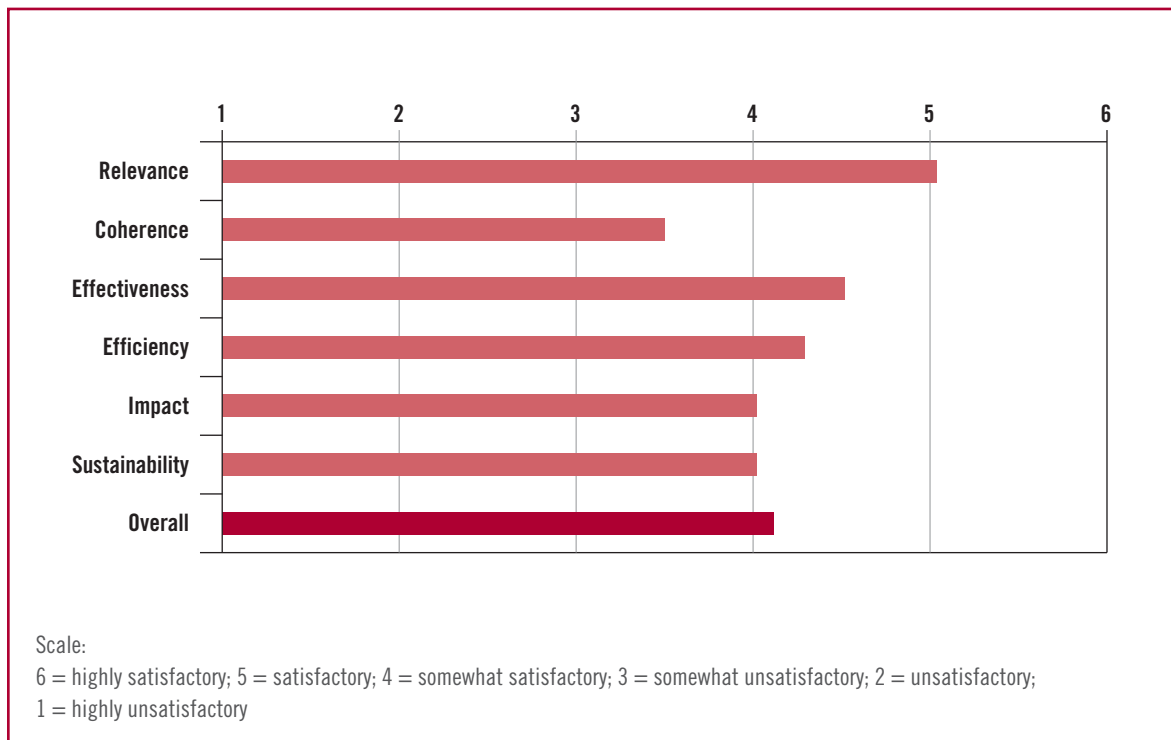
**Efficiency:** A comprehensive assessment of the efficiency of the ILO's skills work would require data that the Office cannot currently provide, including the cost of all resources used to undertake specific skills activities, information on how these activities are linked to outputs and how they contributed to the achievement of outcomes. Although an examination of expenditure on skills by countries raised some questions about relative return on investment, the different circumstances of the countries visited made any judgement based on this sample almost impossible – some had a single project coordinator working in skills, while Bangladesh's successes have led to a separate ILO's skills office with a team of 19 skills specialists. From observations made in the field there was no conspicuous signs of inefficiency – in fact, some had achieved quite a lot with very limited resources. The field visit country sample explicitly included countries where much work was reported to have been done with little funding and the evaluation was able to confirm that this was the case. Survey results showed, amongst others, that the ILO perceives itself to be efficient. A number of constraints to operational efficiency and effectiveness were also identified through the survey including access to technical expertise, the time required for internal decision making, and funding. The evaluation did raise the issue of whether there might be more efficient and cost-effective models that could be developed that are outside the prevailing delivery paradigm, but this is the subject of a separate recommendation below.

**Impact:** In terms of the ultimate goal as expressed in the Strategic Policy Framework (the “Position to be reached by 2015: Over 30 member States have aligned training supply and demand, extended access to training”), there were no data available on the actual number of countries that were assessed as having reached this position. The countries visited in the evaluation had all undertaken activities that relate to the goal, constituents in these countries were generally satisfied and survey data suggested that staff and stakeholders believe that the ILO had made a difference. When questioned in the field, however, staff and stakeholders were often unable to present any evidence of impact, especially in respect of “aligning supply and demand” through training system reform.

**Sustainability:** The potential for sustainability in policy development and training system reform is naturally greater than that of more community-based approaches that pilot delivery mechanisms. The latter, however, offer a more visible immediate result for beneficiaries and the evaluation saw cases where the sustainable results for individuals were good, even if the sustainability of the inter-

vention was questionable. The ILO needs to consider the relative advantages of these different approaches in the formulation of its strategy, and factor in these differences in sustainability outcomes as part of this process.

Figure 2. Evaluation Criteria Ratings



## LESSONS LEARNED

The key lessons learned from the evaluation were:

### **Lesson 1: The ILO needs a document that guides its work in skills and establishes priorities over the short, medium and long term.**

Skills work is complex and is linked with many different national policies and programmes. Depending on local needs and circumstances, the ILO therefore finds itself addressing skills issues from a **multitude of starting points** – economic development, labour market efficiency, structural adjustment, ALMPs for the unemployed, increasing or diversifying trade, enterprise or livelihood development, Green Jobs, supporting the movement from the informal to the formal economy, improving youth transitions from education to work, addressing the needs of migrant workers, improving inclusiveness etc. In some rare cases such as in Bangladesh, the ILO can position itself as the lead agent in training system reform and attempt to tackle all of these issues as part of a grand plan. But in many other situations, the ILO has a specific problem or systemic “weak link” to address and a skills development activity (or specific policy reform) is just part of the solution.

The Office needs to articulate more clearly how it wants its staff to operate within this complex field. This might or might not be a “strategy” in the conventional sense, but some sort of statement or operational framework is needed that makes it clear how and where skills development fits across the whole organization, what opportunities for skills development should be sought, and what the **short, medium and long-term priorities** can be identified for the organization as a whole.

At present, skills staff either **do not know or only think they know what the ILO expects of them**. The survey indicated that almost half of the people in the Office who said that skills work was an important or very important part of their work said that they did not know what the ILO's skills strategy was. The half that thought they did know all had different ideas about what the strategy was.

**Lesson 2: Performance indicators and their measurement criteria need to better reflect the work that actually leads to the outcomes being pursued.**

A lack of understanding of the ILO's direction and priorities in skills might have contributed to the problems identified in the evaluation in reporting against the performance indicators. The indicators in the Strategic Policy Framework **did not align well with the activities** – or, to reference the G20 Strategy, the “building blocks” – that are recognized as **leading to the outcomes** being sought. The indicators provided some insight into how well access was improved for identified groups, but very little into the complex world of training system reform.

These indicators are important and, if they are poorly designed, can misdirect organizational effort. As they were applied in the Strategic Policy Framework 2010–2015, few people in the Office would say that they provided an accurate picture of performance in skills.

**Lesson 3: Training system reform is a fertile field for ILO work, offering sustainability of results and the ability to advance decent work goals, but it can be a slow process.**

The experience in Bangladesh shows that, if the ILO can attain a position of leadership in training reform, this can enhance the ILO's capacity both to attract donor funding and to influence employment policy more broadly. Ten years ago, Bangladesh had no projects in its portfolio that were skills-related, but it is now the backbone of the country's operations with a team of 19 skills specialists employed. Over the period of the evaluation, the office attracted over US\$20 million in investment in skills and is about to sign an agreement for another US\$30 million. The breadth of activity covered is described in the report as are the greater prospects for sustainability that are derived from working with constituents to establish systems not projects.

The drawback of this approach is that it takes some time for the impact and benefits of such systemic reform to be evident either in terms of labour market efficiency and skills match or for particular groups, especially the most disadvantaged. There is a risk that this type of work will be perceived as offering too few immediate results, especially for the latter.

**Lesson 4: Working at the community level to provide skills to highly disadvantaged groups can have an immediate impact, but sustainability and expansion are hard to achieve.**

At the other end of the continuum to training system reform (though it can be an element of this reform) are community-based or informal skills system interventions. In the case of Zimbabwe, the TREE programme, based on this community-based philosophy, has provided individuals with the vocational and entrepreneurial skills they need to climb out of poverty and improve the quality of life for themselves and others. Formal training system providers were involved, but these individuals are unlikely to ever connect with this system much beyond this initial training – certification under a National Qualifications Framework would not offer them much.

This sort of work by the ILO has a lot more visceral appeal than policy work, but it has drawbacks too, chief among them being sustainability. For whatever reason, despite constituent approval, TREE has proven hard to sustain. Zimbabwe desperately wants to sustain it, but it needs money and expertise. What is more, despite having helped thousands of young people in the country, to really make a difference it needs to reach *millions*. As quoted earlier in the report, one constituent said “*we are trying to move a mountain with a teaspoon.*”

**Lesson 5: In the ILO's skills work, it is important to ensure that the input of Ministries other than the Ministry of Labour is given equal attention.**

In most places, TVET is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education rather than the Ministry of Labour, the ILO's in-country counterpart. The evaluation came across examples where the Ministry of Education may not have been as involved in shaping skills-related activities as it should have. In one case, for example, there was a DWCP Working Group looking at skills policy, but which excluded the Ministry responsible for TVET. While the Ministry of Labour was meant to represent the Government as a whole, it naturally saw issues through the lens of its portfolio responsibilities (for example, the public employment service, ALMPs, retraining the unemployed etc.) Opportunities for addressing TVET system issues might therefore not make it to the table, particularly if employer and worker representatives are not across these issues.

There may be a need, therefore, for the ILO to alert its offices and its constituents to the need to ensure inputs from other Ministries are properly sought. In addition to the Ministry of Education, there are others that will also have an interest in skills – including, for example, Ministries responsible for Economic Development, Trade, Business, Infrastructure, as well as sector-specific Ministries.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1: Enhance coherence between the P&B, the key policy documents and the SDGs by mapping key skills development activities to the indicators in the next Strategic Plan/P&B.**

By mapping these indicators to key current activity, as well as to broader fields of work mandated by the key Conventions and Recommendations, what fits and what does not fit will become clearer. Where there are gaps – that is, where no home can be found in the Strategic Plan for particular activities – this needs to be highlighted and a high-level decision made that resolves what might have been an unintended consequence of the indicators' design.

Although much of the ILO's work relates to SDG Goal 8 ("inclusive and sustainable growth, employment and decent work for all"), its skills work also relates to SDG Goal 4 ("Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning"). The targets set under this goal include access for all women and men to TVET (not just youth), the number of youths and adults that have relevant "skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship", access to vocational education and training for disadvantaged groups, and increasing participation in vocational training in the least developed countries (especially Africa and Small Island Developing States).

All of these issues are in the key ILO skills policy documents, but the Transitional Strategic Plan does not seem to adequately recognize them. Although it includes no outcome for skills, skills work is referenced in three other outcomes (1, 5 and 8) and in two of the Cross Cutting areas ("Gender equality and non-discrimination", and "transition to a green economy"). Two P&B indicators (1.2 and 1.4) refer to skills, but these are quite narrowly defined – one measures the upgrading of skills development systems only as they affect school-to-work transition, and the other bundles the application of skills anticipation tools with the assessment of policy and the promotion of Industry Skills Councils. This needs to be corrected in the next Strategic Plan.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS and PROGRAM	High	December 2016	Low

**Recommendation 2: Ensure that adequate technical support is available for areas of growing demand and consider the need to target specific skills related activities in “priority regions or countries”.**

The evaluation found that demand for different types of skills work can fluctuate and the ILO needs to ensure that it can quickly respond to such changes (for example, at the time of the country visits, both Skills Anticipation and Quality Apprenticeships were clearly arousing the interests of many countries). More generally, skills development is an area where demand for different specialized expertise can ebb and flow, so a broad capacity to respond to such fluctuations is needed, particularly in the context of the next Strategic Plan.

The evaluation also found that the focus of ILO activity in skills is Asia – more than half of XBTC project funding with a skills component flowed there, more than three times Africa's share. No doubt there are good reasons for demand for skills in Asian economies and the evaluation's review of a sample of DWCPs shows there is also strong demand in Africa, as well as perhaps some hidden demand. (For example, some African countries prioritized labour intensive infrastructure projects as drivers for youth employment but were silent on skills. This raised the question of how these youths would be trained and would they acquire any transferable skills that would help them beyond the project?)

It could be that the lack until very recently of enough skills specialists in Africa may have resulted in insufficient attention being given to the benefits of including different skills elements in projects. Future planning needs to address this, ensuring that regional skills specialists can add value to DWCPs and activities through skills development.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS	Medium	June 2017	Medium

**Recommendation 3: Clarify the full scope of the ILO's skills agenda and communicate this to ILO offices and constituents. Develop tools and guides that support offices and constituents to better integrate skills development activities into the full range of development interventions.**

Although skills work touches on many areas of the ILO's operations, the opportunity to include effective skills development elements can sometimes be missed. Practical tools and guides may be needed to assist ILO offices and constituents to better integrate skills into a broader range of activities. This may include such elements as the “building blocks” described in the G20 Strategy, Global Products or parts of these products, or just good practices learned from other projects. These need to be written for a broad audience (not for skills specialists) and be focused on the typical problems or opportunities faced in the field that skills responses can help to address – not on the high-level architecture of training system reform.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS	Low	December 2017	Medium

**Recommendation 4: Encourage innovation in the ILO's skills work by allocating funds to develop and test new models.**

The ILO is not regarded as being especially innovative when it comes to skills work. The Office seems to rely heavily on long-standing products and service. The introduction of new approaches and methods seems largely restricted to analytical processes (for example, STED and Skills Antici-



pation) rather than investigating new models for delivery. Some staff expressed frustration with this, questioning why the ILO is “stuck to old fashioned, circular activities” when it could be a leader in the field. There is a need to more actively develop and test innovative models that are both sustainable and have the capacity to be scaled up.

Establishing some form of “innovation fund” to support the development and piloting of promising new models could be considered. These could be stand-alone “experiments” or could perhaps augment activities in larger XBTC projects – even trialling different approaches side-by-side with the traditional approaches used as “control groups”. Finding new models that are effective, scalable and cost effective should be a priority. CINTERFOR’s work in technological innovations in vocational learning should also be followed up.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS and PARDEV	Medium	December 2017	High

**Recommendation 5: Enhance capacity of ILO tripartite partners to participate in ILOs skills work and ensure other ministries are effectively engaged in identifying and addressing priorities.**

In its field visits, the evaluation team met with workers’ and employers’ representatives and many were very knowledgeable in skills policy and in matters relating to training system reform and had been playing a very active role in the tripartite Industry Skills Councils. However, there were also some representatives who would benefit from capacity building in this area so that they could better influence skills development. In some countries, there was clearly a risk that government representatives might dominate the process and that this would lead to poorer outcomes for the skills system. Employer and worker representatives have a vital role to play in skills development and their capacity to do so needs to be enhanced.

Also, as vocational education and training is often the responsibility of each country’s Ministry of Education and not its’ Ministry of Labour, the ILO needs to ensure that its country-level analysis and planning processes effectively engage with the Ministry of Education. Skills work also extends to other ministries and should have input into the ILO’s skills-related work.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS, ACTRAV and ACTEMP /Country and DWT offices	Medium	December 2017	High

**Recommendation 6: Improve the current systems in place to review and verify results reported in the Implementation Reports and improve the capacity of ILO systems to report on the allocation of RB resources to outcomes.**

The office should implement a system to make a more realistic assessment of the ILOs contribution to reported results. Results reported against performance indicators need to be reviewed more thoroughly and only be included in performance reports where the ILO has made a substantial and verifiable contribution. There is no evidence to suggest that this is a problem that is restricted to outcome 2, but is a system-wide problem. Given that some technical interpretation may be required, improving the validity and accuracy of reporting will require the input of both PROGRAM and SKILLS.

Adding to the number of evaluation reports which have highlighted this issue, a system should be put in place that better captures the use of resources (including Regular Budget resources) linked to

outcomes. This will reflect and quantify the work undertaken by ILO, including support to constituents and capacity building efforts. For example, there is currently no way to capture the technical support headquarters and skills specialists provides to the constituents on skills work.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DDG/MR, PROGRAM, DDG/P and technical department	Medium	December 2018	High

**Recommendation 7: Improve institutional record keeping to ensure that important information is not lost when key staff leave the organization.**

The evaluation was frustrated at times by an inability to access certain information, including the background of and reasoning behind significant decisions, because individual staff had since left the organization. Some information of this type was apparently kept in emails or personal drives and ceased to be accessible as soon as the person left. For example, the rationale behind setting targets for Africa in the Strategic Policy Framework and their apparently random nature, posed a mystery that the evaluation team was unable to solve. No documents were found that explained it and, although the information might still be known by someone in the Office, this person proved to be elusive. Basic record keeping of this type needs to be improved across the organization.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS and PROGRAM	High	December 2016	High

## OFFICE RESPONSE

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The Office acknowledges with thanks the evaluation of an important area of work in high demand by the ILO constituents. The responsible technical department, the Employment Policy Department (EMPLOYMENT), appreciates the finding that the ILO's work in skills development is adaptable, responsive and effective in meeting the diverse needs of the constituents, ranging from policy and institutional reform to community-based action. The Office welcomes the recommendations and draws attention to the organizational reforms introduced after 2013. These reforms resulted in better integration of work on skills with the ILO's work on employment policy, synergizing with other outcomes and increasing capacity in the field, from both supply and demand perspectives.

### RECOMMENDATION 1

The Office recognizes that the P&B, the Strategic Policy Framework and indicators under outcome 2 covering skills work in the period 2010–2015 did not reflect the full scope of the ILO's skills strategy as deployed at the country level. However, it underscores the internal consistency and coherence of the ILO's strategy, approach and action, as guided by: the normative and policy frameworks of the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195); the Conclusions on skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development, adopted by the International Labour Conference (ILC) in 2008; and the Conclusions concerning the recurrent discussion on employment adopted by the ILC in 2010 and in 2014. The skills strategy is also reflected in the ILO's G20 Training Strategy, a major outcome of the ILO's partnership and advocacy. While a perfect match of the strategic framework with the full range of support provided through the ILO action may not be feasible, new indicators were already introduced in the 2016–2017 biennium under outcome 1. These indicators are being further refined in the proposals for 2018–2019, in the light of experience and lessons learned. The Office agrees that in addition to SDG 8, much of skills work also relates to SDG 4. Relevant SDG indicators and targets are being fully mapped and reflected in the P&B for 2018–2019.

### RECOMMENDATIONS 2 AND 3

To improve the geographical spread of ILO support, two new skills specialists were appointed in the African region in 2016, bringing the total to four posts. The Office expects that these appointments will bolster its work on skills, including by increasing its development cooperation portfolio in Africa. The Office appreciates the need for tools and guides to assist the ILO offices in addressing skills concerns. It has made a head start in this regard, including by preparing a series of policy briefs

to inform technical specialists working in fields other than skills. It will also consider consolidating the ILO skills strategy into a single document, other than the P&B, that addresses a broader audience.

The Office is taking several steps to continuously update and adapt its response to rapid changes and evolving conditions in labour markets and the skills needs implications, as well as the diverse and changing needs and priorities of the ILO constituents. Focusing on available as well as additional resources, the Office is emphasizing areas of action in high demand, such as apprenticeships and skills anticipation methodologies. In addition, it has launched a new initiative on jobs and skills mismatches with a view to better assessing and responding to present challenges and future of work issues, as reported under outcome 1 in November 2015.

## RECOMMENDATION 4

The evaluation highlights the relevance and effectiveness of some well-established ILO models. The development and testing of new models is a part of the ongoing work of the Office. Within the limitation of existing resources, efforts will be made to increase the focus on this aspect of the technical department's work. The Office will also review the feasibility of the creation of an "innovation fund" to support the development and piloting of promising new training models.

## RECOMMENDATION 5

The Office will intensify its efforts to improve the capacities of worker and employer organizations to engage in the development of skills policies and programmes, including through the development of dedicated knowledge products. Work with government entities other than Ministries of Labour and Employment is taking place, where appropriate, taking into account specific mandates and arrangements. This cooperation will be made more visible.

## RECOMMENDATION 6

A system for tracking resources to outcomes, enabling the Office to quantify contributions to reported results has been operating for two years and an enhanced model for capturing base data is currently being tested. The Office acknowledges the need for further improvements in the reporting of results in implementation reports, which will be assisted by the implementation of the enhanced data capture model effective January 2017.

## RECOMMENDATION 7

The Office acknowledges the challenge of maintaining institutional memory, including the need for a record-keeping system that does not depend on staff email accounts. The Office will step up its efforts to devise an electronic system in which records for major development cooperation programmes and key work items are kept centrally.

## ANNEX A – TERMS OF REFERENCE

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### INTRODUCTION

Every year the ILO's Evaluation Office (EVAL) holds annual consultations with senior management through the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) and constituents (group secretariats) to select topics for future high level evaluations. The selection of strategic evaluations customarily focuses on strategic outcomes but may also focus on institutional capacity issues. In November 2015, the ILO's Governing Body approved EVAL's work plan for 2016 which included an independent outcome evaluation of "Jobs and Skills for growth." The evaluation was selected for 2016 following consultations with management, the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) and the constituents.

### BACKGROUND

Countries at all development levels find that adequate education and skills increase the ability to innovate and adopt new technologies. They make the difference between inclusive growth and growth that leaves behind large segments of society. A workforce that has been appropriately trained and is able to continue learning boosts investor confidence and thus job growth.<sup>58</sup>

In low-income countries, scarcity of workers with relevant education and demonstrated skills constrains growth of the productive formal economy. In many middle-income countries, high growth and productivity in some sectors intermingles with low productivity and unrelenting poverty in the large informal economy. Better education and training for young people, workers and entrepreneurs can accelerate the transition to the formal economy, but only as part of the job-centered macroeconomic growth policies and a conducive environment for enterprise growth.<sup>59</sup>

Demographic trends together with heightened competition make the risk of skills and talent shortages and mismatches more acute in many OECD, Eastern European and Commonwealth of Independent States countries. Encouraging lifelong learning and improving labour migration policies are among the challenges confronting ageing societies. The low-skilled are often losing out on benefits that globalization can bring. Discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, rural isolation or age constrains equal access to education, training, and employment services that prepare young people to enter the labour market.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> From Brief Profile on Skills and Employability, Skills and Employability Branch, 25 May 2012. Accessed via ILO website November 23, 2015

<sup>59</sup> Idem.

<sup>60</sup> Idem

## THE RESULTS FRAMEWORK

The Strategic Framework 2010–2015 identified skills development under outcome 2 with three indicators specifically related to skills development and a fourth which includes components of skills development.

The indicators are the following

- 2.1: Number of member States that, with ILO support, integrate skills development into sector or national development strategies.
- 2.2: Number of member States that, with ILO support, make relevant training more readily accessible in rural communities.
- 2.3: Number of member States that, with ILO support, make relevant training more readily accessible to people with disabilities.
- 2.4: Number of member States that, with ILO support, strengthen employment services to deliver on employment policy objectives<sup>61</sup>
- 2.5: Number of member States that, with ILO support, develop and implement integrated policies and programmes to promote productive employment and decent work for young women and men.<sup>62</sup>

It clearly sets out that by 2015, “Over 30 member States have aligned training supply and demand, extended access to training opportunities to a wider proportion of workers and have integrated skills development in sector and national development policies and in responses to global drivers of change such as technology, trade, and global warming”.

ILO's work on skills development touches upon other areas of ILOs work such as Office's support for national employment policies (outcome 1), policy guidance on skills for green jobs, good practices to promote workplace learning on sustainable enterprises (outcome 3), tools to upgrade informal apprenticeships to combat child labour (outcome 16) and training on the regulation of private employment agencies against human trafficking (outcome 15), promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities (outcome 17), skills recognition programmes for migrant workers (outcome 7) and promoting youth employment.<sup>63</sup>

In the 2014–2015 Programme and Budget, the Areas of Critical Importance identified skills as a cross-cutting issue in:

- Promoting more and better jobs for inclusive growth
- Jobs and skills for youth
- Creating and extending social protection floors
- Productivity and working conditions in SMEs
- Formalization of the informal economy<sup>64</sup>

In the transitional Strategic Plan 2016–17 a specific outcome on skills is no longer identified separately and is embedded in several outcomes on jobs and skills for young people (outcome 1 indicator 1.2, 1.4) and other disadvantaged groups, and decent work in the rural economy<sup>65</sup>, gender equality and non-discrimination, and the green economy.

<sup>61</sup> Only aspects related to skills development of indicator 2.4 will be under the scope of this evaluation.

<sup>62</sup> Only skills development aspects of indicator 2.5 will be covered in this evaluation.

<sup>63</sup> Programme and Budget 2012–13 p. 26–27 P&B also notes that, “progress under the areas of critical important will be measured through indicators attached to the 19 outcomes.” P&B 2014–15 p. 11.

<sup>64</sup> P&B 2014–15 p. 19 and 20.

<sup>65</sup> Based on “Transition from the Strategic Policy Framework for 2010–2015 to the Transitional Strategic Plan for 2016–17: proposals for re-linking CPOs” Program document 28 October 2015.

The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008) and the Global Jobs Pact (2009) highlight skills development as central to improving productivity, employability and social inclusion. The Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195) provides guidance on the content of effective skills policies and systems. The Conclusions on skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 97th Session in 2008 established a strategy for skills development. The Strategy subsequently became the foundation of the ILO/G20 training strategy of 2010<sup>66</sup> and 2015.

The strategy called for:

- Integrating skills development into national and sectoral development strategies;
- Using skills development to maximize opportunities and mitigate the negative impact of technology, trade and climate change;
- Building seamless pathways of education that connect basic education, vocational training, employment services and lifelong learning and that maintain communication on training needs and quality between employers and trainers; and
- Extending access to education and training of good quality and relevance to the labour market to those who are disadvantaged in society and promoting business strategies that utilise higher skills and provide on-going training<sup>67</sup>

In addition to ILO strategies on skills development the ILO has contributed to the development of multilateral and global strategies on skills and training such as the OECD<sup>68</sup>, World Bank<sup>69</sup> and UNESCO<sup>70</sup> strategies for skills development.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of the evaluation is mainly summative with formative aspects. It is to provide insight into the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability and impact of the ILO's strategy, programme approach, and interventions (summative) to promote skills development for employment and growth. It is also intended to be forward looking and provide findings and lessons learned and emerging good practices for improved decision-making within the context of the next strategic framework and the Sustainable Development Goals (formative). The final evaluation report will be submitted to and discussed at the November 2016 Governing Body session.

## SCOPE

The evaluation will consider all efforts of the Office in supporting achievement of skills development components under outcome 2 and under other related outcomes. This HLE is not an evaluation of the Skills and Employability Branch and its overall work but the effort of the entire Office on skills development. Given the breadth of action being taken, the scope of the evaluation will be narrowed to the time period from 2010–2015 which is the period of the strategic policy framework. While the focus is on ILO's work on skills development and increased skills of the ILO constituents the evaluation will also assess the ILOs contribution in global skills strategies and its coordination with the multilateral partners (World Bank, UNESCO, OECD, G20) in working together to support developing countries, in particular low-income countries, "to continue to develop employment-related skills that are better

<sup>66</sup> A Skilled Workforce for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth, ILO 2010.

<sup>67</sup> Brief Profile on Skills and Employability Factsheet, Skills and Employability Branch May, 25, 2012 from Skills and Employability Branch website accessed November 27th, 2015.

<sup>68</sup> Better Skills Better Jobs Better Lives A strategic approach to skills policies, OECD 2012.

<sup>69</sup> STEPPING UP SKILLS For more jobs and higher productivity, 2010.

<sup>70</sup> Youth and Skills putting education to work, 2012.



matched to employer and market needs in order to attract investment and decent jobs.”<sup>71</sup> ILOs work in knowledge management and sharing of experiences through online platforms such as the Global Public-Private Knowledge Sharing Platform on Skills for Employment (Global KSP). The ROAP Knowledge Sharing Platform and the CINTERFOR database will also be examined.

## CLIENTS

The principal client for the evaluation is the Governing Body, which is responsible for governance-level decisions on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation. Other key stakeholders include the Director-General and members of the Senior Management Team at Headquarters, the Evaluation Advisory Committee, the Employment Policy Department's Skills and Employability Branch, EMPLAB (Youth Employment), Job Creation and Enterprise Development Department (Green Jobs), Governance (child labour and trafficking) Work Quality (disabilities and migrant workers) and Multinational Enterprises and Enterprise Engagement Unit (EMP/MULTI). It should also serve as a source of information for ILO donors, partners and policy makers.

## KEY QUESTIONS

The evaluation questions are based on the OECD DAC evaluation criteria of relevance and coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact. Outcome objectives created for the P&B strategy will serve as the basis for the evaluation questions. These questions will seek to address priority issues and concerns for the national constituents and other stakeholders. When designing the questions, the evaluation team will consider availability and reliability of data, how the answers will be used and if the data are regarded as credible. Further evaluation questions will be proposed and refined by the evaluation team during the inception report phase.<sup>72</sup>

Assessment Criteria	Questions to be addressed
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To what extent is the design of the ILO skills strategy relevant to global strategies on skills development and does it address the needs of member States, governments and social partners?</li> <li>■ What means are there to ensure continuing relevance vis-à-vis changing needs and new developments?</li> </ul>
Coherence & Validity of Design <sup>72</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To what extent has the ILO's strategy on skills development been coherent and complementary (in its design and implementation) to activities being carried out under other ILO Strategic Policy Framework outcome Strategies and activities being implemented by other ILO departments?</li> <li>■ How appropriate and useful are the indicators on skills development as described in the ILO's Strategic Policy Framework 2010–2015? Do they effectively assess its results and progress? Are the indicators measurable and traceable?</li> <li>■ Is the strategy coherent and complementary to similar efforts carried out by constituents, United Nations and other partners?</li> </ul>
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To what extent has the ILO fulfilled its objective in skills development using the Strategic Policy Framework and P&amp;B targets as a benchmark.</li> <li>■ How has ILO external coordination (with constituents, United Nations partners, World Bank and G20) and internal coordination (between sectors, technical departments, regions and sub regions) promoted the realization of skills development?</li> </ul>

<sup>71</sup> G20 Training Strategy “A Skilled Workforce for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth”.

<sup>72</sup> There are some gaps and no clear linkage found between the outcomes of the Strategy 2010–2015 and the relevant goals and actions to be taken set out in the 2008 Declaration and the Follow-up to the Declaration. This evaluation will have to point this out in assessing the validity of design of the Strategy 2010–2015 and make necessary suggestions for the new Strategy for 2015–2017.

Assessment Criteria	Questions to be addressed
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To what extent have resources been used efficiently and the programme appropriately and adequately resourced?</li> <li>■ What were the costs associated with the interventions? Could there have been alternative designs that rendered results more efficiently?</li> </ul>
Impact & Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To what extent have ILO actions had impact in the form of increased capacity, necessary tools and policy improvements needed to work towards the achievement of the outcomes and outputs identified within the Strategic Policy Framework on skills development? Is it likely that the results of the interventions are durable and can be maintained or even up-scaled and replicated by constituents?</li> <li>■ What actions and conditions are required for achieving broader, long-term impact?</li> <li>■ To what extent have ILO interventions been designed and implemented in ways that have maximized sustainability at country level?</li> <li>■ Can observed changes and results be causally linked to the ILO interventions? Did the changes result from the ILO interventions? Are there impact assessments that can support attribution of results to ILO, and if not, what other evidence is there?</li> <li>■ What are the tripartite constituents' perceived benefits (differentiated by groups)?</li> </ul>

## METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

This evaluation will be based upon the ILO's evaluation policy and procedures which adhere to international standards and best practices, articulated in the OECD/DAC Principles and the Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations System approved by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) in April 2005. More specifically the evaluation will be conducted in accordance with Eval Protocol No 1: High-level Evaluation Protocol for Strategy and Policy Evaluations.

EVAL proposes an effectiveness evaluation approach (also known as outcome evaluation or summative evaluation), which determines whether an initiative has achieved the intended outcome. To this end, the evaluation will seek to determine the degree to which the ILO strategy for skills development and the results framework has actually translated into improved capacity to impart employable skills that contribute to economic growth. Further refinement of the methodology will be identified during the preparation of the inception report.

The evaluation will be participatory. Consultations with member States, international and national representatives of trade union and employers' organizations, ILO staff at headquarters and in the field, United Nations partners, and other stakeholders will be done through interviews, meetings, focus groups, and electronic communication.

The gender dimension will be considered as a cross-cutting concern throughout the methodology, deliverables and final report of the evaluation. In terms of this evaluation, this implies involving both men and women in the consultation, evaluation analysis and evaluation team. Moreover the evaluators should review data and information that is disaggregated by sex and assess the relevance and effectiveness of gender-related strategies and outcomes to improve skills development for women and men. All this information should be accurately included in the inception report and final evaluation report.

The details of the methodology will be elaborated by the selected team of evaluators on the basis of the Terms of Reference (TORs) and documented in their proposal and their inception report, which are subject to EVAL's approval. It is expected that the evaluation team will apply mixed methods which draw on both quantitative and qualitative evidence and involve multiple means of analysis.

These include but are not limited to:

- Desk review of relevant documents such as STRATEGIC POLICY FRAMEWORK and P&B strategies for the period covered by the evaluation; outcome-based work planning (OBW) and technical cooperation portfolios and related reviews; implementation planning,

management and reporting reports (information from the IRIS Strategic Management Module); relevant global reports and meta evaluations; relevant DWCPs and logic model (results framework); relevant DWCP HLEs and DWCP; country programme reviews which will have examined recent performance against stated outcomes, determined what has been achieved, and whether strategies being used are efficient and effective;

- National and sectoral strategic plans and reports related to skills, other relevant national, multilateral and UN policy and strategy documents
- Reviewing evidence of follow up to relevant evaluation recommendations and use of lessons learned by ILO management;
- Interviewing key stakeholders which should reflect a diversity of backgrounds inside the Office, according to sector, technical unit, regions and country situations
- Conducting online surveys and other methodologies to obtain feedback and/or information from constituents and other key stakeholders; and
- Field visits (5 countries)
- Case studies of visited countries (5) plus desk review-only case study countries (3)

## CASE STUDIES

The purpose of case studies is to conduct in-depth analysis of one set (or unit) of the ILO's strategic and programme means of action aimed at supporting skills development for employment growth. The case studies seek to determine what happened as a result of ILO's interventions, and determine if these interventions had any observable immediate impacts, and to the extent possible determine the links between the observed impacts and the ILO interventions.

Possible themes of the case studies could be focussed on the following ILOs strategy on skills development: (to be further developed with evaluation team and key stakeholders)

- Technical advice: to identify the effectiveness of ILO action in providing policy guidance to integrate skills development into sector or national development strategies.
- Capacity development: for skills development to maximize opportunities and mitigate the negative impact of technology, trade and climate change; assess the extent to which policymakers' applied knowledge gained to make relevant training more readily accessible in rural communities, for young women and men and with those people with disabilities, build seamless pathways of education that connect basic education, vocational training, employment services and lifelong learning and that maintain communication on training needs and quality between employers and trainers; and extend access to education and training of good quality and relevance to the labour market to those who are disadvantaged in society and promoting business strategies that utilise higher skills and provide on-going training
- Knowledge sharing: The case study on this mean of action will seek to assess how effectively ILO has promoted and applied knowledge sharing among constituents, ILO staff and its external partners (UN, G20, and multilateral institutions).

The case studies will consist of a combination of methods:

- Interviews, field studies and participant focus groups,
- Desk reviews to synthesize and aggregate information such as past evaluations, technical studies, and DWCP reviews from the selected countries and programmes at different times. This will allow greater triangulation while minimizing cost and time being expended on new, possibly repetitive studies.

A completed case study report will have detailed descriptions of what happened and the context in which it occurred. The report will feature a factual recounting as well as an analysis of events.

The selection of the field visits and the case studies will take into account budgetary expenditure in the country, proportion of budget to overall RB, RBSA and TC on skills development work in each country, balanced geographic spread, bearing in mind the specific targets and priority for Africa in the STRATEGIC POLICY FRAMEWORK, and other selection criteria to be decided in discussion with the Skills and Employment branch and the evaluation team. Initial desk review of the TC portfolio on skills development suggests that the case studies should include operations in Africa, Asia, Central Asian Republic region and the Americas. Additional criteria may be added by the evaluation team.

## SUMMARY RATINGS

A summary rating shall be expressed by the independent evaluation team at the end of the six evaluation criteria and the respective questions listed above<sup>73</sup>. The evaluation shall use a six-point scale ranging from “highly satisfactory,” “satisfactory,” “somewhat satisfactory,” “somewhat unsatisfactory,” “unsatisfactory,” and “highly unsatisfactory.”

- Highly satisfactory: when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that ILO performance related to criterion has produced outcomes which go beyond expectation, expressed specific comparative advantages and added value, produced best practices;
- Satisfactory: when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that the objectives have been mostly attained and the expected level of performance can be considered coherent with the expectations of the national tripartite constituents, beneficiaries and of the ILO itself;
- Somewhat satisfactory: when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that the objectives have been partially attained and there that expected level of performance could be for the most part considered coherent with the expectations of the national tripartite constituents, beneficiaries and of the ILO itself ;
- Somewhat unsatisfactory: when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that the objectives have been partially attained and the level of performance show minor shortcoming and are not fully considered acceptable in the view of the ILO national tripartite constituents, partners and beneficiaries;
- Unsatisfactory: when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that the objectives have not been attained and the level of performance show major shortcoming and are not fully considered acceptable in the view of the ILO national tripartite constituents, partners and beneficiaries; and
- Highly unsatisfactory: when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that expected results have not been attained, and there have been important shortcomings, and the resources have not been utilized effectively and/or efficiently.

## MAIN OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES/TIMEFRAME

The proposed time frame for this evaluation is from January 2016 to November 2016 in accordance with the following schedule:

TORS drafted and circulated to stakeholders	End January 2016
Evaluation team formed	February 2016
Scoping mission for case studies and inception report drafted	March-April 2016

<sup>73</sup> Independent evaluations in the ILO are conducted by independent external evaluators. The final project ratings are produced by the external evaluators as an outcome of the evaluation process. These ratings are based on actual programme data, interaction with beneficiaries and stakeholders as well as on project performance documents (which include self-assessed ratings).

Evaluation mission and case studies conducted.	May/June 2016
First draft circulated for comments	July 2016
Final draft shared with stakeholders	End July 2016
Final Report	September 2016
Preparation of the final summary, editing and translation	By October 2016

## Management and Responsibilities

The Evaluation Office (EVAL) is mandated to manage the evaluation function and ensure proper implementation of the evaluation policy. The evaluation team will be composed of a Senior Evaluation Officer who will lead a team composed of international consultants with expertise in skills development and evaluation, and evaluation team members/national consultants to support the case studies. The director of EVAL will provide inputs and guidance throughout the evaluation process.

The Senior Evaluation Officer will play a critical coordination role and will be responsible for the evaluation implementation at the national and regional levels and will:

- Conduct one case study of a country not selected for a field visit,
- Participate in at least two of the evaluation missions conducted by the international consultants,
- Supervise the work of other evaluation team members, review and finalize the final evaluation report.

The external evaluator will provide technical leadership and is responsible for:

- Drafting the inception report, producing the draft reports and drafting and presenting a final report;
- Providing any technical and methodological advice necessary for this evaluation within the team;
- Ensuring the quality of data (validity, reliability, consistency and accuracy) throughout the analytical and reporting phases.
- Managing the external evaluation team, ensuring the evaluation is conducted as per TORs, including following ILO EVAL guidelines, methodology and formatting requirements; and
- Producing reliable, triangulated findings that are linked to the evaluation questions and presenting useful and insightful conclusions and recommendations according to international standards.

An officer from the Skills and Employability Branch will be appointed to facilitate coordination with sector experts and provide relevant documentation as requested by the team. This person will be the key technical liaison to the evaluation team, assisting in the identification of key stakeholders at Headquarters and the field and identification of key resources/documents.

This evaluation will be inclusive in nature and seek to involve all key stakeholders. An evaluation support group will be established to facilitate information sharing on the various aspects of the ILO's activities on skills development. Ideally, this group will include specialists from departments who are also working on skills development and who will use, or could influence the use of the evaluation results.

The support group is expected to support the evaluation team through:

- The coordination and facilitation of interviews and consultations on operational matters and among ILO TC managers, Programme Specialists, partners, and relevant stakeholders
- Facilitation of information and documentation, including country briefs and coordination of national constituents' participation in the evaluation process as requested by the team.

- Information sharing on ILO activities in the country, including project implementation, project results and impacts, and mainstreaming of ILO objectives in national policy frameworks, etc.

## QUALITY ASSURANCE

The lead evaluator will be required to ensure the quality of data (validity, reliability, consistency and accuracy) throughout the analytical and reporting phases. It is expected that the report shall be written in an evidence-based manner such that all observations, conclusions, recommendations, etc., are supported by evidence and analysis.

## QUALIFICATIONS OF THE EVALUATORS

This evaluation will be managed by EVAL and conducted by a team of independent evaluators with the following competency mix:

- Prior knowledge of the ILO's roles and activities, and solid understanding of skills development in international development cooperation and funding (essential);
- Demonstrated executive-level management experience in reviewing and advising complex organizational structures, preferably in the field of employment, skills development;
- At least 10 years' experience in evaluation policies, strategies, country programmes and organizational effectiveness;
- Proven experience in conducting and writing evaluation reports of large multilateral organizations for high level decision-making;
- Fluency in English, spoken and written (essential); knowledge of Spanish would be highly desirable.

All team members and their qualifications and roles within the team should be made available in the proposal, indicating proven ability to work with others in the development and timely delivery of high-quality deliverables. The organisation of the work should be specified and explained clearly in a detailed timeline.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

In assessing candidates EVAL will allocate greater importance to technical factors including the design and methods proposed than to cost factors. Proposals will be assessed in terms of best value to the ILO, with price and other factors considered.

## EVALUATORS' CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The ILO Code of Conduct for independent evaluators applies to all evaluation team members. The principles behind the Code of Conduct are fully consistent with the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service to which all UN staff is bound. UN staff is also subject to any UNEG member specific staff rules and procedures for the procurement of services. The selected team members shall sign and return a copy of the code of conduct with their contract.





## ANNEX B – LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED/CONSULTED

### ILO – HEADQUARTERS AND REGIONAL OFFICES (35)

Azita Berar Awad	Director Employment Policy Department
Girma Agune	OIC Skills and Employability Branch
Jim Windell	Training Policies and Programmes Specialist
Jeannette Sanchez	Knowledge Management Officer
Michael Axmann	Skills Development Systems Specialist
Kazutoshi Chatani	Skills Development Officer
Paul Comyn	Skills and Employability Specialist
Olga Strietska-Ilina	Skills Policies and Systems Specialist
Laura Brewer	Skills and Employability Specialist
Con Gregg	Technical Specialist, Skills Anticipation
Bolormaa Tumurchudur-Klok	Technical Officer
Jean Duronsoy	CTA
Ashwani Aggarwal	Skills specialist DWT Pretoria, Southern and Eastern Africa
Fernando Vargas	Skills Specialist ILO/CINTERFOR
Carmela Torres	Skills specialist DWT Bangkok South East Asia and East Asia
Akiko Sakamoto	Skills Specialist DWT Bangkok South East Asia and Pacific Islands
Alexis Hoyaax	Turin ILO/ITC Skills and Employability
Céline Lafoucriere	Senior Specialist in Workers' Activities ACTRAV
Zulum Avila	Employment
Jean Francois Klein	Employment department Management and Coordination Unit
Dorothea Schmidt-Klau	Employment department Management and Coordination Unit
Kees Van der Ree	Unit Head Green Jobs
Michael Mwasikakata	Senior Specialist Employment Services
Natalia Popova	Labour economist Migrant
Maria Prieto	Youth Employment

Stefan Tromel	GED
Markus Pilgrim	Head of Unit Small and Medium Enterprises department
Roy Chacko	ACTEMP
Andre Bogui	Director Program, former Director CO Dhaka
Graeme Buckley	Senior Programme Analyst, Program
Ramiro Pizarro	Senior Development Cooperation Officer, PARDEV
David Lamotte	Deputy Regional Director
Maurizio Bussi	DWT Director Bangkok
Wade Bromley	CBED, Bangkok
Charlie Bodwell	Enterprise specialist, Bangkok

### ITUC AND IOE (3)

Raquel Gonzalez	Director International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
Roberto Suárez Santos	Deputy Secretary General, International Organization of Employers (IOE)
Pierre Vincensini	Adviser, International Organization of Employers (IOE)

### BANGLADESH (44)

Gagan Rajbhandari	ILO Deputy Director, CO Dhaka
Cezar Dragutan	ILO CTA, B-SEP project
Serajul Islam	ILO Programme Officer, B-SEP
Mohammad Nuruzzaman	ILO Programme Officer, B-SEP
Francis Dilip De Silva	ILO Senior Specialist, Industry Skills Development
Kishore Kumar Singh	ILO Senior Skills Development Specialist
Manas Bhattacharya	ILO Skills Development Specialist
Haripada Das	ILO Programme Officer
A. N. M. Tanjel Ahsan	ILO Programme Officer
Sheikh Abu Reza	Director, Planning and Development Directorate of Technical Education
Begun Shamsun Nahar	Secretary In-Charge, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
Miah Abdullah Mamun	Additional Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment
Engr. Md. Jahangir Alam	Assistant Director, (Planning and Development) Director of Technical Education
Arif Ahmed	Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
Md. Nurul Islam	Director, Training Standard and Planning Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training
Mohammad Rezaul Karim	Director, National Skills Development Council Secretariat Ministry of Labour and Employment
Ashoke Kumar Biswas	Additional Secretary Ministry of Education
Quzi Munirul Islam	Joint Chief, Ministry of Planning
A.B.M Khorshed Alam	Chief Executive Officer, National Skills Development Council Secretariat Ministry of Labour and Employment
Md. Sohorab Hossain	Secretary Ministry of Education
Md. Nasimul Islam	Head of Administration, HR, CSR, Compliance and Civil Engineering Artisan Ceramics LTD and Institute of Social Compliance

Md. Shafiq-ul Islam	Executive Director, Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CPR)
Santara Islam	Regional Manager Mirpur Region UCEP
Mohd. Habibur Rahman	Chief Program Officer, UCEP
Abdul Wahed	President, Jatiyo Garments and Dorji Sramik Jote-JGDSJ
Md. Shafiqur Rahman Bhuiyan	Chairman, Centre of Excellence Agro Food Skills (CEAFS) Foundation
Razequzzman Ratan	General Secretary, Central Committee Socialist Labour Front
Nazia Haider	Senior Programme Officer Skills Development, Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh
Md. Abu Yousuf	Managing Director, Pacific Furnishers, Pacific Furnishers Ltd, Pacific Timber and Timber Products, Pacific One-Stop Interior Solution
Md. Halimuzzaman	CEO, Healthcare Pharmaceuticals Limited
Rubina Husain	Managing Director and Center Head, Institute of Hotel Management and Hospitality
Naimul Ahsan Jewel	General Secretary and President, Jatiya Shromki Jote-Bangladesh & Jatiya Garments Shromki Jote-Bangladesh
Jurgen Heimann	Minister Counsellor Human and Social Development Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh
Deidre Yukich	First Secretary (Development) High Commission of Canada
Mir Md Saifur Rahman	Development Advisor, High Commission of Canada
Christopher Duguid	First Secretary, (Development) High Commission of Canada
Pulak Ranjan Dar	General Secretary, Bangladesh Construction and Wood Workers Federation and Publicity Secretary of Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress (BFTUC)
A.K.M Bari	Chairman, Industry Skills Council Tourism and Hospitality Sector
Tahsinah Ahmed	Director, Skills Development Programme BRAC
AFM Fakhru Islam Munshi	President Bangladesh Agro-Processors' Association
Mikhail I. Islam	Executive Director, Chittagong Skills Development Centre, (CSDC)
M. Shahadat Hossain	National Coordinator, IFCTU-BC JILAF Field Project
M. Ehsanur Rahman	Executive Director, Dhaka Ahsania Mission
Al-Haz Sukkur Mahamud	President, Jatiyo Sramik League, Bangladesh Shipping Workers' Federation, Mukta Garmets Workers Federation

## VIET NAM (22)

Vu Van Ha	Legal Affairs Dept/ GDVT
Nguyen Xuan Vinh	Policy Dept/ VGCL
Nguyen Huong Tra	Former ILO NPC/ Rural Youth Employment
Chang-Hee LEE	Director, ILO Country Office for Viet Nam
Ngo Quang Vinh	NPO, Skills for Trade project
NGUYEN THI Huyen	NPO, Inland Tourism project
NGUYEN QUYNH Trang	Former NPO PEPDEL
NGUYEN THI Oanh	NPO, PEP Project
Nguyen Chien Cuong	Former ILO NPC/ SCORE & SIYB
SUN Lei	Chief of Education Unit, UNESCO Office in Viet Nam
Vu Xuan Hung	Director, National Institute of Vocational Training
Mr D ng Hà	Manager of Employment Policy, Bureau of Employment, MOLISA
Niccolo' Cipriani and Riccardo Mattei	Italian Development Cooperation Office

Pratibah Mehta	UN Resident Coordinator
Vu Quoc Tri & Ms Mary McKeon	Project Director & Team Leader, ESRT project
Lê D ng	Director, ICD, Viet Nam's Cooperative Alliance
Minoru Ogasawara	CTA, Child Labour Project
Nguyen Thi Mai Oanh	NPO, Child Labour Project
Khuong Ta Thuy Linh	Project Coordinator, KfW Office in Ha Noi
Mai Hong Ngoc	Deputy Director in charge/BEA-VCCI
Britta van Erckelens	Deputy Program Director/GIZ
Lisa-Marie Kreibich	Technical Advisor/GIZ

## ARMENIA (21)

Boris Kharatyan	Deputy chairman, Confederation of TU in Armenia
Lilit Beglaryan	Deputy Director Global Development Fund NGO
Arthur Kesoyan	Head of Disability Dept. Head of Regional State Employment Agency MOL&SA
Tadevos Avetisyan	Head of Employment department of the MOL&SA
Gagik Makaryan	Chairman Republican Union of Employers of Armenia
Shushanik Barseghyan	Deputy Chairwoman Republic Union of Employers of Armenia
Shamam Harutunyan	Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Affairs
Artak Aghbalyan	Advisor to the Minister on VET, Ministry of Education and Science of the RA
Ashot Arshakyan	Head of the VET department, Ministry of Education and Science of the RA
Armine Poghsyan	Head of the VET Policy division Ministry of Education and Science of the RA
Artak Simonyan	Deputy Director of the State Employment Agency, State Employment Agency of the RA MOL&SA
Robert Abrahamyan	Director of the College, Yerevan State Informatics College
Haykuhi Gevorgyan	Director, Methodological Centre for Professional Orientation
Yulia Stakyan	Programme Expert Vocational Qualification, GIZ
Tatevik Gasparyan	Director of the National Center for VET Development of the RA MOE&S
Garnik Nalbandyan	Deputy Director National Institute of Labour of MOL&SA
Arman Sargsyan	Director, National Institute of Labour of MOL&SA
Anahit Aleksanyan	Deputy Director of National Institute for Education
Marine Jamkochian	Executive Director Republican Union of Employers of Armenia
Karine Simonyan	ILO G20 Project Coordinator, Armenia
Nune Hovhannisyan	ILO National Coordinator, Armenia

**RUSSIAN FEDERATION (13)**

Natalia Hoffmann	Advisor, (Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs – RSPP)
Marina Basakakova	Expert, Institute of Economics
Marina Maslova	Head of Department, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection
Elena Kubishin	Expert/Researcher, Institute of Economics
Yury Gertsyi	"Professional" Research Center
Olga Koulaeva	Employment and Skills Specialist CIS Countries DWT Moscow
Elena Kudriavtseva	ILO, G20 Project coordinator
Sergejus Glovackas	ILO, Senior specialist in workers' Activities
Vladimir Curovic	ILO, Senior Specialist in Employers' Activities
Rolf Buchel	ILO, Chief Technical Advisor, Decent and Safe Jobs project
Irina Melekh	ILO, Programme Officer
Mikhail Pouchkin	ILO, Chief Technical Advisor
Irina Sinelina	ILO, Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Officer Moscow

**UNITED NATIONS (1)**

Christine Evans Klock	United Nations Resident Co-ordinator/UNDP Resident Representative Ghana, former Director ILO Skills Department
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**URUGUAY (5)**

Enrique Deibe	Director CINTERFOR
Fernando Vargas	Senior Specialist in Professional Training
Gonzalo Graña	National Officer for Social Dialogue and Professional Training
Fernando Casanova	Programme Officer
Rodrigo Filgueira	National Officer for TICs applied to Education

**ZAMBIA (15)**

Kennedy Bowa	Manager, curriculum development TEVETA
Dines Phiri	Training System Development Specialist, TEVETA
P. N. Chela	Inspector, Training Quality Assurance, TEVETA
Alexio Musindo	Director, ILO Country Office for Zambia, Malawi, and Mozambique
Precious Lisulo	Chief TEVET Officer (Skills), Ministry of Higher Education
Luke Makinshi	Director, Education and Training Zambia Congress of Trade Unions
Sarah Kaulula	Former Chief TEVETA Officer
Boniface Phiri	Director, Research Zambia Congress of Trade Unions
Tapera Muzira	CTA, Zambia Green Jobs
Pia Korpinen	ILO Project Officer Disability Project
Florence Kapani	Teacher, Food Production, Lusaka Business and Technical College
4 x Students	Lusaka Business and Technical College

**ZIMBABWE (22)**

Elias Murinda	Director Youth Development Ministry of Youth Indigenisation and Economic Empowerment
Hoplang Phororo	Director ILO Country Officer Zimbabwe
Chandirekera Mutubuki-Makuyana	Sector Leader, Energy SNV Zimbabwe
Fungai Matura	Project Manager energy SNV
Elijah Mutumeri	Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions
John Mufukare	Director, Employers' Confederation of Zimbabwe
Evelynn Ndlovu	Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Small and Medium Enterprises and cooperative Development
Mr Bwanya	Principal, VTO (Quality Informal Apprenticeship Program)
Mrs Chaferana	Committee Member (Quality Informal Apprenticeship Program)
Mr Chipango	Committee Member (Quality Informal Apprenticeship Program)
12 x Master Craftspeople	Glenview Complex (Quality Informal Apprenticeship Program)

## ANNEX C – SUMMARY OF ISSUES IN KEY SKILLS POLICY DOCUMENTS

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**Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142)** states that the ratifying States are required to formulate and implement policies and programmes of vocational guidance and vocational training in cooperation with employers' and workers' organisations, closely linked with employment, in particular through public employment services. For this purpose, the States are further required to develop open, flexible and complementary systems of general, technical and vocational education, educational and vocational guidance and vocational training, and to extend them gradually to young persons and adults, including appropriate programmes for the disabled).

**R195 – Recommendation No. 195, 1975** calls on Member States to develop and implement, through the process of social dialogue, education, training and lifelong learning policies that promote people's employability throughout their lives. The SDPs should be an integral part of comprehensive economic, social and labour market policies and programmes for economic and employment growth. It recognizes that education and training are a right of all people and advocates for promotion of equal education and training opportunities for all. The enterprises should play an increasingly role in enhancing the investment in training and in providing workplace-based learning.

In 2008, government, worker and employer representatives at the **International Labour Conference (ILC)** adopted a set of **Conclusions on skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development**. They stressed that education, training and lifelong learning foster a virtuous circle of higher productivity, more employment of better quality, income growth and development. The Conclusions state that countries that have succeeded in linking skills to productivity, employment, development and decent work, have targeted their skills development policies towards three main objectives:

- a) matching supply to current demand for skills;
- b) helping workers and enterprises adjust to change; and
- c) building and sustaining competencies for future labour market needs.

The ILC recommended a holistic approach for skills development, which encompasses the following features (ILO, 2008):

- a) *continuous and seamless pathways of learning* that start with pre-school and primary education that adequately prepares young people for secondary and higher education and vocational training; that provide career guidance, labour market information and counselling, as young women and men move into the labour market; and that offer workers and entrepreneurs opportunities for continuous learning to upgrade their competencies and learn new skills throughout their lives;
- b) development of *core skills* (including literacy, numeracy, communication skills, teamwork and problem-solving and other relevant skills) and learning ability, as well as awareness of workers' rights



and an understanding of entrepreneurship as the building blocks for lifelong learning and capability to adapt to change;

- c) development of *higher-level skills* – professional, technical and human resource skills – to capitalize on or to create opportunities for high-quality or high-wage jobs;
- d) *portability of skills*, based first on the core skills to enable workers to apply knowledge and experience to new occupations or industries, and second, on systems that codify, standardize, assess and certify skills, so that levels of competence can be easily recognized by social partners in different labour sectors across national, regional or international labour markets; and
- e) *employability* (for wage work or self-employment) that results from all these factors – a foundation of core skills, access to education, availability of training opportunities, motivation, ability and support to take advantage of opportunities for continuous learning, and recognition of acquired skills – and that is critical for enabling workers to attain decent work and manage change and for enabling enterprises to adopt new technologies and enter new markets.

The **G20 Training Strategy** sets out the reasons why a skills strategy is needed; a conceptual framework for such a strategy; and recommendations for its effective implementation. It recommends nine building blocks for effective policy implementation:

- anticipating skills needs;
- participation of social partners;
- sectoral approaches;
- labour market information and employment services;
- training quality and relevance;
- gender equality;
- broad access to training;
- finance;
- and assessing policy performance.

(Above adapted from Ashwani Aggarwal and Vladimir Gasskov, *Comparative Analysis of National Skills Development Policies: A guide for policy makers*, International Labour Office, Decent Work Technical Support Team for Eastern and Southern Africa – Pretoria: ILO, 2013)

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Independent evaluation  
of ILO's strategy and actions  
to promote skills development  
for jobs and growth (2010–2015)

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**EVALUATION OFFICE**

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

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ACI	Area of Critical Importance
CO	Country Office
CPOs	Country Programme Outcomes
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (of the OECD)
DWA	Decent Work Agenda
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
DWT	Decent Work Team
EO	Employers Organization
EU	European Union
EVAL	ILO Evaluation Office
FPRW	Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work
GB	Governing Body
HLE	High Level Evaluation
HQ	Headquarters
ILC	International Labour Conference
ILO	International Labour Organization/Office
IOE	International Organization of Employers
IR	Implementation Report
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
OBW	Outcome Based Workplan
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
P&B	Programme and Budget
PARDEV	Partnerships and Field Support Department
RB	Regular Budget
RBM	Results Based Management

RBSA	Regular Budget Supplementary Account
RBTC	Regular Budget Technical Cooperation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SPF	Strategic Policy Framework
TA	Technical Assistance
TC	Technical Cooperation
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WO	Workers' Organizations
XBTC	Extra-budgetary technical cooperation

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Any errors or omissions are the responsibility of the Evaluation Office.



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose and scope of the evaluation

1. In November 2015 the ILO's Governing Body mandated the Evaluation Office (EVAL) to conduct an independent high-level evaluation of the ILO's strategy, programme approach, and interventions to promote skills development for jobs growth. High-level evaluations aim to generate insights into the ILO's performance within the context of its results-based management system.
2. The purpose of the evaluation is to provide insight into the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the skills-related work of the ILO. The evaluation focuses on the period 2010–2015, which falls under the Strategic Policy Framework for that period. It also considers the Programme and Budget (P&B) for 2016–2017 and aims to inform the development of the strategic plan 2018–2021 and facilitate its alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
3. The evaluation concentrates on activities associated with outcome 2 of the Strategic Policy Framework, which is based on the premise that skills development increases the employability of workers, the competitiveness of enterprises and the inclusiveness of growth. In addition, it considers other outcomes and other skills-related efforts of the ILO. The scope of the evaluation, therefore, encompasses the work of the Office as a whole, not just that of the Skills and Employability Branch (formerly Skills and Employability Department). The ILO's contribution to global skills strategies and its collaboration with multilateral partners are also considered.

### Evaluation methodology

4. The evaluation builds on the approach presented in EVAL's High-level Evaluation Protocol for Strategy and Policy Evaluation. This protocol sets the standards for qualitative research, which draws on multiple sources of information, including: document reviews; analyses of financial and programmatic data; key informant interviews with ILO constituents, staff and multilateral and bilateral partners in skills development; and direct observation from field visits and interviews in nine selected countries. One hundred and eighty-one people were interviewed during the course of this evaluation including ILO staff, government officials, representatives of workers' and employers' organizations, NGOs, and other multi-bilateral donors working on skills development. In addition, a survey was sent to staff in headquarters and regional offices, directors of country offices and Decent Work Teams (DWTs,) skills specialists, and the Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) or project staff working on skills projects. The survey was also sent to selected representatives of workers and employers' organizations, government officials, and other partners who were interviewed as part of the field visit data collection. A separate survey was also sent to partners of the United Nations also working on skills development.

5. Content analysis of specific issues was also conducted by the evaluation including an analysis of a sample of Decent Work Country Programme documents from the period 2010–2015 to assess demand for skills related support by the member States. The sample of countries analysed was selected through random sampling of all available Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) documents that were finalized between 2010 and 2015. DWCPs that started in 2014 were not included in the sample.

## FINDINGS AT A GLANCE

### Coherence

6. The definition and composition of the ILO's skills strategy lacks clarity.
7. The skills "strategies" set out in each biennium's P&B described only some elements of the ILO's skills related work.
8. A "skills agenda" set out in key ILO Conventions and Recommendations seems to have driven much of the ILO's work in practice, but this agenda was not adequately reflected in the P&B's performance indicators. This incoherence may have led to inconsistencies and errors in reporting.
9. Despite deficiencies of the ILO's skills strategy (as expressed in the P&B) as a means of guiding work, the ILO's approach proved in practice to be adaptable and responsive to the differing needs of constituents.

### Relevance

10. Although skills development work has clear synergies with other work of the ILO, the P&B processes in place during the reporting period may have unintentionally created a disincentive for collaboration – though less so in the field.
11. Externally, the ILO's work in skills is recognized as having a unique value and being complementary to the skills activities of its partners and constituents. In some cases, however, the different priorities of partners may conflict with the ILO's.
12. The ILO's tripartite approach is seen as being relevant and appropriate to skills work, but there may be a need to strengthen links with other ministries.
13. The ILO's work in skills (if not its "strategy") aligns well with global strategies and, moving forward, can make important contributions to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### Effectiveness

14. Results were reported against P&B indicators in Programme Implementation Reports, though the evaluation team had concerns about the accuracy and validity of some results.
15. Based on the evaluation's field visits, the ILO's skills work was regarded as relevant and effective by its constituents and stakeholders. More work however, needs to be done.
16. The ILO has engaged with UN partners and other development actors in the skills field and this work appears to have been well coordinated and complementary.

### Efficiency

17. ILO work in the area of skills development seems generally to be efficient and cost-effective, but data limitations do not currently allow a detailed analysis.
18. A number of significant constraints to operational efficiency and effectiveness were identified through the survey

### Impact

19. Based on site visits, the ILO's skills work has had some impact on policy development, institutional capacity and the extension of training opportunities to certain groups. Impact on the countries' ability to align training supply and demand is not yet evident in practice, but the logic of the reforms seem sound in this respect.

### Sustainability

20. Staff and stakeholders perceive the ILO's skills work as having had a sustainable impact on extending access to training systems and services.

## CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

### Conclusions

21. Skills development is an important part of the ILO's work. It raises the value and output of labour, empowers workers and enriches their lives and improves the productivity, sustainability and competitiveness of enterprises. For many, it is a key that enables them to access the labour market, escape from poverty and gives them the opportunity to adapt to a changing world. **Skills development is a fundamental enabler of decent work.**
22. The considerable scope and complexity of the ILO's work in skills make any broad judgement of performance in this area very difficult. For example, work in national training system reform is hard to compare with projects that build skills to improve livelihoods in rural communities. Moreover, success in one type of work in one country might be counter-balanced by relative failure in a similar field in another.
23. The lack of clarity about the global organizational strategy for skills work meant that much of the work performed, though following a recognized agenda set out in key policy documents, did not reflect the Strategic Policy Framework, Programme and Budget (P&B) as well as the indicators used to measure results. The evaluation team was therefore put in the invidious position of evaluating strategic performance with a lack of clarity about strategy and with poorly-defined performance indicators.
24. Keeping these important factors in mind, the evaluation considered how well the Office performed in skills against the Strategic Policy Framework indicators and through direct observation from the field visits and the survey results, the evaluation draws the following conclusions:

### 25. Relevance

Although some of the ILO's skills work in the period under review found no natural home among the Strategic Policy Framework performance indicators, in all other respects its activities and approach were relevant and appropriate, including with regard to key Conventions, Recommendations and



implementation of the G20 Strategy. In the countries visited for the evaluation, constituents were supportive of the ILO's tripartite approach, although it was noted that links might need to be strengthened beyond its traditional partner ministries. While skills development has clear synergies with other crosscutting work of the ILO, the P&B processes in place at the time the evaluation was carried out might have created a disincentive for collaboration. The evaluation noted that activities converged well in the field. Stakeholders surveyed saw the ILO as a natural leader in the area of skills work. Moreover, the recognition given by the G20 in asking the ILO to take the lead in developing the G20 Training Strategy has positioned the ILO as a global influence in skills development work. Given the high demand and need, however, further guidance may be needed on organizational priorities, including geographical focus.

## 26. **Coherence**

Action implemented in the field was not always coherent with the strategy expressed in the P&B, which did not adequately describe the full range of activities in which the ILO was engaged to support constituents. This lack of coherence and alignment could have led to inconsistencies and errors in reporting, as country offices might have been faced with the difficult choice of either adhering strictly to the Strategic Policy Framework or adjusting their reporting to fit better with the global results framework. Furthermore, there was a lack of clarity regarding the composition and definition of ILO's skills strategy. Although staff and constituents cited a range of policy documents, there was no consensus among them. The evaluation noted that the ILO's activities harmonized with the strategies of other development agencies and United Nations (UN) partners and, moving forward, could make important contributions to the attainment of the SDGs.

## 27. **Effectiveness**

Performance was examined through the lens of the Strategic Policy Framework. Of the five indicators linked to outcome 2, three were not met and two, on youth employment and employment services were exceeded. The evaluation team expressed concerns about the accuracy and validity of some of the reported results. In the countries visited, some of which had large technical cooperation portfolios, major successes were achieved but were not fully reflected in the Programme Implementation Reports. Generally, in the countries visited activities considered gender concerns although not in a systematic manner. Gender was not reflected thoroughly in the reporting of results. Staff and constituents interviewed had a favourable view of the effectiveness of the ILO's skills work. Although the strategy was deficient in some respects, in practice the ILO's efforts proved to be adaptable, responsive and effective in meeting the differing needs of the constituents.

## 28. **Efficiency**

A comprehensive assessment of the efficiency of the ILO's skills would require data that the Office cannot currently provide. Such an assessment would need to include a review of the cost of all resources used to undertake specific skills activities, in addition to information on how those activities were linked to outputs and contributed to the achievement of outcomes. An examination of expenditure on skills by country raised some questions about relative return on investment. However, no conspicuous signs of inefficiency were observed in the field. In fact, in some cases a great deal had been achieved with very limited resources. Nevertheless, a number of constraints to operational efficiency and effectiveness were identified through the survey, including issues related to access to technical expertise, time required for internal decision-making and funding, including adequate access to both financial and human resources.

## 29. **Impact**

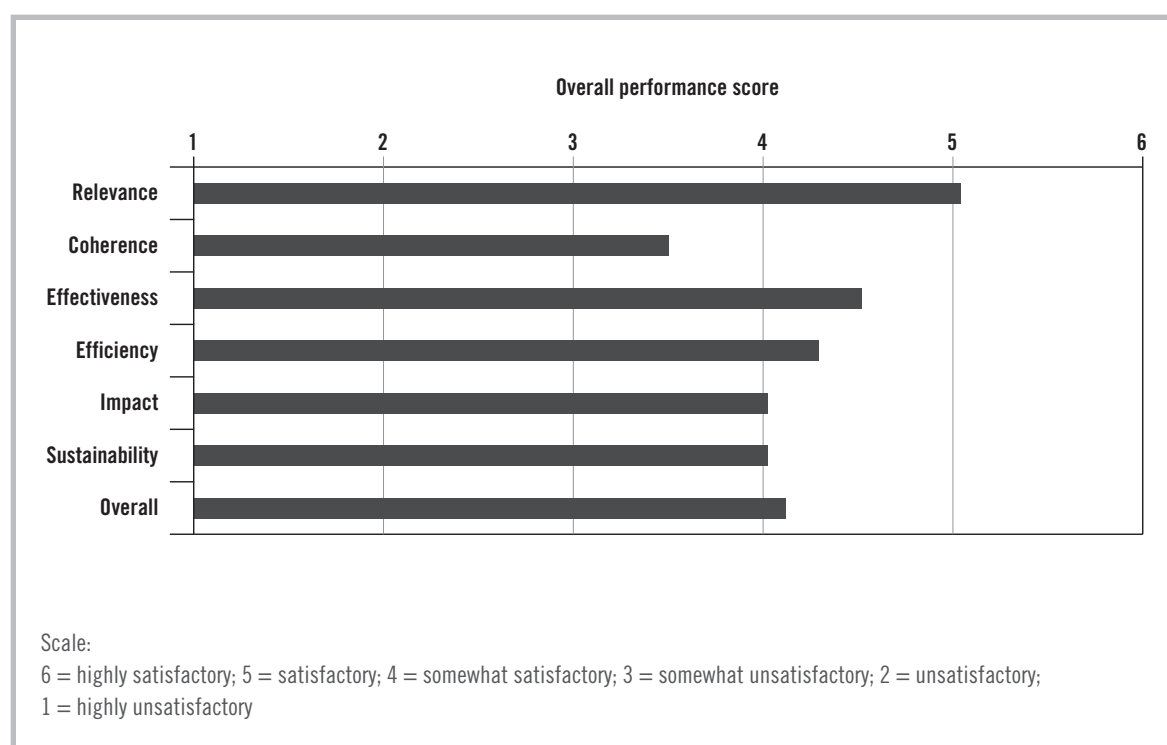
The goal as expressed in the Strategic Policy Framework was that by 2015, over 30 member States will have aligned training supply and demand and extended access to training. However, no data were available on the actual number of countries assessed as having attained this goal. The countries visited had undertaken activities that related to the 2015 goal; constituents in those countries were

generally satisfied and survey data suggested that staff and stakeholders believed that the Office had made a difference. Some staff and stakeholders questioned in the field were often unable to present any hard evidence of impact, especially in respect of “aligning supply and demand” through training system reform.

### 30. Sustainability

Policy development and training system reform offers greater potential for sustainability than that of more community-based approaches that test delivery mechanisms, although such approaches offer more visible and immediate results for beneficiaries. This was observed by the evaluation team, which cited cases where the sustainable results for individuals were positive although the sustainability of the intervention itself was not certain. Staff and stakeholders perceived the ILO skills work as having a sustainable impact on extending access to training systems and services to identified priority groups. However, the field visits did not find much hard evidence of this.

Figure 1. Evaluation Criteria Ratings



### Lessons learned

- Although the process can sometimes be slow, training system reform is a fertile field for the ILO that has the potential to yield sustainable results and advance the Decent Work Agenda.
- While efforts to provide skills to highly disadvantaged groups at the community level can have an immediate impact, sustainability and expansion are hard to achieve.
- It is important to ensure that appropriate attention is given to the input of ministries other than the Ministry of Labour.
- The ILO needs either a more elaborate section on skills in the P&B or a separate document that guides skills work and establishes priorities in the short, medium and long term.
- Performance indicators and their measurement criteria need to reflect more accurately the work that actually leads to the outcomes.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

31. **Recommendation 1: Enhance coherence between the P&B, key policy documents and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by mapping key skills development activities to the indicators in the strategic plan 2018–2021 and the P&B for 2018–2019.** Mapping activities in this manner will make clear what fits, and what does not. Any gaps should be highlighted and resolved through a high-level decision. Although much of the ILO's work relates to SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), its skills work also relates to SDG 4 (Quality education). The P&B 2016–2017 does not seem to recognize this adequately and the strategic plan 2018–2021 should therefore ensure that the ILO skills activities that relate to SDG 4 are adequately recognized.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS and PROGRAM	High	December 2016	Low

32. **Recommendation 2: Ensure that adequate technical support is available for areas of growing demand and consider the need to target specific skills-related activities in priority regions or countries.** The evaluation found that demand for different types of skills work can fluctuate and the ILO needs to ensure that it can quickly respond to such changes. It also needs to ensure an appropriate geographical spread in its skills work since for example, it found that Asia currently receives more than three times Africa's share of project funds, despite higher demand from Africa.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS	Medium	June 2017	Medium

33. **Recommendation 3: Clarify the full scope of the skills agenda and communicate this to ILO offices and constituents. Develop tools and guides that support offices and constituents to better integrate skills activities into the full range of development interventions.** Although skills work touches on many areas of the ILO's operations, the opportunity to include effective skills development elements can sometimes be missed. Practical tools and guides may be needed to assist ILO offices and constituents to better integrate skills into a broader range of activities. These need to be written for a broad audience (not for skills specialists).

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS	Low	December 2017	Medium

34. **Recommendation 4: Encourage innovation in the ILO's skills work by allocating funds to develop and test new models.** The Office appears to rely heavily on long-standing products and services and should actively pursue innovative solutions that offer sustainability and capacity that can be scaled up. Establishing an "innovation fund" to support the development and piloting of promising new models could be considered. Finding new models that are effective, scalable and cost-effective should be a priority.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS and PARDEV	Medium	December 2017	High

35. **Recommendation 5: Enhance the capacity of tripartite partners to participate in the ILO's skills work and ensure all relevant ministries are effectively engaged in identifying and addressing skills priorities.** Workers' and employers' representatives have a vital role to play in skills development. The evaluation identified a need to support their capacity to participate in and influence skills development. In addition, as vocational education and training often falls under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education and not the Ministry of Labour, the ILO needs to ensure that country-level analysis and planning processes effectively engage with the Ministry of Education. Skills work also extends to other ministries, which should also have input to the ILO's skills-related work.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS, ACTRAV and ACTEMP /Country and DWT offices	Medium	December 2017	High

36. **Recommendation 6: Improve the systems in place to review and assess the results reported in the implementation reports and improve the capacity of the ILO's systems to report on the allocations of Regular Budget (RB) resources to outcomes.** The Office should implement a system to make a more realistic assessment of the ILO's contribution to reported results. Results reported against performance indicators need to be reviewed more thoroughly and only included in performance reports when the ILO has made a substantial and verifiable contribution. Technical interpretation, when required, should be performed jointly with PROGRAM and the technical department concerned. As a number of evaluation reports have highlighted, the expansion of the current system should be set up to better capture the use of resources, including regular budget resources, linked to outcomes. This will reflect and more accurately quantify the work undertaken by the ILO, including support to constituents and capacity-building efforts.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DDG/MR, PROGRAM, DDG/P and technical department	Medium	December 2018	High

37. **Recommendation 7: Improve institutional record keeping to ensure that important information is not lost when key staff leave the Office.** At times, the evaluation was hindered by the inability to access certain information, including the background to and the reasoning behind significant decisions. This was due to the departure of staff members. Some relevant information, kept in emails or personal drives, ceased to be accessible once staff members left. Basic record keeping that retains important decision-making documentation needs to be improved across the Office

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS and PROGRAM	High	December 2016	High



# INTRODUCTION

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## BACKGROUND – SKILLS AND THE ILO

38. Skills development raises the value and output of labour, empowers and enriches the lives of workers, and improves the productivity, sustainability and competitiveness of enterprises. For many women and men, it provides a key to access the labour market, to escape from poverty, and to adapt to a changing world. It is a fundamental enabler of decent work.
39. The ILO's work in skills requires an approach that can adapt to constant change. Transformations brought about by globalization, intensified competition and new technology are raising the base level of skills required to access jobs in the formal economy. Even opportunities for individuals to derive an income in the informal sector increasingly require them to enhance their vocational skills.
40. The ILO must also adapt its approach to the vastly different needs and circumstances of its member States. Economic, labour market and social conditions vary enormously so different responses are required in different places. Some countries with well-established vocational training systems now find they need to modernize or enhance their approach to meet contemporary labour market needs. Some less developed countries need to build these systems virtually from scratch. In other cases, skills work might be required as part of emergency responses, such as post-crisis or post-disaster situations where people sometimes need to develop new skills to survive in a world that has changed completely for them.
41. While the ILO's work in skills supports opportunities for people to gain decent and productive work, it is not supported by the same imperative for action as its work in promoting fundamental rights. That is to say, that the ILO skills interventions do not involve the implementation of basic principles or normative standards set out in any of the eight «fundamental» Conventions identified by the Governing Body.<sup>1</sup> Rather, the ILO's skills work is underpinned by “technical” Conventions and their associated Recommendations.<sup>2</sup>
42. In broad terms, the ILO's approach to its skills development work follows the same logic and theory of change that underpins the Office's activities as a whole. By providing analysis, advice, capacity building, and direct support, and by facilitating partnerships, the ILO supports governments to work

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<sup>1</sup> These eight fundamental ILO Conventions cover the following fundamental rights: freedom of association and the effective recognition of the right to collective bargaining, the elimination of all forms of forced or compulsory labour, the effective abolition of child labour and the elimination of discrimination in respect of employment and occupation.

<sup>2</sup> These include, in particular, the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No.142); and Recommendation 2004 (No. 195).

with employers' and workers' representatives to pass legislation, revise policies, apply programmes, and introduce initiatives that grow and extend decent work opportunities.<sup>3</sup>

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

43. In November 2015, the ILO's Governing Body mandated the Evaluation Office (EVAL) to conduct an independent high-level evaluation of the ILO's strategy, programme approach, and interventions to promote skills development for jobs and growth. High-level evaluations aim to generate insights into the ILO's performance within the context of its results-based management system.
44. The purpose of the evaluation is to provide an insight into the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of the skills-related work of the ILO. Although it focuses on the period from 2010–2015 – that of the previous Strategic Policy Framework – it also looks forward, aiming to inform the development of the next strategic framework and its alignment with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
45. The Strategic Policy Framework 2010–2015 had a separate outcome for skills – outcome 2. This had four indicators specifically related to skills development and a fifth that included the following elements:
  - Indicator 2.1: Number of member States that, with ILO support, integrate skills development into sector or national development strategies.
  - Indicator 2.2: Number of member States that, with ILO support, make relevant training more readily accessible in rural communities.
  - Indicator 2.3: Number of member States that, with ILO support, make relevant training more readily accessible to people with disabilities.
  - Indicator 2.4: Number of member States that, with ILO support, strengthen employment services to deliver on employment policy objectives.<sup>4</sup>
  - Indicator 2.5: Number of member States that, with ILO support, develop and implement integrated policies and programmes to promote productive employment and decent work for young men and women.<sup>5</sup>

The Strategic Policy Framework also clearly stated that by 2015, “over 30 member States have aligned training supply and demand, extended access to training opportunities to a wider proportion of workers and have integrated skills development in sector and national development policies and in responses to global drivers of change such as technology, trade, and global warming”.

46. The ILO's work on skills development touched upon other areas such as support for national employment policies (outcome 1), policy guidance on skills for green jobs, and good practices to promote workplace learning in sustainable enterprises (outcome 3), tools to upgrade informal apprenticeships to combat child labour (outcome 16), training on the regulation of private employment agencies against human trafficking (outcome 15), promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities (outcome 17), skills recognition programmes for migrant workers (outcome 7) and promoting youth employment.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> ILO, ILO Programme implementation 2010–11, International Labour Conference, 101st Session, Geneva, 2012. p.3.

<sup>4</sup> Only aspects related to skills development of indicator 2.4 will be under the scope of this evaluation.

<sup>5</sup> Only skills development aspects of indicator 2.5 will be covered in this evaluation.

<sup>6</sup> Programme and Budget 2012–13 p. 26–27 P&B also notes that, “progress under the areas of critical important will be measured through indicators attached to the 19 outcomes.” P&B 2014–15, p. 11.



47. In the 2014–2015 P&B, Areas of Critical Importance (ACIs) were established and these areas identified skills as a cross-cutting issue in:
  - Promoting more and better jobs for inclusive growth;
  - Jobs and skills for youth;
  - Creating and extending social protection floors;
  - Productivity and working conditions in small and medium enterprises;
  - Formalization of the informal economy.<sup>7</sup>
48. In the transitional Strategic Plan 2016–2017 a specific outcome on skills is no longer identified separately and is embedded in several outcomes on jobs and skills for young people (outcome 1 – Indicator 1.2, 1.4) and other disadvantaged groups, decent work in the rural economy,<sup>8</sup> gender equality and non-discrimination, and the green economy.
49. The evaluation concentrates on activities associated with outcome 2 of the Strategic Policy Framework (“*Skills development increases the employability of workers, the competitiveness of enterprises and the inclusiveness of growth*”), but it also considers other skills-related efforts of the ILO and their links to other Strategic Policy Framework outcomes. The evaluation therefore reviews the work of the Office as a whole, not just that of the Skills Department (now called Skills and Employability Branch). The ILO’s contribution to global skills strategies, its collaboration with multilateral partners, and its global knowledge sharing initiatives are also considered.
50. As specified in the Terms of Reference (see **Annex A**), the evaluation analyses the Office’s “strategy, programme approach, and interventions” in skills development based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation criteria for evaluating development assistance. Key questions under each DAC criterion are:
  - (i) Relevance:
    - To what extent is the design of the ILO skills strategy relevant to global strategies on skills development?
    - Does it address the needs of member States, governments and social partners?
    - What means are there to ensure continuing relevance vis-à-vis changing needs and new developments?
  - (ii) Coherence and Validity of Design
    - To what extent has the ILO’s strategy on skills development been coherent and complementary (in its design and implementation) to activities being carried out under other ILO Strategic Policy Framework outcome Strategies and activities being implemented by other ILO departments?
    - How appropriate and useful are the indicators on skills development as described in the ILO’s Strategic Policy Framework 2010–2015? Do they effectively assess its results and progress? Are the indicators measurable and traceable?
    - Is the strategy coherent and complementary to similar efforts carried out by constituents, United Nations and other partners?

<sup>7</sup> ILO Programme and Budget for the biennium 2014–2015, Geneva, 2015, pp 19 and 20.

<sup>8</sup> ILO: Internal document based on «Transition from the Strategic Policy Framework for 2010–2015 to the Transitional Strategic Plan for 2016–2017: proposals for re-linking CPOs” PROGRAM 28 October 2015.

## iii) Effectiveness

- To what extent has the ILO fulfilled its objective in skills development using the Strategic Policy Framework and P&B targets as a benchmark?
- How has ILO external coordination (with constituents, United Nations partners, World Bank and G20) and internal coordination (between sectors, technical departments, regions and sub regions) promoted the realization of skills development?

## (iv) Efficiency

- To what extent have resources been used efficiently and the programme appropriately and adequately resourced?
- What were the costs associated with the interventions? Could there have been alternative designs to render results more efficiently?

## (v) Impact and Sustainability

- To what extent have ILO actions had an impact in the form of increased capacity, necessary tools and policy improvements needed to work towards the achievement of the outcomes and outputs identified within the Strategic Policy Framework on skills development? Is it likely that the results of the interventions are durable and can be maintained or even up-scaled and replicated by constituents?
- What actions and conditions are required for achieving broader, long-term impact?
- To what extent have ILO interventions been designed and implemented in ways that have maximized sustainability at country level?
- Can observed changes and results be causally linked to the ILO interventions? Did the changes result from the ILO interventions? Are there impact assessments that can support attribution of results to ILO, and if not, what other evidence is there?
- What are the tripartite constituents' perceived benefits (differentiated by groups)?

51. The principle client for the evaluation is the ILO's Governing Body, which is responsible for governance-level decisions on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation. Other key stakeholders include the Director-General and members of the Senior Management Team at headquarters, the Evaluation Advisory Committee, the Employment Policy Department's Skills and Employability Branch, Youth Employment (EMPLAB), Job Creation and Enterprise Development Department (Green Jobs), Governance (child labour and trafficking) Work Quality (disabilities and migrant workers) and Multinational Enterprises and Enterprise Engagement Unit (EMP/MULTI). It should also serve as a source of information for ILO donors, partners and policy makers.

## EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

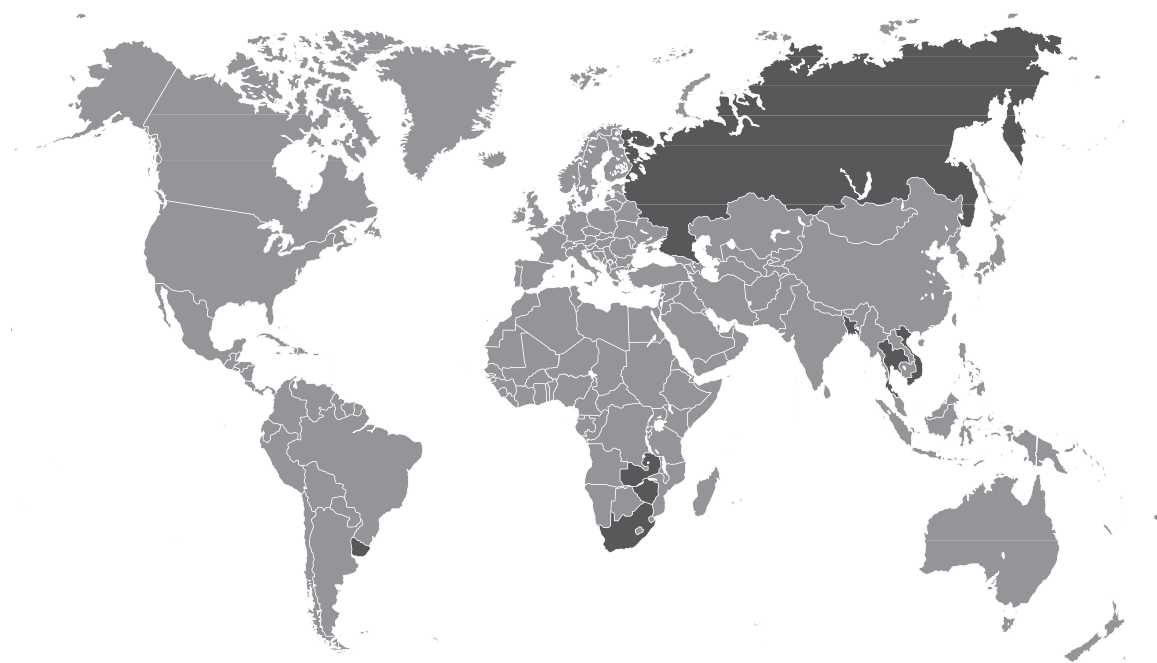
52. The evaluation builds on the approach presented in EVAL's High-level Evaluation Protocol for Strategy and Policy Evaluation.<sup>9</sup> It is based primarily on qualitative research, drawing on multiple sources of information, including document reviews, analyses of financial and programmatic data, key informant interviews with ILO constituents, staff and multilateral and bilateral partners in skills development, and direct observation from field visits and interviews in nine<sup>10</sup> selected countries. Some 181 interviews were conducted during the course of this evaluation including ILO staff, government officials,

<sup>9</sup> ILO. Evaluation Office: *Protocol 1: High-level evaluation protocol for strategy and policy evaluation*, (Geneva, 2015), available at: [http://www.ilo.org/global/docs/WCMS\\_215858/lang--en/index.htm](http://www.ilo.org/global/docs/WCMS_215858/lang--en/index.htm).

<sup>10</sup> The field visit countries were Armenia, Bangladesh, the Russian Federation, Viet Nam, Zambia and Zimbabwe, with additional interviews in Uruguay (CINTERFOR), the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, and the ILO Decent Work Team (DWT) for Eastern and Southern Africa and Country Office for South Africa, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland.

representatives of workers' and employers' organizations, NGOs, project participants and multi-bilateral donors working in skills development. (See Annex B for a full list of interviewed people).

#### Field visit and case study countries



53. The selection of field visit countries was based on geographic spread, the extra-budgetary technical cooperation (XBTC) resources that had been spent in the countries, and focused on ensuring that skills interventions undertaken during the period under review were included in the evaluation. While much of the work deals with issues at the global level, the evaluation also includes findings from case studies from Armenia, Bangladesh, Benin, the Russian Federation, Viet Nam, Zambia, Uruguay (CINTERFOR), and Zimbabwe, and the Skills for Employment Knowledge Sharing Platform.
54. A survey was conducted of ILO staff in headquarters and regional offices, directors of country offices and DWTs, skills specialists and CTA/project staff working on skills projects. The survey also requested participation from selected representatives of workers and employers' organizations,<sup>11</sup> government officials, and other partners who were interviewed as part of the field visit data collection. The survey was sent to 238 people and the response rate was 46.2 per cent. Survey respondents (94.5 per cent) reported that they were involved in skills work in one or more countries making the respondent pool highly relevant to the ILO's skills work. A separate survey was sent to the Inter-Agency Working Group on Greening Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), which consists of members of the United Nations and multi-bilateral donor agencies, in an effort to receive feedback about how ILOs work in skills development is perceived by its partners. The Inter-Agency Working Group brings together expertise from a wide range of international organizations working in the field of TVET, skills development and the green transformation of the society and economy. The response rate for this survey was 53.8 per cent. Eighty-five per cent of respondents

<sup>11</sup> The survey was also sent to the representatives in Geneva of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), and the International Organization of Employers (IOE).

noted that skills development was a “very important” part of their work while 14 per cent said it was “important”, making these respondents a highly relevant group as well. Survey questions for both surveys are available upon request.

55. Content analysis of specific issues was also conducted by the evaluation team including an analysis of a sample of Decent Work Country Programme documents from the period 2010–2015 to assess demand for skills related support by the member States. A classification of skills related activities from the DWCPs into intervention types was carried out to provide a more nuanced picture of the demand for skills related support. The sample of countries analysed was selected through random sampling of all available DWCP documents that were finalized between 2010 and 2015. DWCPs that started in 2014 were not included in the sample. A detailed analysis of all country programme outcomes reported in the biennial Implementation Reports was also conducted. This analysis sought to check the accuracy of reported results in terms of the defined measurement criteria.

### Methodological limitations

56. As has been noted in previous high level evaluations the lack of financial and reporting data on the use of regular budget resources linked to outcomes has meant that much of the work undertaken by headquarters on skills development (missions, support to constituents through advisory trips, good practice exchange trips) is not quantifiable. This is an area of systemic concern to the Office and consequently the evaluation does not have the full set of data for assessing the efficiency of ILO work in this area
57. Staff turnover between the periods of 2010–2015 has also made recollection of what occurred earlier in the period under question more difficult. Given that the ILO's skills development work is not confined to one department, institutional memory is diffused across the Office and is often held by individuals. When these individuals leave, important information leaves with them – especially historical knowledge of why particular decisions were made and why tasks were carried out in a particular way. As often no institutional records appear to have been kept, the evaluation team asked some important questions for which no answers could be found. See **Recommendation 7**.

## THE ILO'S WORK IN SKILLS – 2010–2015

*This section provides insight into the range, nature and rationale of ILO's skills-related activities and interventions in the period under review. It considers the wide range of problems and opportunities that the ILO's work in skills is intended to address. It begins by outlining the ILO's allocation of resources in the period and the extent of activities supported by technical cooperation funds. It then examines the broad focus areas of this work, describes the types of interventions that these areas include and provides examples drawn from the evaluation field visits.*

### ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES TO THE ILO'S SKILLS WORK

The overall funding available to skills work linked to outcome 2 in the period was significant with around half of the total funds sourced from and spent on extra-budgetary technical cooperation projects

58. **Table 1** shows that total funding allocated to outcome 2 – including regular budget, regular budget supplementary account (RBSA) and XBTC projects attached to outcome 2<sup>12</sup> – over the three biennia exceeds US\$ 282 million. This represented about 8.3% of total organizational expenditure.<sup>13</sup>

Table 1: Expenditures for outcome 2

Type of expenditure	2010–2011	2012–2013	2014–2015	TOTAL
Regular Budget (RS)	42,117,743	45,903,903	43,809,336	131,830,982
Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA)	1,961,346	895,334	2,901,818	5,758,498
Extra-Budgetary Technical Cooperation (XBTC)	56,044,080	46,975,400	41,656,007	144,675,487
<b>Total</b>	<b>100,123,169</b>	<b>93,774,637</b>	<b>88,367,161</b>	<b>282,264,967</b>

Source: Programme Implementation Reports

59. Outcome 2 extra-budgetary technical cooperation (XBTC) projects represented about half of the total expenditure in the period (51 per cent). Funding spent from this source and attached to outcome 2 appeared to decline over the three biennia – down by 26 per cent or US \$14.4 million. The outcome's share of the ILO's total XBTC funds also declined from 13.2 per cent in 2010–2011 to 9.7 per cent in 2014–2015.

<sup>12</sup> This does not include XBTC projects where Skills Branch has been identified as a collaborating unit – See **Table 3**.

<sup>13</sup> Based on 2012–2013 and 2014–2015. 2010–11 financial data were presented in a somewhat different format.

### Current ILO management and reporting systems do not make it easy to measure the extent of skills-related project investment across all outcome areas

60. The majority of skills development activity took place at the country level in line with agreed CPOs. Skills works is a highly decentralized part of the ILO's operations. Projects funded through XBTC and RBSA were mapped to a particular CPO in each country and were, in turn, mapped to a Strategic Policy Framework outcome.<sup>14</sup> As mentioned earlier, under the 2010–2015 Strategic Policy Framework, CPOs could only be attached to one outcome, meaning some projects with significant skills elements might be “hidden” elsewhere. In other words, neither projects nor CPOs were coded based on whether they included skills activities. Getting a comprehensive picture of skills-related project investment – one that is based on actual *activities* – would require a detailed analysis of all of the CPOs and projects active between 2010 and 2015, a large task that was outside the scope of the evaluation.

**By applying proxy measures, the evaluation found that around a quarter of a billion dollars of project funds (XBTC) were invested in skills-related projects in the period.**

**Over half of these funds were for projects in Asia while around 17 per cent were for projects in Africa.**

61. In the absence of more precise data sources, the evaluation sought to delve deeper into the issue of skills-related projects by using an alternative, proxy measure. A search of projects data recorded in the ILO's Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS) was conducted which included a range of criteria designed to reveal a skills link (either in name, mapped outcome or through the involvement of organizational units<sup>15</sup>).
62. **Table 2** sets out details of (a) projects which had “SKILLS” or “EMP/SKILLS” recorded as being the “technical unit” responsible; and (b) projects which had other parts of the ILO recorded as being the “technical unit” but which recorded “SKILLS” or “EMP/SKILLS” as being the “collaborating unit”. To provide insight into the geographic focus of these projects, the projects were

Table 2: Expenditure 2010–15 on XBTC Projects

Admin Unit	Projects with Skills as Technical Unit (USD)	%	Projects with Other ILO as Technical Unit (USD)	%	Combined Total (USD)	Combined %
Africa	21,856,879	15.2	19,327,281	18.6	41,184,160	16.7
Americas	7,879,721	5.5	1,660,276	1.6	9,539,997	3.9
Arab States	8,858,078	6.2	1,670,359	1.6	10,528,437	4.3
Asia	78,520,095	54.7	55,340,023	53.4	133,860,118	54.2
Europe	11,086,838	7.7	5,168,040	5.0	16,254,878	6.6
Global/HQ	13,580,995	9.5	20,510,751	19.6	34,091,746	13.8
ITC/Turin	1,683,512	1.2	0	0	1,683,512	0.7
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>143,466,118</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>103,676,733</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>247,142,851</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS)

<sup>14</sup> Full list available upon request.

<sup>15</sup> Specifically, projects from the reporting period which met one or more of the following criteria: the Administrative Unit is EMP/SKILLS or SKILLS; the Technical Unit is EMP/SKILLS or SKILLS; the Backstopping Unit is EMP/SKILLS or SKILLS; the Collaborating Unit in IRIS is SKILLS; the project is mapped to “old” P&B outcome 02: Skills Development; the project is mapped to the “new” P&B outcome 1: More and Better Jobs and were previously mapped to P&B outcome 02: Skills Development; and where the project title contains the word “skills”. The resulting report was analysed and any obvious errors or inconsistencies were corrected.

segmented by “admin sector”, which included projects implemented in specific regions as well as global/HQ-administered projects.<sup>16</sup>

63. At around 54 per cent, the high share of expended funds supporting skills-related projects in Asia is especially noteworthy given Africa's much lower share (around 17 per cent) and the priority status<sup>17</sup> apparently afforded Africa by the Office in the Strategic Policy Framework. PARDEV data show that the relative share of total expenditure of XBTC funds (i.e. for all outcomes) for Asia and Africa are not as skewed towards Asia but may be trending in that way – for example, in 2013 Asia had 29.1 per cent of all XBTC funds and Africa had 28.7 per cent; in 2015 the shares were 37.2 per cent and 24.9 per cent respectively.<sup>18</sup>
64. The data above raise a number of questions that should be considered in future skills strategy development and programme planning. Does the apparent focus on Asia simply reflect the priorities and interests of donors? Is it because Asian countries have reached a stage of economic development where they are especially “hungry” for skills development compared with Africa? Are the skills development responses currently offered by the ILO more relevant and more readily implemented in Asia than in Africa? Is the demand for skills in Africa, as articulated in the Decent Work Country Programmes, really lower than in Asia? While the current evaluation is not able to answer these questions definitively, the analysis of the DWCPs showed that the sampled African countries had higher demand for all interventions areas compared to the Asian countries and therefore the resource flow to Asia does not seem to be based on demand. Future work on skills should be carefully targeted to ensure that ILO support is responsive to demands of the constituents and skills specialists in headquarters and in the regions should work to bridge donor preferences and country demands (see **Recommendation 2**).

### The number of specialist skills staff employed by the organization in the period remained stable in both headquarters and the field

65. In 2010–2011 and 2012–2013, under the Regular Budget, there were 10 staff employed in the Skills department based in Geneva headquarters and seven staff (equivalent full-time) in the field, including three in Asia, two in Africa, 0.5 in Europe-Central Asia and 1.5 in the Americas. In 2014–2015, the number of staff in Skills in HQ declined to seven, but this was due to four roles being transferred to other units (two employment services specialists and two disability specialists.)

Table 3: Staff (regular budget) of skills department/branch

	2010–11	2012–13	2014–15
<b>HQ</b>	10	10	7
male	3	3	5
female	7	7	2
<b>Field</b>	7 <sup>19</sup>	7 <sup>20</sup>	7 <sup>21</sup>

<sup>16</sup> A full list of projects is available upon request.

<sup>17</sup> The priority status is assumed in that specific targets were set for Africa in the Strategic Policy Framework 2010–2015. Of outcome 2's five indicators, four had targets for Africa. The evaluation sought an explanation for the justification of the specific targets for Africa but did not receive a clear response from the Office.

<sup>18</sup> ILO Extra-Budgetary Development Cooperation Annual Report 2015 – Expenditure and Delivery, Partnerships and Field Support (PARDEV, February 2016,) Table 2.

<sup>19</sup> Five full time posts in Bangkok, Cairo, Manila, New Delhi, Port of Spain and Pretoria. The posts in Moscow and San Jose were 50 per cent skills specialists which was counted as one post above.

<sup>20</sup> Five full posts of which two in Bangkok and one in Cairo, New Delhi, Pretoria, and Port of Spain and two 50% posts in Moscow and San Jose.

<sup>21</sup> Same as 2012–2013 above.



66. Considering the size of Africa and the complexity and diversity of the challenges faced in African countries, having only two skills specialist field staff based there (one in Pretoria and one in Cairo) may have been insufficient. Not having enough skills development experts supporting the four Decent Work Teams in Africa might also have been a contributing factor in its lower share of skills projects compared to Asia (described above).<sup>22</sup>

## THE ILO'S SKILLS WORK IN THE PERIOD

### The ILO has supported the development of skills policy and enabling legislation

67. Support for the development of national policies (or strategies or plans) for skills development was an important part of the ILO's work in many countries. These policies can provide a basis for improving access to decent work, meeting the skills needs of the labour market and supporting economic development and diversification. They provide direction, focus and coherence to the skills system. By developing a national skills policy, a country can improve the coherence of its skills system, redefine institutional arrangements and establish a training reform agenda. This can, in turn, provide the ILO with a framework for its skills development work in the country.
68. ILO involvement in this area is supported and informed by key policy documents. R195 (2004) asks member States to develop and implement human resource development policies which promote employability, facilitate the development of training delivery systems, develop national qualification frameworks and improve or enable access to identified groups.<sup>23</sup> The 97th session of the International Labour Conference (2008) adopted conclusions concerning skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development that encouraged member States to develop skills policies that focused on matching skill supply to demand, helping workers and enterprises adjust to change and to build and sustain competencies for future labour market needs. These conclusions adopted by the ILC subsequently became the foundation of the ILO/G20 training strategy of 2010.<sup>24</sup> The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008) and the Global Jobs Pact (2009) also highlight skills development as central to improving productivity, employability and social inclusion.
69. The Strategic Policy Framework indicator relevant to the ILO's work in supporting skills policy development was Indicator 2.1 – “Number of member States that, with ILO support, integrate skills development into sector or national development strategies.” While the wording of this indicator and its measures might be open to interpretation (for example there is a difference between supporting a country to “integrate” skills in its development strategies and supporting it to “develop a skills policy”), policy support work is considered as core business for the Office and fitted reasonably well here.<sup>25</sup>
70. The ILO's most significant activity in the period to support skills policy development was global in its reach – the development of *G20 Training Strategy: A Skilled Workforce for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth*. Developed in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis, and recognizing the need to focus on skills development as a vital part of building an employment-oriented framework for economic recovery and growth, the G20 Training Strategy followed a request from G20 leaders

<sup>22</sup> In 2016, an additional two skills specialist were appointed in Francophone Africa, one in Dakar and one in Kinshasha, raising the total number to four.

<sup>23</sup> These groups are youth, migrants, people with disabilities, older workers, indigenous people, ethnic minorities, workers in small and medium-sized enterprises, and those in the informal economy, the rural sector and in self-employment.

<sup>24</sup> ILO: *A Skilled Workforce for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth: A G20 Strategy*, (Geneva, 2010).

<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that the policy development indicator for outcome 2 for skills was less outcome-focused than the corresponding indicators for some other outcomes. For example, the relevant indicator under outcome 3 was “Number of member States that, with ILO support, reform their policy or regulatory frameworks to *improve the enabling environment for sustainable enterprises*” while under outcome 6 “Number of member States that, with ILO support, adopt policies and programmes to *promote improved safety and health at work*.”

for the ILO “to convene its constituents and NGOs to develop a training strategy for [their] consideration”. The strategy was presented at the G20 Summit in Toronto in June 2010, and, in November that year, leaders pledged to support developing countries in implementing national strategies for skills development, building on the approach it advocated.

71. The strategy described the major global opportunities and challenges for training and skills development as well as a broad framework “to bridge training and the world of work”. To guide the development of national skills development policies, it set out a number of “building blocks” – key elements that needed to be included in national skills policies and strategies:

- Anticipating future skills needs;
- Participation of social partners;
- Sectoral approaches;
- Labour market information and employment services;
- Training quality and relevance;
- Gender equality;
- Broad access to training;
- Financing training; and
- Assessing policy performance.

The G20 Strategy led to a number of follow-up actions, including the first Technical Cooperation project funded by the Russian Federation. These will be considered in the next section of this report.

72. The ILO was also very active in supporting skills policy development at the country level. While the ILO's country-level support for skills policy development is not especially apparent in its project activity (with one notable exception being Bangladesh), DWCPs frequently highlight this work. The evaluation's analysis of a sample of 47 DWCPs indicated that 25 countries included CPOs associated with supporting skills policies (including five targeting youth). **Table 4** sets out some examples of reportable activities (i.e. “Target” CPOs) drawn from the P&B implementation reports includes. **Case Studies 1 and 2** below provide examples that are more detailed.

Table 4: Examples of Skills Policy Development Activities – Reported CPOs -2010–2015

Country	Description	Code/Biennium
Albania	Assisted drafting of National VET and Lifelong Learning Strategy with both Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Education	ALB130 (12-13)
Botswana	Advice to integrate a skills strategy into the National Development Plan	BWA102 (14-15)
Haiti	Technical support for a new national TVET policy including an apprenticeship policy	HTI127 (14-15)
India	Advice on employment and skills elements of the 12th five-year Plan and on strategies to re-engineer India's skills system	IND102 (12-13)
Malawi	Advice to constituents developing the National Employment Policy and the Malawi Growth and Development Strategy II, which both include skills policies	MWI105 (11-12)
Mozambique	Technical assistance for the employment and skills component of the government's five-year plan	MOZ102 (14-15)
South Africa	Technical inputs into the draft National Development Plan including skills development	ZAF104 (12-13)
South Sudan	Support to the Ministry of Labour in finalizing and validating the vocational training policy and in unifying the country's TVET approach	SSD102 (12-13)
Tanzania	Technical assistance for the review of the TVET policy and apprenticeship policy	TZA103 (12-13)
Zimbabwe	Technical guidance for the National Employment Policy Framework (NEPF) and the National Skills Development Policy	ZWE101 (10-11)

Source: Programme Implementation Reports

### Case Study 1: Skills Policy Development in Bangladesh

The ILO played a key role in developing a Bangladesh national policy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Through a partnership with the European Union and the Government of Bangladesh, the TVET Reform Project (TVET-R) commenced in 2008 seeking to review and strengthen the country's skills development policies, and systems. It aimed to enable legislation that would lead to a "market-oriented and flexible TVET system which responds to the demand for competitive skills of the modern sector, as well as to the needs of youth and under-privileged groups."

The project's policy development phase proved to be a long and complex task, involving the consideration of different models and extensive consultations with a wide range of stakeholders. Drafting and re-drafting of the policy continued through 2010 and 2011 before being formally approved by the National Skills Development Council, which is chaired by the Prime Minister of Bangladesh.

The national policy closely aligns with the key policy documents, Conventions and Recommendations and, the ILO has established itself as the key developmental partner in skills development in the country. The policy has proved to be a springboard for many subsequent skills-related activities and projects championed by the ILO in the country (and described in the evaluation). Elements of the policy include:

- Demand-Driven, Flexible and Responsive Training Provision;
- Nationally Recognised Qualifications;
- Competency-Based Training and Assessment;
- Programmes and Providers Quality Assured;
- Strengthened Role for Industry Sectors in Skills Development;
- Accurate Skills and Labour Market Data for Planning and Monitoring;
- Competent and Certified Instructors and Trainers;
- Effective and Flexible Institutional Management;
- Strengthened Apprenticeships;
- Recognition of Prior Learning;
- Improved Access for Under-Represented Groups;
- Private Training Provision;
- Enhanced Social Status of TVET;
- Industry Training and Workforce Development;
- Skills Development for Overseas Employment;
- Financing;
- Implementation;
- Monitoring & Evaluation.

Developing the policy, of course, does not guarantee successful implementation and each of the elements outlined above pose specific challenges. Continued technical cooperation and support from the ILO will be required in the future and there are still significant gaps that need to be filled – especially extending the benefits of training reform to the 89 per cent of the population who currently work in the informal sector. However, stakeholders are confident in the ILO's capacity to assist. As one constituent said:

***"The ILO is a very committed partner. In skills, others often push their own agenda and parameters and ignore the country's needs. The ILO puts the country's needs first. It's what differentiates it from other development partners."***

### Case Study 2: TVET Legislative Reform in Viet Nam

Although not as common, ILO support in skills policy development in the period sometimes goes further, providing technical input into legislative reform relating to TVET. The evaluation team's field visit to Viet Nam learned that support for the re-writing of the TVET Law in that country was a key activity of its DWCP.

The evaluation found that the support of the ILO in updating and restructuring the TVET legal framework (revising the TVET Law, development of supporting decrees and decisions, and development of the TVET Strategy 2011–2020) were highly valued by the constituents and other key stakeholder in Viet Nam. This revision represented a major reform for Viet Nam. In recent times, vocational training in Viet Nam has been split between two ministries – the General Department of Vocational Training under the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MoLISA) has

provided short-term training courses leading to certificates and vocational diplomas for skilled workers, while the Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) has provided courses leading to higher level technical qualifications. This led to a fragmentation of the national training system.

The ILO's support included:

- Analysis of current drawbacks in TVET system operating under the TVET Law 2006;
- A report on demand driven vocational training and recommendations on how it might be incorporated in the revised TVET Law;
- A paper on the Modular Training Approach and recommendations on how it might be incorporated in the revised TVET Law;
- A paper on Student Streaming and Career Guidance;
- Organization and support for consultations on specific TVET Law provisions and compilation of inputs from stakeholders for consideration;
- Technical inputs to a report from a study tour to Manila with lessons learnt from the Philippines.

The revised law was approved 27 November 2014, putting in place a framework for a single integrated vocational training system. Among the many improvements that the ILO helped to introduce was the inclusion for the first time of an important role for the Vietnamese employers' and business associations.

There are, however, continuing challenges. The ministry ultimately responsible for the single system has not yet been agreed – the revised Law talks in general terms about 'the government' responsibilities and there are some unresolved issues between ministries on which will take the lead. Until there is clear accountability and clear mechanisms for monitoring vocational training, difficulties in implementing the legal framework and establishing a quality vocational training system will continue.

The ILO will continue to play a role in resolving these and other issues to ensure that the skills development arrangements in Viet Nam work well.

### The ILO has supported the development and enhancement of formal training systems and institutions

73. While skills policies can provide the architecture of reform, success depends on the capacity of countries to build effective national training systems, institutions and programmes. In this respect, the ILO was again very active in the period, providing technical advice and support, sharing knowledge and experiences of various approaches, introducing or testing models through technical cooperation projects and helping to establish or to build the capacity of key institutions.
74. The ILO's work in training systems development is central to all the key policy documents and is best summarised in C142 – Human Resources Development Convention, 1975: *“each member shall gradually extend, adopt and harmonize its vocational training systems to meet the needs for vocational training throughout life of both young persons and adults in all sectors of the economy and branches of economic activity and at all levels of skill and responsibility.”* The breadth and complexity of this work was not, however, well reflected in the Strategic Policy Framework and this made it difficult to properly align associated CPOs with the framework.<sup>26</sup>
75. The ILO's work in this area had to respond to the varying needs of different countries in developing their skills systems. For example, the need to:
  - Address skill shortages in high-growth sectors by improving training quality and certification and ensuring that their skills systems meet defined industry standards (for example Bangladesh);
  - Harmonise national skills development systems with international standards to allow the skills of outbound migrant workers to be recognized in identified destination countries (or across a regional economic cooperation zone);

<sup>26</sup> A few specific skills systems elements are among the measures (for example “tripartite institutions operate at national or local levels to link skills supply and demand”), but the majority relate to either policy (for example for people with disabilities, in rural communities, youth) or to “training programme” development for these groups. Development of national systems and capacities to implement policy or effectively deliver programmes were not mentioned.

- In some countries with well-established but outdated vocational training systems, to modernize them in response to changing market needs (for example see *Case Study 3*);
  - Address various types of “skills mismatch” problems;<sup>27</sup>
  - Improve the effectiveness of Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs), often delivered through Public Employment Services (PES), as adjuncts to the formal skills system;
  - Develop ways of more accurately forecasting the skills required to diversify economies and to improve national competitiveness through a more highly skilled and adaptable workforce.
76. The ILO responded to these needs in many ways, sometimes playing a leading or coordinating role and sometimes-adding value where it could to evolving training systems. It provided advice and tools in many different technical areas, including apprenticeship systems (both formal and informal), the development of occupational standards and competency-based curricula through Industry Skills Councils, the introduction and administration of National Qualification Frameworks, meeting the skills needs of the Green Economy, recognition of prior learning, and skills anticipation and forecasting.
77. The reform of formal skills systems has not always been the focus of the ILO's skills work. Some countries looked to establish complementary systems and programmes, outside or only partly linked to the formal training system, to support people to develop the skills they need to derive a livelihood. The ILO's activities in these situations will be discussed separately later.
78. The “showcase” example of the ILO's achievements in supporting skills development systems in the reporting period was its work in **Bangladesh** – described by one stakeholder as representing the ILO's “gold standard” in this area. Building on the National Skills Development Policy described earlier, the ILO worked in partnership with the Government of Canada, the EU, and other development agencies to support the Government of Bangladesh to introduce a new skills system in the country, one that incorporated all of the elements recommended in the ILO's guiding policy documents. Operating with 19 dedicated project staff based in a separate Skills Development Office in Dhaka, the ILO provided support at all stages in the country's reform of its skills systems and institutional arrangements. This support included:
- Technical advice and support to the peak skills policy coordination body in Bangladesh, the National Skills Development Council (NSDC);
  - Assistance in the establishment and capacity-building of Industry Skills Councils, which brought training institutions and industry together to ensure that delivery was driven by demand and that industry had direct access to skilled workers;
  - Facilitating the establishment of “Centres of Excellence” in four industry sectors, which act as both a mechanism to foster best practice in training and to deliver training in their own right;
  - The development of a National Technical and Vocational Qualifications Framework (NTVQF), based on national competency standards, to support skill development pathways;
  - A national competency assessment and certification system which included mechanisms for the recognition of prior learning;
  - A trainer accreditation system;
  - A “dual apprenticeship” model that integrated on-the-job learning with institutional training;
  - Initiatives to support skills development for Green Jobs, such as the development of nationally-recognized qualifications in solar panel installation and service;
  - Improving access to, or links with the formal skills system for people in the informal sector, in rural communities or with low levels of literacy and numeracy. This would be done by linking a proven ILO model (TREE) with the formal system through pre-vocational entry points.

<sup>27</sup> See for example, ILO, Skills Mismatch in Europe – Statistics Brief, (Geneva, September 2014).

79. During the period, the ILO worked on skills system development in other countries, though nowhere as comprehensively as in Bangladesh. The analysis of DWCPs showed 38 of the 47 countries in the sample had included at least one activity in DWCP outcomes that related to skills system development. An analysis of P&B implementation reports highlighted some reportable activities relating to the development and enhancement of skills systems and institutions, but they were surprisingly few in number and add weight to the argument that this core part of skills work was not well measured by the Strategic Policy Framework<sup>28</sup> – see **Table 5. Case Studies 3 and 4** below provide more detailed examples.
80. It was not possible for the evaluation to examine every technical cooperation project in the period to determine the extent to which each developed or enhanced skills systems and institutions. In some cases, project titles provide an indication and **Table 6** lists a sample of these projects with SKILLS recorded in IRIS as the technical unit. In many other projects, however, skills projects may have included work focused on systems reform or institutional capacity building. At the very least, it is reasonable to assume that the sustainability strategy of many such projects would require (or, at least, encourage) the institutional mainstreaming of activities and approaches that were introduced or tested.

Table 5: Examples of Skills System Development Activities – Reported CPOs -2010–2015

Country	Type and description of activity	Code/Biennium
Guyana	Systems – Advised TVET Council on CBT using occupational standards	GUY151 (12-13)
Iraq	Institutions – Prepared the Terms of Reference for National Committee for TVET	IRQ102 (10-11)
Jordan	Systems – Support for skills assessment and certification systems Systems – Piloted project to upgrade informal apprenticeships	JOR104 (12-13) JOR104 (14-15)
Lebanon	Systems – Implemented demonstration project for CBT in construction sector	LBN102 (10-11)
Mexico	Systems – Technical advice on competency-based training for two sectors	MEX102 (10-11)
Pakistan	Systems – Supported TVET reform including CBT and an apprenticeship model	PAK104 (14-15)
Rwanda	Systems – Piloted workplace-based training programme to reinforce skills acquired in a TVET institutional setting	RWA104 (14-15)
Sudan	Institutions – Guidance on the organizational setup of the TVET Department	SDN101 (10-11)
Tanzania	Systems – Design and piloting of RPL system	TZA107 (10-11)
Timor-Leste	Systems – Technical assistance for design of entire TVET system	TLS103 (10-11)
Yemen	Institutions – Improved capacity of MoL training centres to deliver CBT	YEM156 (14-15)

Source: Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS)

Table 6: Examples of projects related to formal skills systems or institutions -2010–2015

Country	Type and description of activity	Budget (USD)
Afghanistan	Skills Assessment and Certification Systems	4,522,286
Bangladesh	Sectoral Centre of Excellence for TVET	1,147,592
Bangladesh	TVET Reform	16,581,311

<sup>28</sup> To further highlight the mismatch between what the organization's results-based management system *records* as results and what the organization seems to *value* as results, none of the multitude of activities described above and implemented in Bangladesh and widely acclaimed as good practice feature in or are counted by the P&B implementation reports. The reports only count two results over the three biennia – one relating to the NSDC (counted in both 2010–2011 and 2011–2012, perhaps erroneously) and one relating to disability inclusiveness.



Country	Type and description of activity	Budget (USD)
Bangladesh	Strengthening National Skills Development Council Secretariat	169,870
Cambodia	Skills for Trade & Economic Diversification (STED)	881,687
Cambodia, Lao & Myanmar	Mutual skills recognition (2 projects)	238,940
Egypt & Tunisia	Strengthening skills for trade and economic diversification	447,049
Europe	Applying the G20 Training Strategy (Regional component)	3,272,540
Global/HQ	Knowledge sharing on early identification of skill needs	601,327
Global/HQ	Applying the G20 Training Strategy (Global & Management components)	3,803,201
Global/HQ	Skills for Trade & Economic Diversification (STED – 2 components)	1,220,186
Global/HQ	South-South cooperation on work-based learning	181,641
Jordan	TVET monitoring and evaluation systems	265,487
Malawi	Skills for Trade & Economic Diversification (STED)	588,546
Myanmar	Role of business in skills matching and anticipation	18,750
Myanmar	Skills for Trade & Economic Diversification (STED – 2 projects)	996,731
Regional (Asia)	Study on assessment	50,885
Regional (Arab States)	Enhancing vocational rehabilitation for disable persons (2 components)	215,179
Regional (Asia)	Mutual Recognition of Skills for AEC	431,188
Uruguay	Updating occupational standards and job descriptions	202,095
Uruguay	Institutional capacity building of TVET institutions	975,588

Source: Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS)

### Case Study 3: Training System Reform in the Russian Federation

In recent years, the Russian Federation has accelerated its efforts to modernize its Skills Development Systems and the ILO has been a valued partner in this process. In line with the experience in many other developed countries, the Russian Federation has struggled with a number of labour market challenges that directly relate to the quality and quantity of training system outputs. These include mismatches between the current skill needs of employers and the skills being taught in the system, too little demand in vocational and technical training enrolments (linked partly to a perception of it being of lower status) and too much in some university disciplines, emerging skill shortages as a generation of people trained under the old Soviet system approach retirement, and a general failure of the skills system to base itself on contemporary needs.

Because of the importance of training system development, it became a priority in the Programme of Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the ILO (2013–2016), which stated that “the contents and structure of vocational education” needed to “match labour market needs”, “vocational education programmes need to be modernized to meet labour market requirements” and that this would involve a “national qualifications framework.”

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection had been working towards modernizing standards in occupations covering some 600,000 members of the workforce, but, in 2014, the scope of this work suddenly grew when the President announced a far more ambitious overhaul of the system that would cover around 25 million workers. This would involve a massive re-engineering of the system, the establishment of 22 employer-led Councils for Professional Qualifications, a peak National Council and a coordinating taskforce to drive the reform.

The challenge facing the ministry was therefore considerable and, as one of its senior managers told the evaluation team, “it is why we couldn't get along without the ILO and its international experience in this field.” According to the ministry, specific supports included:

- Expert advice and reports on the application of National Qualification Frameworks worldwide;
- Input into a new draft law on assessment mechanisms;

- Advice and international models on the operations of the Councils for Professional Qualifications;
- Industrial relations support through the ILO's specialists in Employers' Activities and Workers' Activities;
- Support for a Government-funded project examining new RPL mechanisms for use by workers from neighbouring CIS countries and for local people whose skills have not been recognized;
- A study tour of Ireland to see first-hand its system in operation.

The ILO's process of sharing with the Russian Federation its knowledge of different systems highlighted an important consideration of this work. Rather than advocate any particular model, various models were shared – the German, Spanish, Australian, New Zealand and others. The ILO might have strongly promoted one particular model, but this would have been a mistake as each is underpinned by certain country-specific practices or cultural norms that might be unworkable in the Russian Federation. For example, the Russians were surprised by the highly deregulated nature of the skills assessment system in Ireland – something that they could only imagine being delivered by a government entity in the Russian Federation. Similarly, the willingness of employers in Ireland to volunteer their time to skills system development processes was something that was thought to be unlikely to be replicated in the Russian Federation.

The system has not yet been fully implemented and faces many challenges given the scale of the changes and the lack of existing institutional experience. The practicalities of getting employers to define and articulate their skills needs is proving to be particularly challenging. In addition, while over 800 new standards have been developed, the task of developing the capacity of vocational training institutions and their teachers to adapt to the new standards has hardly begun.

The ILO's ongoing support will be required. As one employer organization representative put it:

*“We will need ILO to be quickly responsive to day-to-day problems and changes.”*

#### Case Study 4: Strengthening Training Institutions in Armenia

Armenia was one of five countries selected as part of the “Implementing the G20 Training Strategy” project, which was funded by the Russian Federation. Under this project, country-level activities included pilot initiatives to improve the management of TVET bodies and institutions and to increase the participation of social partners in skills development. A wide range of activities was run over a three-year period to November 2015, including training of TVET institutional managers using a computer-based simulator developed by the Moscow School of Management (SKOLKOVO), the conduct of a Skills Foresight exercise (also by SKOLKOVO), and various institutional capacity building initiatives.

Following initial presentations to stakeholders by SKOLKOVO in June 2013 and a workshop on the TVET Simulation tool conducted in Moscow in March 2014, two Skills Foresight Workshops were conducted in April and June 2014 that focused on the Food and Precision Engineering sectors. Follow-up activities to identify competencies took place in 2015. Training of moderators in the use of the TVET Simulation tool occurred in October 2015, with a total of 30 TVET staff ultimately trained (including 8 trainers from the State Informatics College who were trained as program moderators).

As the project progressed, the focus increasingly turned to activities designed to improve the TVET system and its connections to employment service delivery. This took the form of a broad program of support and capacity building for the Ministry of Labour, the State Employment Service, TVET Institutions, employer and worker organizations and specific sectors.

Capacity building activities for the Ministry of Labour (including its State Employment Agency) occurred at a time of significant systemic reform in Armenia, including a movement from passive to Active Labour Market Programs – such as retraining programs for the unemployed and internship/on-the-job training programmes for recent graduates. Support was provided to improve program monitoring and evaluation of these new ALMPs (a workshop with ILO experts and support for the conduct of a labour market survey); vocational guidance provision (training at the ILO International Training Centre in Turin and a workshop delivered by a Russian expert); and to enhance State Employment Service effectiveness (technical support for the development of an online job brokerage system and training for employment service staff).

Apart from the staff development provided to TVET College staff through the SKOLKOVO elements of the project, the project also supported a training needs analysis for members of the management boards of 21 TVET colleges. The capacity of Trade Unions in TVET system development was supported through a seminar delivered as part of a subregional conference on transitioning from the informal economy. Employer organizations were also strongly engaged in the project via the SKOLKOVO Skills Foresight element.

The project in Armenia demonstrated that ILO support for skills system development is not restricted to the formal training system. The role of Public Employment Services in the delivery of ALMPs is also important, filling in skill development gaps, often through the provision of short courses, education-to-work transition programmes and career guidance services.



**The ILO's skills work was responsive to the needs of young people, the poor and the marginalized. It successfully embedded skills development in activities that improved the employment and income generation capacity of people in the informal economy and in rural communities.**

81. Although formal training systems play a vital role in ensuring the skill needs of the labour market are met, many developing countries have very large numbers of people working in the informal economy, including many in rural communities, who have little or no contact with these systems. In many of these countries, the formal skills development systems have not been orientated towards the needs and circumstances of these people, despite general acceptance that skills and capacity building are of fundamental importance to the development process and to the fight against poverty. Their systems simply do not have the resources to address these needs, given the massive scale of the problem and the competing demands of the formal sector.<sup>29</sup>
82. In developing the vocational skills of this vulnerable group, the ILO faced the same challenges of scale and lack of resources. The Strategic Policy Framework and ACIs emphasized the importance of focusing effort on people in rural communities and in the informal sector (as well as on young people and people with disabilities, both of whom are well represented in these groups). The key policy documents reinforced this focus too. Importantly, they recognize the limitations of formal training systems – as C142 – *Human Resources Development Convention, 1975* puts it, members “shall establish and develop open, flexible and complementary systems of general, technical and vocational education... *whether these take place within the system of formal education or outside it.*” In practice, as will be shown below, the ILO worked both “within” and “outside” the training system with this group.
83. Working “within the system”, the ILO’s work generally took the form of improving pathways into the system for those who have been traditionally outside it. In **Bangladesh**, for example, where the ILO was very active supporting the development of the formal skills system, 89 per cent of the population are employed in the informal sector.<sup>30</sup> These people have generally had few or no opportunities to access the formal training system. The ILO’s efforts in Bangladesh to address this situation included building into the National Qualifications Framework two “**pre-vocational**” qualifications. These provide pathways for people whose educational disadvantages might otherwise prevent them from accessing the higher-level training available in the formal skills development system. The initiative is still in its infancy, but the vision is to make accredited pre-vocational training programmes available nationally at a minimal cost to participants. NGOs and other providers of non-formal skills training will be encouraged to use the new qualifications and learning materials to increase the employability of beneficiaries, thus allowing their entry into higher-level training aligned with the needs of the formal economy.
84. **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)** was also a focus area for the ILO in some countries in its efforts to improve access to the formal training system by people from these groups (and others, including migrant workers). RPL is a process of formally recognising competencies currently held, regardless of how, when or where the learning occurred, including through formal or informal

<sup>29</sup> See, for example, Paul Bennell, *Learning to change: Skills development among the economically vulnerable and socially excluded in developing countries*, ILO, Geneva 1999: “Of particular concern is that, while the number of people living in absolute poverty continues to grow, the capacity of the state to support appropriate training appears to be declining in many developing countries. More generally, given dwindling resources and other pressing demands for training services from other sectors, there is a sense of being overwhelmed by the enormity of the skills challenge in support of the poor.” p2.

<sup>30</sup> Asian Development Bank and Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, *The Informal Sector and Informal Employment in Bangladesh Country Report 2010*. Mandaluyong City, 2012.

training and education, work experience or general life experience.<sup>31</sup> In theory, RPL has much to offer people who have been denied the opportunities afforded by the formal education and training system, allowing their acquired competencies to be recognized on their merits. In practice, however, the process can be difficult to implement, even in relatively well-resourced developed countries.<sup>32</sup> RPL mechanisms are generally built into the ILO's activities supporting TVET sector reform. For this reason, the evaluation's analysis of DWCPs only showed 7 of the 47 countries with specific references to RPL. It is likely, however, that RPL technical support is being sought from the ILO far more often than this figure suggests (for example, the evaluation learned that the Southern African Development Community has been working closely with the ILO's Senior Skills Specialist in the region to improve the application of RPL among its 15 member states.)

85. Working “outside” the formal skills system (though sometimes linking with it), the ILO continued to use such methodologies as **TREE (Training for Rural Economic Empowerment)**, a well-established ILO “global product” designed to augment existing employment and training systems by providing new opportunities for people in rural communities. TREE starts by identifying economic development opportunities in rural communities and then supports participants to convert these into employment, income generation and viable small businesses. Importantly, it embeds vocational skills training in a broader package of capacity building including entrepreneurship training, business mentoring and value chain development. The ILO has introduced the TREE approach in many countries over the years and, in the period 2010–2015, a five-year project funded by the Danish Africa Commission introduced it to Benin, Burkina Faso and Zimbabwe training thousands of young people in the process. *Case Study 6* provides details of Zimbabwe's experience.
86. Recognising the need to address the skill needs of young people outside the formal training systems and the fact that many in developing countries acquire their skills informally on-the-job,<sup>33</sup> the ILO's skills work also included projects designed to enhance the quality of **informal apprenticeships**. Under these arrangements, “apprentices in micro- and small businesses learn technical skills from master craftspeople and practitioners at the workplace and are inducted into a business culture and a business network which makes it easier for them to find jobs or start businesses”.<sup>34</sup> The ILO's approach was to focus on improving the quality of training provided through informal apprenticeships, as well as the level of skills acquired by participants, the conditions under which they work, entrepreneurship skills, overall employability and access to non-traditional occupations for young women. Again, the ILO has been active in this field for many years and, in the period under evaluation, the project in Benin, Burkina Faso and Zimbabwe included activities of this type. A member of the evaluation team visited a project site in a former industrial area of Harare in Zimbabwe, where some 450 young people had been trained by master craftspeople in various furniture manufacturing skills, supplemented by external training courses. An on-site training and production facility had also been built, though this was not yet in operation. *Case Study 5* describes a project in Benin that included informal apprenticeships.
87. The problem with working “outside” the formal system is sustainability. Good practices to develop the skills of people in rural communities and the informal economy can be demonstrated through technical cooperation projects and these can raise their capacity to access decent work and incomes. However, sustaining these practices is challenging. The ILO's website highlights only Pakistan and

<sup>31</sup> Australia. New South Wales. Department of Education and Communities. *Skills Recognition: A Guide for Registered Training Organisations*, 2014, p.8.

<sup>32</sup> Aggarwal, Ashwani. *Recognition of prior learning: Key success factors and the building blocks of an effective system*, ILO, Pretoria, 2015.

<sup>33</sup> 90 per cent of the national skills provision in some. ILO: ILO Training Center: *Study on the reintegration of children formerly associated with armed forces and groups through informal apprenticeship*. (EMP/SKILLS and IPEC, Geneva, 2010).

<sup>34</sup> ILO. *Upgrading informal apprenticeship: a resource guide for Africa*; International Labour Office, Skills and Employability Department. Geneva: ILO, 2012. p. iii.

the Philippines as countries that have “mainstreamed” TREE into their policy and programme responses and it is unclear what enduring impact the ILO’s work in informal apprenticeships has had either in expanding the availability of training and employment available through this mode or in improving quality.

88. Another ILO model that came to the attention of the evaluation team, but which seems to sit outside the prevailing delivery paradigm, is **C-BED (Community-Based Economic Development)**. Although it sits in the Enterprise branch of the ILO, like TREE, it is best delivered as part of a package of supports, including vocational skills development. What sets it apart from other delivery models is the fact that it is based on structured **peer-to-peer learning**, facilitated through partner organizations (including government ministries, NGOs and educational institutions). As training does not require external experts, it is a very low-cost intervention – requiring as little as a tenth of the cost of conventional training responses. To illustrate the sustainability and scalability of the model, the Ministry of Agriculture in Indonesia is training more than 65,000 agricultural extension workers to facilitate C-BED training among more than 7,000,000 rural entrepreneurs and farmers. They have trained over 2,000 staff so far with only technical support – no financial support – from ILO. The impact of C-BED has been externally evaluated and the results are impressive. From a sample of the more than 16,000 participant entrepreneurs in the Philippines, 93 per cent had improvements in units sold, 92 per cent in revenue, 92 per cent in profit, 89 per cent in cost management, 90 per cent in output per hour and 94 per cent in product quality.

#### Case Study 5: Informal apprenticeships in Benin

“Informal apprenticeship systems are the most important training system in many informal economies. In Africa, but also in parts of Asia, informal apprenticeships have a long history and are deeply rooted in society. A master craftsman (MC) fulfils a social and economic function by passing on his/her skills to the next generation. The graduation of an apprentice in West and Central Africa is often a community affair, which underlines the social importance of apprenticeships.”<sup>35</sup>

(Land and Baier-D’Orazio, 2015: 6)

In Benin, ILO supported the strengthening of the “end of apprenticeship assessment” (French: EFAT) which involved community leaders, was grounded in local social practices and included recognition through the national certification system (CQM Certificat de Qualification au Métier – Occupational Skills Certificate). The CEJEDRAO project reported that 6,343 jobs had been created through the project and that 1,964 master craftspeople had been trained. Other notable achievements included:

- The establishment of a National Tripartite Steering Committee (CONAP);
- An effective partnership with all members of CONAP;
- The establishment of 25 Village Development Committees (VDCs);
- The introduction of the TREE methodology in Benin and its translation into national languages (Fon, Batonou and Lokpa) which served as an educational tool and allowed communication, training and extension of the TREE methodology to disadvantaged rural areas
- Youth have been trained and placed in the six sectors identified for economic empowerment of rural communities;
- The integration of green employment, gender and HIV-AIDS as cross-cutting themes in the project activities;
- Centres for training, production and marketing created and operational;
- Some 728 institutions benefited from capacity building;
- Partnerships between key actors National Confederation of Artisans Benin CNAB/Inter departmental Union of Chambers of Trade UCIMB/CEJEDRAO Direction of Apprenticeships and professional training DAfOP/Direction of Apprenticeships for professional training DAMA

Given the amount of TC funding involved in the CEJEDRAO project the sustainability of the project could have been stronger. It remains to be seen how ILO will capitalize on this project (now closed) and how the lessons and good practices from the project will be used to advocate the implementation and mainstreaming of the model by the Government of Benin.

<sup>35</sup> R. Lang and M. Baier-D’Orazio: *Assessing skills in the informal economy: A resource guide for small industry and community organizations* (Geneva, ILO, 2015).

### Case Study 6: TREE in Zimbabwe

Part of a five-year project funded in three African countries by the Danish Africa Commission, the Skills for *Youth Employment and Rural Development Programme* supported both the implementation of TREE and efforts designed to improve the quality and outcomes of informal apprenticeships in Zimbabwe. The TREE component in Zimbabwe came from strong demand from the Government of Zimbabwe for “action on the ground” to address youth unemployment in rural areas. The ILO sought to avoid past supply-driven training approaches that used the formal system to train people, but which resulted in too few finding productive work.

In line with the TREE approach, in Zimbabwe, the project identified community assets and opportunities with economic potential and combined skills training (developed and delivered in response to these opportunities) with other supports, including business mentoring, guidance in the use of production technologies, facilitating access to credit and value chain development. It involved local stakeholders in the identification, design and delivery of the programme. Business activities included aquaculture, poultry, piggery, dairy, horticulture, honeybees and, through a partnership with the Dutch development agency SNV, solar sales and maintenance.

The evaluation observed project activities in Mutoko, a town in the Mashonaland East province, where 211 local youth (aged 15 to 35) had been engaged in horticultural production of tomatoes, carrots, butternut, beans, squash and potatoes. An under-utilized, but irrigated area was identified as a community asset that could be used. A local training institution, the Tabudirira Centre for Business Development, provided the skills training component at the site of the production. The ILO's Decent Work Agenda was pursued wherever possible (for example, there was evidence that the project had addressed gender balance issues, Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) and environmental sustainability throughout the design and implementation of the project.)

A member of the evaluation team attended a meeting of local implementation partners where day-to-day challenges being faced by the participants were discussed – training needs, meeting the production demands, marketing, cooperative approaches, financing etc. The ILO Project Coordinator addressed all these issues, demonstrating the importance and breadth of the technical advice being supplied.

Stakeholders reported that TREE had led to “remarkable changes in the lives of the young people”. Some had progressed from dire poverty to being in a position to build new homes and buy cars. Value-added services (for example, packaging) had not been as successful so far, but they were optimistic of improvements.

In terms of sustainability, the government has earmarked in its budget US\$75000 for each province. The model is widely praised, but the primary challenge will be increasing its scale to make an impact on what is an immense problem – as one constituent said, ***“We are trying to move a mountain with a teaspoon”***.

A senior government official summarized the need ***“The conventional training system is not suited to this group at present. They need specific short-courses that are directly related to employment. We need mass skilling for employment creation, not for 5,000 people, but for four million plus.”***

### The ILO has engaged in activities designed to make skills development more inclusive of people with disabilities

89. People with disabilities often face multiple challenges to developing the skills they need to secure work. They face the same difficulties in escaping from poverty as others in developing countries, but often also have difficulties accessing basic education and essential services and overcoming low societal expectations, outdated and unhelpful labour regulations and the low self-esteem that can arise from their continuing marginalization. In terms of vocational training systems, they are often excluded altogether or directed instead to “special education” facilities that reinforce preconceived, outdated ideas about what jobs disabled people can or cannot do.
90. In the Strategic Policy Framework, Indicator 2.3 measured progress in making “relevant training more readily accessible to people with disabilities” and so was intended to be a major focus for the ILO's work in the period. Disability inclusiveness is an important value for the ILO and activities focused on broader skills development goals often have specific disability strategies and targets built in. However, an analysis of the technical cooperation projects in the period showed that 14 per cent of all projects that had the Skills Branch as the technical unit were clearly focused on the disability issue. **Table 7** provides details of these projects. **Case Study 7** provides a detailed example. (During the period, two disability specialists were part of the Branch, but their function has since been moved to a different part of the Office.)

Table 7: Examples of Skills Projects Related to People with Disabilities -2010–2015

Country	Type and description of activity	Budget (USD)
Azerbaijan	Promoting Rights and Opportunities for People with Disabilities – Equality through Legislation (PROPEL – Azerbaijan)	64,571
China	Promoting Rights and Equality for Persons with Disabilities	202,786
Costa Rica	National Plan for Labour Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Costa Rica	115,503
Ethiopia	Disability Ethiopia: Irish Aid-ILO Partnership Programme, Phase II, 2014–15	357,030
Global	People with disabilities in Fiji and Vanuatu have greater opportunity to secure decent wages and self-employment to achieve a livelihood	60,000
Global	Global Product Disability	496,157
Indonesia	Promoting Rights and Opportunities for People with Disabilities through Legislation	189,781
Indonesia	Promoting rights of people with disabilities in Indonesia -under UNPRPD	185,810
Mongolia	Promoting Livelihoods for Persons with Disabilities in Mongolia	209,854
Palestinian O.T.	Sheikha Fatima Vocational Rehabilitation Centre	507,305
Palestinian O.T.	UN Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD)	70,000
Serbia	Strengthening capacity for inclusive local development in Southern Serbia	958,448
Tunisia	Decent Work for Tunisians living with disability	58,625
Viet Nam	Promoting Rights and Opportunities for People with Disabilities: Equality Through Legislation	215,966
Viet Nam	Strengthening role of Disabled People's Organizations to advance disability rights	84,113
Viet Nam	Promoting Decent Work for People with Disabilities through a Disability Inclusion Service	1,960,834
Viet Nam	Promoting /Employment of People with Disabilities through effective Legislation	1,839,383
Zambia	Promoting Rights and Equality for People with Disabilities through Legislation	540,462

Source: Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS)

### Case Study 7: Inclusive Training for Young People with Disabilities in Zambia

Zambia has an extensive vocational training system with around 35,000 students enrolled in TVET courses in more than 300 institutions. People with disabilities, however, have traditionally been excluded from this mainstream training system and been placed instead in “special schools” which deliver training in a narrower range of occupations and at lower skills level. This acts as a barrier to fully realizing their employment potential.

From 2012, through a technical cooperation project funded by Irish Aid, “Promoting Rights and Opportunities for People with Disabilities in Employment through Legislation” (PROPEL), the ILO worked with Zambia's Technical Education Vocation and Entrepreneurship Training Authority (TEVETA) to improve the inclusiveness of the mainstream training system. The project selected a pilot group of five institutions to participate. Activities included the conduct of accessibility audits to identify and address barriers in the physical environment of the colleges; review of curricula to ensure their flexibility to meet the learning needs of disabled students; disability awareness/sensitization training for college managers, teachers and other staff; and a longer (5 weeks in total) in-service course for 20 teachers, delivered by a consultant from the UK.

Following this preparatory work, colleges initially complained that no students with disabilities were enrolling. The project investigated and discovered that the colleges had done virtually no promotion to the target group. In one case, the college was adjacent to a Catholic School that specialized in the general education of disabled children, but had not thought to engage with it to encourage students to enrol. A valuable lesson from the project was the need to reach out to disability networks to actively promote the fact that these institutions now welcome and make accommodations for people with disabilities.

A member of the evaluation team visited the Lusaka Business and Technical College, one of the pilot locations, and interviewed staff and disabled students. The college had little previous experience in accommodating the needs of disabled students, but now had 20 deaf and hea-

ring impaired students. They had started with one or two, but their inclusive approach soon became known in this community and enrolments soon multiplied. The male and female students interviewed were all very pleased to be learning in this mixed environment and their non-disabled classmates were happy as well – one had even taken the initiative to learn sign language and was supporting the teacher in class. ILO staff indicated that, although the project had made some real progress with only limited project funds, “ILO needs ten years to embed this type of cultural change in the system”. Momentum and good will have been created within TVETA and in other government agencies, but technical advice is still needed to build local capacity: “People want to move ahead, but without technical capacity they might move in the wrong direction.”

### The ILO delivered a number of “Global Products” and “Global Outputs” designed to support skills development among member States

91. A **“global product”**, according to the ILO’s Results-based Management Guidebook (2011:14), “consists of a series of specific outputs that, taken together, deliver a major ILO product or package of services. These are global in nature and are not directed to any specific country or series of countries. A global product is costed upfront and then delivered using all ILO means of action and the combined resources of headquarters and field units as well as those of global technical cooperation projects.” During the evaluation period, there were three global products delivered as part of the ILO’s skills development activities – TREE (Training for Rural Economic Empowerment), STED (Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification) and the Skills for Green Jobs Programme.
92. **TREE** – TREE is an alternative model for the delivery of vocational training and has been available since 2002 in its current form.<sup>36</sup> TREE promotes income generation and local economic development, emphasizing the role of skills and knowledge for creating new employment opportunities for the poor, the unemployed, informal economy workers and other disadvantaged people. By linking training directly to economic opportunities identified in the community, TREE ensures that skills developed are relevant. Activities in the period included:
  - Implementation of a five-year project funded by the Danish Government that established TREE in Burkina Faso, Benin and Zimbabwe (for the latter, see *Case Study 5*);
  - Introduction of TREE in Liberia and Mozambique;
  - Continuation of TREE (or elements of the approach) in Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Viet Nam, Cambodia, Kiribati, Nepal, Timor Leste, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Samoa and Vanuatu;
  - Conduct of a TREE Knowledge-Sharing Workshop in Addis Ababa in May 2013 to strengthen country-level activities by sharing knowledge across countries.
93. **STED** – STED is a methodology developed by the ILO that provides strategic guidance for the integration of skills development in sectoral policies. It is designed to support growth and decent employment creation in sectors that have the potential to increase exports and to contribute to economic diversification. Application of the approach in the period included:
  - Ukraine (Metal Industry and Tourism) in 2010;
  - The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (Tourism and Food) in 2011;
  - Kyrgyzstan (Garment Sector) in 2011–2012;
  - Jordan (Pharmaceuticals and Food) and Viet Nam (Tourism), as part of the “Implementing the G20 Strategy” project, funded by the Russian Federation in 2012–2015;
  - Malawi (Horticulture) in 2015.

<sup>36</sup> It built on an earlier model, established in the early 1990s, called “Community Based Training”.



94. **Skills for Green Jobs** – To support countries to transition to a greener economy and to generate more green jobs, the ILO promotes skills for green jobs through the publication of policy documents, development of tools and guides, research work, as well as capacity building activities. During the period, the ILO produced many publications and practical guides<sup>37</sup> in this relatively new field. The ILO also supported policy-makers, social partners and practitioners by conducting capacity building activities and regular training at the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC-ILO) in Turin as well as tailored courses on request. It has also made some course materials available online. Examples of training and capacity building included:
- ITC-ILO green jobs training course “Promoting green jobs policies: Employment potential and skill needs in a greener economy”;
  - A green economy module delivered as part of the Skills Development Academy (see below);
  - Through its engagement with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the PAGE (Partnership for Action on Green Economy) Academy, the ILO delivered an elective course in skills needs assessment and development;
  - An ITC-ILO e-learning course on green jobs (Skills component).
95. In addition to these global products, the P&Bs also describe some “**global outputs**” for programming purposes. In the period, these included:
- 2010–2011 – **Research on identification of skills and occupational needs for green jobs, as part of the ILO’s Green Jobs Initiative** – The report, *Skills for green jobs: A global view*, analysed changes in demand for skills and occupations in the transition to a green economy, and proposed policy recommendations for skills development based on 21 country studies.
  - 2011–2013 and 2015 – **ILO Skills Development Academy** aimed to assist government officials and social partners to build effective skills-development systems responsive to current labour market and economic challenges. It provided a platform for examining existing challenges and discussing effective and innovative approaches to improving skills-development systems and policies. Courses covered a wide range of topics related to skills development systems including anticipation of skills needs, skills for green jobs, enhancing the employability of disadvantaged groups, involving the social partners, workplace learning, and planning, monitoring and evaluation. Attendance figures were: 2011 – 66 participants from 25 countries; 2012 – 80 participants from 27 countries; 2013 – 101 participants from 32 countries; 2015 – 104 participants from 23 countries.
  - **The Inter-Agency Working Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)** (which includes the ILO, European Commission, European Training Foundation, OECD, UNESCO, World Bank and the regional development banks) identified areas for collaboration among agencies at headquarters level, in terms of research and coherent policy advice, and at country level, in terms of joint policy reviews and activities. This cooperation contributed to the development of the G20 Training Strategy and delivered a common report on indicators for assessing TVET. In addition, as a member of the Policy Board and Management Committee of the UN Partnership to Promote the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNPRPD), the ILO promoted a combined rights and livelihoods perspective in the activities to be supported by the UNPRPD at the global, regional and country level.
  - The creation of the **Skills for Employment Knowledge Sharing Platform (KSP)** – a Public-Private Partnership designed to share the approaches and experiences of international organizations, governments, employers and workers – see *Case Study 8*.

<sup>37</sup> Full list available upon request.

### Case Study 8: Skills for Employment – Global Public-Private Knowledge Sharing Platform

Following requests from ILO constituents at the 2010 International Labour Conference for the ILO to make its wealth of knowledge in skills development more readily accessible for member States, and building on the G20 Training Strategy's promotion of training system reform, the ILO initiated the development of a multilateral, inter-agency knowledge sharing platform, the Global Public-Private Knowledge Sharing Platform (Global KSP). Working with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the World Bank, the ILO led and administered this project, which pooled the relevant knowledge products on skills of each partner.

Information is categorized in a hierarchy that includes skills policy options, international standards and strategies, national policies and initiatives, advocacy and information materials, research papers and syntheses, evaluation reports, case studies and good practices, and statistics. It can be searched by keyword, issue, product type, country, source and language.

Since it became active in June 2013, there have been:

- 60,000 individual visits to the site;
- Around 1,800 skills related items (documents only) made available;
- 2,500 unique visitors per month;
- 5,230 downloads over the last year.

The development of the KSP in the period laid the foundations for future more interactive knowledge-sharing, such as the hosting of online virtual discussions that allow experts, practitioners and representatives from a range of institutions and enterprises from around the world to raise questions, share experiences and address challenges related to skills. (This e-discussion facility of the KSP is now operational.)

The evaluation's survey of staff and stakeholders showed that awareness and use of the Global KSP is not as widespread as it should be. Some 37 per cent of ILO staff overall indicated that they were unfamiliar with it. Some 64 per cent of non-ILO staff (including constituents, partners etc.) were unfamiliar. Of all respondents who indicated that they were familiar with the KSP, about one third had used it in the last six months.

### The ILO has produced and disseminated global knowledge products and publications relating to skills and has been a leader in facilitating knowledge sharing

96. Skills development is a diverse and complex policy area and, during the period of the evaluation, the ILO produced and shared a large number of publications and information resources and facilitated knowledge sharing in various ways. During the evaluation field visits, stakeholders indicated that they saw the ILO as a leader in this field and able to extend their understanding of the policy and programme options in the area of skills development.
97. Key activities included:
  - Some 156 publications – see *Table 8* for a breakdown by theme;<sup>38</sup>
  - The **Skills for Employment Knowledge Sharing Platform (KSP)** – see *Case Study 8* above;
  - Regional skills-related knowledge sharing initiatives such as the **Asia Pacific Skills and Employability Network**;
  - The **ILO Skills Development Academy** – see above under “global products”;
  - Various **other knowledge sharing and capacity building programmes** on skills-related subjects run in the **ITC** – including skills needs anticipation and matching (2012, 2014) and career guidance policies and practices (2013, 2014);
  - The evaluation's survey indicated that around half of respondents had participated in subregional, regional or global workshops or seminars that were related to exchange of good practices or knowledge sharing.

<sup>38</sup> Full list is available upon request.



- **CINTERFOR** (Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training) – a specialist centre of the ILO, established in 1963, that provides a knowledge management platform for 65 institutions from 27 countries in Latin America, the Caribbean, Spain and Africa. See *Case Study 9*.

Table 8. Publications by Theme

	2010–2011	2012–2013	2014–2015	TOTAL
Disability	17	10	15	42
Green Jobs	31	2	1	34
Skills Systems	6	5	21	32
Youth/Apprenticeships	8	7	16	31
Employment Policy/Services	2	11	3	16
Gender	1	1	2	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>156</b>

Source: [www.ilo.org](http://www.ilo.org) (Publications) supplemented by information provided by staff

### Case Study 9: Sharing Knowledge of Skills Development through CINTERFOR

CINTERFOR (Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training) was founded in 1963 in response to demand from Latin American countries as they developed national institutes of vocational training. Long before the idea of south-south cooperation had taken hold, CINTERFOR pioneered this type of relationship by networking among the different institutions of vocational training in the region. CINTERFOR provides technical advice, personnel and resources to the subregional and national offices in Latin America and the Caribbean. When programmes at the country or subregional level focus on training and skills development CINTERFOR contributes its expertise. It provides direct technical support in a number of specialist skills areas, including skills anticipation, for which it has developed a methodology, RPL, for which it has provided technical advice and implementation support, and occupational standards and competencies, for which it has developed an online database of best practice.

Specific activities included:

- Activities in various countries (for example, Chile and El Salvador) supporting the harmonization of employment, education and training policies, through the design and implementation of National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs);
- General technical support in training system development (for example, Brazil, Colombia and Uruguay);
- Support for regional skills recognition arrangements (for example, between Argentina and Chile);
- A technical cooperation project in Uruguay designing occupational standards in the building and paper industries;
- A technical cooperation project to develop competencies for Central American micro, small and medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the knowledge and information economy;
- A study of apprenticeship regulatory arrangements in Latin America and the Caribbean.

In recent years, CINTERFOR has begun to focus on innovation in the provision of skills training through Information and Communication Technology (ICT). CINTERFOR has also increased its own research efforts focusing on work and youth education dynamics in the 21st century in the region. Using such knowledge in the right way, and combining it with its comparative advantage regarding vocational training, CINTERFOR hopes to position itself as a leading player in this field in the region.

### New focus areas for skills work emerged in the period and these may grow in importance in the future – Skills Anticipation and Quality Apprenticeships

98. During the period, interest from constituents has grown in certain areas of skills development policy and practice. While one is by definition forward-looking – Skills Anticipation – another represents renewed global interest in a model that has existed for centuries – Apprenticeships.

99. **Skills Anticipation** – the ability of national skills development systems to better anticipate and match skills and jobs is of growing concern globally and was raised in every country visited in the evaluation. In their efforts to attract foreign investment and to ensure the continuing competitiveness of existing industries, governments are increasingly aware of the need to understand emerging skills needs and to ensure their skills policies and systems can plan for, and adapt to these needs. Changes brought about through globalization, new technology and demographics also demand a proactive response. The prevalence of current skills mismatches, where employers cannot find the skills they need despite unemployment levels being high, further drives governments to better match training supply with employer demand.
100. Skills Anticipation or forecasting broadly refers to “activities to assess future skills needs in the labour market in a strategic way, using consistent and systematic methods”.<sup>39</sup> It is an important part of the skills policy development process and this has been reinforced in key ILO recommendations and in the G20 Strategy. The global tool STED (described earlier) is an example of the ILO’s technical assistance in this area, but other projects and activities can also be linked to demand for this type of support – including, for example:
- the development and piloting of a skills anticipation tool as part of the “Implementing the G20 Strategy” project, funded by the Russian Federation;
  - the conduct of establishment skills surveys in some countries participating in the “Work4Youth” project overseen by the Youth Employment Branch;
  - the development of labour market information systems in some countries (for example, Armenia).
- In addition, the ILO has produced a range of publications<sup>40</sup> relating to skills anticipation and has provided direct technical assistance in response to constituent demand (for example, in Columbia and Azerbaijan). Also, interest from donors in skills anticipation was reported by Skills Branch staff as growing.
101. **Quality Apprenticeships** – in response to global concerns about escalating youth unemployment rates, ILO member States and social partners were reported to be increasingly asking for advice on the development and expansion of apprenticeship systems. Apprenticeships combine learning in the workplace with learning in a VET institution under an employment contract or indenture. There is an observable correlation between improved youth employment outcomes and the existence of strong formal apprenticeship systems in countries and this undoubtedly has rekindled interest in them as a skills policy option. Skills branch staff indicated that requests for technical assistance in this field have gone from “virtually zero” prior to 2013 to being so much in demand that the ILO is struggling to respond. The fact that these systems are generally based on tripartite mechanisms means that they harness a key organizational strength of the ILO.
102. Some of the activities in the period of the evaluation included:
- Influencing global policy on apprenticeships – for example, the ILO produced a paper on apprenticeship systems and issues in November 2012, which contributed to a G20 discussion on apprenticeships;
  - Organizing tripartite workshops to promote dialogue in quality apprenticeships – for example, in 2013, a subregional workshop on Apprenticeship Systems in Europe and a regional seminar in the Arab States region;

<sup>39</sup> ILO, Guidance Note: Anticipating and matching skills and jobs, International Labour Office, Skills and Employability Branch, Geneva ILO, 2015. p.3

<sup>40</sup> For example see ILO Publications: *Skills for trade and economic diversification: A practical guide* (2012); *Anticipating skill needs for green jobs: A practical guide* (2015); *Guide for anticipating and matching skills and jobs* (2015).

- Capacity building of constituents – for example, in 2015 a dedicated elective course on quality apprenticeships was run as part of the Skills Academy;
  - Research and involvement in academic conferences – for example, a comparative analysis of apprenticeship systems conducted in partnership with the World Bank and attendance at various conferences as keynote speakers;
  - Projects – including projects supported by the European Commission in Portugal, Latvia and Spain, the introduction of new apprenticeships in the sugar and tourism sectors in Mexico, and a project funded by Norway for apprenticeships in the hotel industry in Tanzania.
103. Both Skills Anticipation and Quality Apprenticeships are clearly of growing importance to the ILO's skills work and future planning and resourcing need to take this into account (see **Recommendation 2**).

## EVALUATION CRITERIA – FINDINGS

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### RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE

**There is a lack of clarity about what the definition and composition of the ILO's skills strategy.**

104. As the evaluation was intended “to provide insight into... the ILO’s strategy, programme approach and interventions to promote skills development”, the evaluation team was surprised to find that there was little agreement on what the ILO’s skills strategy actually was. In the usual understanding of the word, an organizational strategy is something that sets priorities, focuses energy and resources, ensures a shared understanding of goals and intended results, and adjusts the direction in response to change. In short, a strategy shapes and guides the Office’s actions.
105. In this sense, some management and staff pointed to various key documents that they saw as shaping and guiding action. These included “*R195 – Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004*” which was described by members of SKILLS as “our bible”. R195 describes a wide field of endeavour including pre-employment training, development of competencies, inclusive training, recognition and certification frameworks, career guidance, lifelong learning and other activities. Other “shaping and guiding” documents included the conclusions adopted by the 2008 International Labour Conference concerning skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development, and the G20 Training Strategy, developed by the ILO at the request of G20 leaders, which sets out a number of what it calls “building blocks” for training and skills development. The key elements of these documents are summarised in *Annex C*.
106. While these documents are helpful, they cannot be considered to be the ILO’s strategy as such – at least, they have not been officially adopted nor have any formal place in the ILO’s planning and management processes. Rather, they seem to be used to populate a menu of interventions that are applied in different circumstances as required.
107. The evaluation’s survey of staff and stakeholders confirmed the lack of clarity about the ILO’s skills strategy. Only 54 per cent of ILO staff respondents (96.43 per cent of these respondents who answered in the survey that skills is an “important” or “very important” part of their work) claimed familiarity with “the strategy”, but these people had different views on what this strategy was. Asked to name it, 25 respondents provided responses:
  - Ten named the G20 Strategy;
  - Four named the P&B;
  - Two named Report V of the 2008 ILC;

- Four indicated that there were a number of documents that somehow collectively comprised a “strategy”;
- Five named various other documents, including local (DWCP) and regional plans.

108. It should be noted that previous high-level evaluations have had similar difficulties identifying the organizational strategies that related to their own areas of focus. For example, the high-level evaluation of the ILO's work in labour inspection that was conducted in 2015 spoke only of an “implicit strategy” that was inferred from a discussion of outcomes in the P&B.<sup>41</sup> However, given the complexity and diversity of the ILO's skills work, “reverse engineering” a skills strategy in this way from the P&B is not so straightforward and, in any case, risks basing strategy on action rather than basing action on strategy.

### **The skills “strategies” set out in each biennium's P&B described some elements of the ILO's skills work but the strategic intent of this work was not always made clear**

109. Despite the lack of clarity about what, in practice, the ILO's skills development strategy may have been, all high-level evaluations are required to assess strategies as described in P&B.<sup>42</sup> The biennial P&Bs approved by the Governing Body or International Labour Conference for each of the three biennia under review were based on the Strategic Policy Framework. The P&Bs are supposed to define strategic objectives and intended outcomes, indicate how results will be measured, and present an estimated budget, including the regular budget (RB), regular budget supplementary account (RBSA), and extra-budgetary resources for technical cooperation (XBTC). Importantly, they are meant also to *describe the activities that will be undertaken to achieve results*. Outcome 2 covered the ILO's core work in skills, but as described earlier, other outcomes included important skills development elements.
110. In each P&B, a “strategy” of sorts was described for outcome 2 but in different ways and in different formats. They mainly comprised an outline of key issues faced by the organization in the skills area and broad descriptions of the approach to be taken. In 2010–2011 and 2014–2015, reference was made to the key policy documents mentioned above,<sup>43</sup> but not in 2012–2013.<sup>44</sup> There was little if any coherence between what was described and the performance measures (see below).
111. The third P&B (2014–2015) used a simpler format and included, for the first time, a reference to the strategic intent of skills work under the heading of “Strategy goal and focus” – this was to “improve the efficiency and impact of skills systems” and to “ease transitions to decent work for young people by improving training, skills utilization and work conditions in occupations and small businesses entered following vocational training.”

<sup>41</sup> ILO: *Independent evaluation of the ILO's strategy and actions for strengthening labour inspection systems (2010–15): a summative and formative evaluation to inform ILO's future strategy on workplace compliance*. (Geneva, 2015). P.7.

<sup>42</sup> ILO: *Results based strategies 2011–15: Evaluation strategy – Strengthening the use of evaluations*. Governing Body, 310th Session, Geneva, Mar. 2011, GB.310/PFA/4/1. p.5.

<sup>43</sup> In 2010–2011, the approach was described as “making policy advice and tools available to constituents so that they can better apply, taking into account their own circumstances, the policy guidance in Human Resource Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), and the International Labour Conference resolutions concerning skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development (2008), and youth employment (2005).

<sup>44</sup> In 2012–2013, “The Office will continue to pursue an approach that combines skills development, work experience, employment services and entrepreneurship awareness and training”.

**A “skills agenda” set out in key ILO Conventions and Recommendations seems to have driven much of the ILO’s work in practice, but this agenda was not adequately reflected in the P&B’s performance indicators. This incoherence may have led to inconsistencies and errors in reporting.**

112. In practice, the ILO’s work in skills in the period was broader in scope and more complex in nature than the Strategic Policy Framework and its performance indicators would suggest. Outcome 2 in the Strategic Policy Framework explicitly supported only two types of skills-related activity: *high-level policy* activities that integrate skills into national development plans; and activities that improve the access to training of youth, people with disabilities and in rural communities.<sup>45</sup>
113. A literal adherence to the wording of the Strategic Policy Framework might have changed the nature of the ILO’s work in (perhaps) unanticipated ways. Some of the basic tenets of the ILO’s skills work – as set out in the key policy documents mentioned earlier – found no natural home in the outcome 2 indicators and could have been downplayed or even jettisoned altogether.<sup>46</sup> Organizational performance against these indicators will be assessed later (see *Effectiveness* below), but the point to be made here is that the coherence between these indicators and the strategies and means of action described in the P&Bs (including the extensive scope of work referenced in R195, the 2008 ILC resolutions etc.) was poor or, at least, ambiguous.<sup>47</sup>
114. For example, it is not immediately clear where such focus areas of R195 as the promotion of life-long learning, the recognition of prior learning, developing qualification frameworks, or developing career guidance and training support services might be counted under the indicators. Arguments can be made, of course, about where these *might* fit, but, as the evaluation’s analysis of performance in the next section shows, such arguments were sometimes questionable and have resulted in some square pegs being forced into round holes.
115. Speaking with the staff in the field responsible for mapping CPOs and projects to the Strategic Policy Framework indicators, the evaluation found that, while this was sometimes problematic, in practice, the Office (or individuals) found ways to re-present or re-engineer these activities so that they somehow fitted (or seemed to fit) the criteria and could be included in the P&B. Sometimes this fit was poor.
116. The evaluation noted a lack of coherence between the Strategic Policy Framework outcomes and the skills agenda set out in the key policy documents flowed through to the programming of work at a country level through their Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs). DWCPs include outcomes which are used to align country activities with the outcomes defined in the P&B. While the biennial P&B Implementation Reports are meant to display the key results achieved, many significant activities and achievements were not reported. This appears to be particularly the case with activities linked to ILO’s large number of skills-related technical cooperation projects.<sup>48</sup> Examination of some of the results reported and counted in the P&B Implementation Reports technically should not have been included as they failed to meet the specified criteria.

<sup>45</sup> Other activities covered by outcome 2 related to employment services and youth policy and programmes. While these, of course, might conceivably include skills-related elements (for example, short-term training courses organised through public employment services; and youth-focused skills training or school-to-work transition initiatives), none of the indicators listed for these sub-outcomes mentioned anything about such activities or indeed skills at all. Expressed in the way they were, they had no logical connection with the outcome’s goal (“Skills development increases the employability of workers, the competitiveness of enterprises and the inclusiveness of growth”).

<sup>46</sup> A full list of the indicators and measurement criteria are available upon request.

<sup>47</sup> The Terms of Reference for the evaluation recognised this issue. Footnote 15 points out that “there are some gaps and no clear linkage found between the outcomes of the Strategy 2010–15 and the relevant goals and actions to be taken set out in the 2008 Declaration and the Follow-up to the Declaration” and indicates that the evaluation should “make necessary suggestions for the new Strategy”.

<sup>48</sup> Full list available upon request.

### From the Interviews

*"We have to be directed by the P&B – when the office is assessed at a global level, these indicators are what we are judged on. They can be a challenge, **but the money is in the indicators** – budgets follow these results." (Country Office)*

*"There are **two realities** – what you're trying to do and what the P&B says you're trying to do." (Country Office)*

*"The P&B did not provide a coherent picture of the skills agenda. It does not seem to have been written by someone who understood the nuances. It **provided no framework for ILO action** and made it hard to report what the ILO was actually doing in skills." (Headquarters)*

*"The Strategic Policy Framework and its measurement criteria **did not allow us to report** on some very important skills activities. Outcome 2 was especially difficult. It talked about policy and some target groups, but it was not balanced and had both gaps and overlaps." (Regional Office)*

*"We 'retrofit' what the constituents want us to do into the P&B – **we write a storyline that fits**." (Country Office)*

*"Skills development must be one of the core priorities of the Employment Department. It is expected of us, even if it is imperfectly reflected in the Strategic Policy Framework." (Country Office)*

### Despite the deficiencies of the ILO's skills strategy (as expressed in the P&B) as a means of guiding work in this area, the ILO's approach proved in practice to be adaptable and responsive to the differing needs of constituents

117. The evaluation field visits showed that the focus of the ILO's work varied significantly based on country needs. **Zimbabwe** did little or no work on enhancing formal training systems, focusing instead on supporting rural economic development through TREE and informal apprenticeships in urban areas. **Bangladesh** included such activities, but in the context of a comprehensive redevelopment of the policy, program and delivery arrangements of the formal system. **Zambia** focused on disability inclusion, the **Russian Federation** on modernizing its occupational standards and competencies, Armenia on strengthening institutions, and **Viet Nam**'s broad approach included quite intensive support reviewing TVET legislation.
118. Given this diversity of needs and approaches, it could be argued that the ILO worked well *without* a highly prescriptive operational strategy for skills. The circumstances of the countries where it works are so diverse as to make the advocacy of a consistent global approach undesirable. This is acknowledged in some of the key policy documents,<sup>49</sup> but contrasts starkly with some other types of ILO work, which are highly normative in approach and which are defined in terms of the attainment of global standards. Importantly, compared with skills, organizational performance in such work areas perhaps can be more readily measured with the type of simple counts that underpin its RBM system – for example, how many extra countries ratified a convention.
119. One country director interviewed for the evaluation pointed out that, by having a separate skills strategy (or, for that matter, a separate strategy for any of the ILO's main areas of work such as employment, social protection, labour standards or social dialogue), the Office might end up approaching issues from the wrong angle or by asking the wrong questions. The first question should always be "where are the opportunities or entry points for the ILO to help the country advance?" Activities or projects designed to harness these opportunities can then consider if and how there is a place for skills development, enterprise support, or any other technical support. At the same time, the ILO can advance its other agenda and values as part of this (for example, disability inclusion, improving Occupational Health and Safety, gender, HIV etc.) There is evidence that this opportunity-based ap-

<sup>49</sup> See for example the section entitled "Diverse realities, common and different challenges" in ILO: *Skilled Workforce for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth: A G20 Training Strategy* (Geneva, 2010) p.15.



proach works – embedding skills into projects in this way has been shown to get better results than running projects based on a “stand alone strategy”.<sup>50</sup>

120. Although this opportunistic approach to skills work – with ILO “doing what it can, when and where it can” – does not involve the step-by-step implementation of a standard, one-size-fits-all *strategy*, it can be *strategic* nevertheless. Reflecting current practice, ILO skills work involves helping constituents to select, adapt and apply models and approaches, tested in the field in various circumstances, and based on agreed Conventions and Recommendations. The use of these “building blocks” – the term used in the G20 Strategy – is probably the most apt description. They can be used in different circumstances to build capacity – sometimes to construct the whole “edifice”, as in Bangladesh.
121. The catch, however, is that it becomes very difficult for the ILO to monitor performance and to equitably allocate resources to areas like skills that have such a “moveable feast” of approaches and activities. Skills might not be something that can be “rolled out” as a standardized service model in every country – each focusing on much the same thing – but there needs to be more clarity about global priorities to better determine what resources are needed. It would at least be an improvement if a future STRATEGIC POLICY FRAMEWORK broadly reflected the priority areas of skills work, including in policy support, system and institutional development and access.
122. None of the above should be read as implying that the ILO should restrict itself to a fixed and unchanging repertoire of interventions. Innovations in delivery need to be encouraged and tested and there may be new “building blocks” that are needed (see *Efficiency* and **Recommendation 4**).
123. Diagnostic tools to support the incorporation of skills “building blocks” into country activities and interventions would also be helpful. Skills is seen as being technically complex and some countries may need such support to better understand the skills response options and where they might best fit in what they are trying to achieve. These tools need to be as practical as possible and show how specific skills elements can be incorporated into different types of projects – not complex plans to transform whole systems. Efforts to ensure that regional skills specialists are not marginalized in this process and can contribute their expertise would also support this (see **Recommendation 3**).

#### From the Interviews

*“Because of countries’ different development levels and available resources, we need the strategy to be **adaptive**.” (ILO Headquarters)*

*“We don’t need a skills strategy at all – we need **an organizational strategy that includes skills**.” (Country Office)*

*“In the field, you can’t afford the luxury of focusing on one thematic area. **An approach is needed that weaves ILO work together** (for example, RPL for migrants requires training system reform). The issues are inter-related and technical assistance needs to be too – addressing multifaceted nature of the problems.” (ILO Headquarters)*

*“The skills needed at the **community level is the important thing**. There’s a place for policy level work, but it needs to link to action. Sometimes it is successful action that leads to better policy – not the other way around.” (Country Office)*

*“The **ILO needs to be a step ahead** when it comes to skills, but the last real discussion was the 2008 ILC. So much has changed since the financial crisis, but only the G20 Strategy has been produced in response.” (ILO Headquarters)*

*“**Are we stuck to old fashioned, circular activities?** Can we be more innovative, particularly in crisis countries? We tend to offer packages and have limitations in evaluating needs and what really fits.” (ILO Headquarters) From the Interviews*

<sup>50</sup> ILO. Decent work results of ILO employment promotion interventions: Lessons learned from evaluations, 2003–2013; International Labour Office, Evaluation Office, Geneva: ILO, 2014, p.11.

## As described in outcome 2, the strategies and performance indicators associated with Employment Services had no apparent link with skills development

124. The inclusion of Indicator 2.4 under outcome 2 represented a poor fit in terms of programme logic. It related to the strengthening of employment services to deliver on employment policy and included such measures as Public Employment Service revitalization, job matching services, plans to promote employment of disadvantaged groups, and national legislation regulating private employment agencies. None of these issues directly relates to skills development. The indicator appears to have been “tacked on” to the outcome for reasons related to organizational structure – at the time, Employment Services were part of this department in Geneva (although a subsequent restructure saw them attached to another branch for the 2014–2015 biennium).
125. This is not to say that Public Employment Services cannot play an important role in skills development. They can and do through, for example, their implementation of Active Labour Market Programmes (ALMPs) that address skills needs or through their role in identifying and responding to current skills in demand from employers. Activities described in Armenia provide an example of this (see *Case Study 4*).

### From the Interviews

*“Sitting in Skills narrowed the role of Public Employment Services as labour market institutions. There is now [after restructure] a better alignment between employment policy development and core functions of PES and active labour market programmes. But Employment Services do play a role in skills – especially in response to economic crises” (ILO Headquarters)*

## The indicators used to measure performance under outcome 2 did not reflect the relative “degree of difficulty” of different interventions and might have discouraged more ambitious reform efforts

126. The indicators also failed to adequately reflect the relative effort required to achieve different types of results. For example, based on a simple “count”, the development from scratch of an entirely new national training system – countable (some might say only arguably so) under 2.1 – would have as much weight as, say, establishing a small scale pilot training program in a single rural location – countable under 2.2.
127. The same can be said for some individual measures. For example, under indicator 2.2 would placing five people “in wage or self-employment on completion of skills training” count the same as placing 5,000? It may be that the Office’s planning processes in practice address the potential for such distortions, but care is needed to ensure that performance indicators do not unintentionally create incentives to “think small” and to avoid more ambitious reforms.

## Although skills development work has clear synergies with other work of the ILO, the P&B processes in place at the time may have unintentionally created a disincentive for collaboration– though less so in the field.

128. While the primary objective of outcome 2 in the 2010–2015 Strategic Policy Framework, to increase “the employability of workers, the competitiveness of enterprises, and the inclusiveness of growth”, is an important focus for the ILO’s skills work and for its specialist staff, the evaluation found that skills development has made – or has the potential to make – vital contributions to the achievement of other organizational objectives. For example, through the field visits, the evaluation team saw:
- Skills development facilitating the transition from informal to formal employment (outcome 1) – for example, in Bangladesh, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe;

- Skills development leading to employment and self-employment in the green economy, a component of the ILO's work in promoting sustainable enterprises (outcome 3) – for example, Zimbabwe;
  - Support for the development of skills recognition programmes that can assist migrant workers to access productive and decent work (outcome 7) – for example, the Russian Federation (in-bound migrants) and Bangladesh (in-bound and out-bound migrants);
  - The *strengthening of tripartite constituents'* capacity to contribute to national skills development policy and systems is an integral part of the ILO's skills work (outcomes 9, 10 and 12) – all countries visited;
  - The development of sector-specific training strategies, including the development of industry skills councils, can support the ILO's work in promoting decent work at a *sectoral level* (outcome 13) – for example, Bangladesh, the Russian Federation, Viet Nam;
  - Informal apprenticeship arrangements can be used to combat child labour and to bridge *the gap between basic education and productive employment* (outcome 16) – for example, Bangladesh, Zimbabwe, and Zambia;
  - Promoting the inclusion in skills development of persons with disabilities, women, indigenous people and other vulnerable groups helps in the *elimination of discrimination* (outcome 17) – for example, Zambia.
129. In recognition of these synergies and as a means of both focusing organizational effort and of encouraging a more collaborative approach, the 2014–2015 P&B introduced eight “Areas of Critical Importance” (ACIs),<sup>51</sup> many of which identified skills as a “principal outcome” or included it as part of their description. While the intent of this was good, other organizational processes operating at the time may have limited its impact. For example, during the period of the 2010–2015 Strategic Policy Framework, as CPOs could only be “attached” to one outcome, a CPO might be recognized as either a skills activity or an enterprise activity, but not both. By not adequately reflecting the interrelated and mutually supportive nature of much of the ILO's work, this may have discouraged internal collaboration at some levels because of associated resource allocation implications. In terms of the P&B Implementation Reports, it may also have resulted in skills work being less apparent in other outcome areas – and vice versa.
130. There were different perspectives between Headquarters and the field when it came to issues of operational synergy across different outcome areas and of collaboration between different departments. Headquarters staff expressed some concerns relating to the allocation of projects to different outcomes (during the period of the evaluation only one could be chosen) and backstopping units (i.e. who took responsibility for quality, conduct of missions, negotiations with regional offices on costs to cover their support etc.) Some concerns were also expressed about sending mixed messages about skills policy when skills experts were not consulted in the development of new products (for example, guides which have sections on skills). For Regional and Country Offices, such issues were generally not raised. In the field, issues seemed to converge at the implementation stage.
131. Some of the weaknesses described above have been already recognised by previous strategy evaluations (although on a different outcome) and have led to changes in the Transitional Strategic Plan and current P&B processes. There are, however, also some continuing weaknesses and irregularities

<sup>51</sup> As the 2014–2015 P&B introduced the ACIs: “A limited number of areas of critical importance detailed below are defined for priority action in 2014–2015. Each of these areas combines work from across several of the 19 outcomes of the ILO strategic framework, and is linked to these outcomes through their indicators, by which results will be measured.” The ACIs were: Promoting more and better jobs for inclusive growth; jobs and skills for youth; creating and extending social protection floors; productivity and working conditions of SMEs; decent work in the rural economy; formalization of the informal economy; strengthening workplace compliance through labour inspection; and protection of workers from unacceptable forms of work.

which may need to be addressed in preparing the next Strategic Policy Framework. Of central importance is the need to ensure that the ILO's unique capabilities and expertise in skills development are harnessed by the organization as a whole to achieve both its own objectives and the SDGs. This is discussed later in the final section of the evaluation.

#### From the Interviews

*"While there are processes for project documents to go through the Skills Branch for vetting, other documents (for example, guides with sections on skills) often don't. This can send mixed messages regarding skills. We need to make the most of the organization's expertise and ensure the links are there. Employment Services needs skills input, but it is in a different area." (ILO Headquarters)*

**Externally, the ILO's work in skills is recognized as having a unique value and being complementary to the skills activities of its partners and constituents.**

**In some cases, however, the different priorities of partners may conflict with the ILO's.**

132. To some extent, skills development work can be described as a "crowded field". Many development partners, NGOs and other United Nations agencies are very active in skills. Unlike some other focus areas of ILO work, such as those associated with fundamental principles and rights at work; the ILO is not always in the position to be the main driver of change or improvements in the area of skills. Many factors influence how, where and when the ILO can add value. This may involve the institutional relationships in a particular country, the nature of past projects and the momentum they have created, the availability of funding from different sources; and even the expertise, interests and contacts of individual staff.
133. Despite this crowded field, the ILO has a unique comparative advantage that is recognized by stakeholders and which distinguishes ILO from other agencies. Expertise in and knowledge of skills systems and approaches used in different parts of the world, strong relationships with the social partners, and the capacity to develop, adapt and apply effective tools and models all combine to give the ILO a special place in discussions and negotiations.
134. Nevertheless, the ILO also has limitations. For example, the ILO's is not in the position to resource the large-scale implementation of the skills development models and systems that it develops. There are good examples of countries expanding and sustaining these models and systems with their own resources or in close cooperation with donors or other development agencies. In many situations where the ILO is, at best, a "supporting player", adding value where it can, while the greater share of skills development activity is carried out by others.
135. This can lead to situations where the ILO's own skills development objectives are frustrated. For example, in Bangladesh, the example was given of some development partners that were pushing for unaccredited short courses to be used in a major project rather than a program aligned with the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). In this case, the problem was ultimately resolved (in favour of the NQF model) but such outcomes are not guaranteed. The imperative of some partners to spend their project budgets sometimes conflict with quality training outcomes.
136. As its knowledge and expertise in skills is an important organizational asset, ILO knowledge sharing activities need to be given a higher priority in strategic and operational planning. Initiatives like the Global Knowledge Sharing Platform can support the ILO and member States to identify skills development solutions. It should be noted that the staff and stakeholder survey suggested that awareness and access levels were low (64 per cent of those outside the ILO were unfamiliar with it). The role of CINTERFOR in supporting knowledge sharing (and other strategic objectives) needs to be articulated more clearly.

### From the Interviews

*“The ILO can show us what’s worked elsewhere, why it worked, and how we might make it work here.” (Government Representative)*

*“In Armenia, it was ETF that was the godfather of training system reforms.” (Government Representative)*

*“We are currently in discussions with the ILO about seeking a co-funding arrangement with the EU. We already work closely together, often use the same experts. It would be much easier and would help coordination.” (Development Agency)*

### The ILO’s tripartite approach is seen as being relevant and appropriate to skills work, but there may be a need to strengthen links with other Ministries

137. The ILO’s relationship with its constituents also distinguishes it from other actors in the skills field. These relationships enable constructive social dialogue that can identify needs and influence the development of countries’ skills systems that meet the needs of employers and workers. This tripartite approach is also reflected at a sectoral level through Industry Skills Councils, which play a key role in defining occupational standards and competencies.
138. In the area of skills policy and programs, the Machinery of Government arrangements in many countries need special consideration within this tripartite approach. The ILO’s counterpart institution in government is usually the Ministry of Labour, but in many countries it is the Ministry of Education that has responsibility for TVET. While it is the responsibility of the Ministries of Labour to liaise with other Ministries, direct input from Ministries of Education may help clarify or elevate national skills development priorities. In Armenia, for example, there is a DWCP working group that meets to determine such priorities, but it does not include the Ministry of Education. In some places, there can be a lack of communication between the Ministries or unresolved demarcations (see **Case Study 2**, for example). The ILO needs to ensure that its country-level analysis and planning processes effectively engage with the Ministry of Education and, indeed, other Ministries that may have an important role in shaping skills policies and programmes, including Economic Development, Trade and sectoral Ministries (see **Recommendation 5**).

### From the Interviews

*“The ILO’s links to employers and unions are a strength. We are the only ones with these links.” (ILO Headquarters)*

*“The Ministry of Labour would generally expect to get more out of the DWCP than other Ministries.” (Country Office)*

*“Our connections with the ILO have been weak in skills – but they can play a role helping us to build a bridge between education and the labour market.” (Ministry of Education Representative)*

### The ILO’s work in skills (if not its “strategy”) aligns well with global strategies and, moving forward, can make important contributions to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

139. Probably the closest thing there is to a “global strategy” for skills – the **G20 Strategy** – was itself developed by the ILO. It seems odd then to report that the ILO’s own strategy, as expressed in the P&B, does not align with it in a clear way. However, as has been explained, its actions do and the G20 “building blocks” have been used in many countries.
140. The **OECD** published in 2012 *Better Skills, Better Jobs, Better Lives: A Strategic Approach to Skills Policies*. Designed “to provide a basis on which governments can begin converting ‘better



skills policies' into jobs, growth and 'better lives'", the strategy shares with the ILO a common focus on anticipating skill needs and overcoming skill mismatches (pp.17–62), on the need include people with disabilities, women and the disadvantaged (pp.63–78 – though framed less in terms of equity and more from the perspective of "human resource utilization" and "labour market activation"), on youth (pp.85–8), on skills for economic diversification and improved competitiveness, and on the need for improved policy integration (p.95).

141. The **World Bank's** 2010 framework, *Stepping Up Skills for more jobs and higher productivity*, is structured around different life stages – from preschool stage (to establish the foundations for learning and socialization), through the school age and youth stages and onto working age. It maps different skill development interventions to these stages, includes some issues that are outside the ILO's normal role (for example, early childhood nutrition and remedial education in schools), but otherwise includes skills development activities that are compatible with the ILO's approach (for example, apprenticeships, skills certification systems, entrepreneurship training, et al.) It is not so much a strategy as a "framework that can help countries understand the challenges they face" and "a call for a comprehensive approach that resists the temptation of seeking single minded solutions" (p.2).
142. **UNESCO's** 2012 publication, *Youth and skills: Putting education to work*, is not a strategy either, but a "global monitoring report". It does, however, have a substantial section on youth transition to work and a number of the issues it highlights are part of the ILO's activities on the ground, including formal apprenticeships (p.243), alternative vocational training pathways (p.250), recognition of prior learning (p.252), education to enhance earnings in the informal sector (p.260) including in informal apprenticeships (p.271), prioritizing skills for rural youth (p.283) and training in green skills (p.294). One area that it does cover and which is not currently a focus of the ILO, is diversification of the school curriculum to include some TVET content. This issue was raised in some of the field visits and, although there are some practical constraints, might warrant consideration by the ILO in the future.
143. Looking to the future and the next Strategic Policy Framework, the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* includes goals towards which the ILO will be expected to make important contributions. Its work in skills policy, systems, institutional capacity and inclusiveness will provide a sound base for future alignment. Because of its mandate and its tripartite governance structure, the ILO's priorities and approach are determined in a somewhat different way to other United Nations agencies, but in the case of skills, the linkages between the SDGs and the ILO's own goals are very clear. (see **Recommendation 1**)
144. **Sustainable Development Goal 4**, which relates to education, includes four targets that specifically mention vocational skills and training. **Goal 8**, which relates to economic growth and employment, includes another seven targets which will require some form of skills development response:  
  
Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning. Relevant targets:
  - a. By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and *quality technical, vocational and tertiary education*, including university
  - b. By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant **skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship**
  - c. By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure *equal access to all levels of education and vocational training* for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations
  - d. By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, Small Island Developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, *including vocational training*.

Goal 8: promote inclusive and sustainable growth, employment and decent work for all. Relevant targets:

- e. Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through *diversification, technological upgrading and innovation*, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors
- f. Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, *decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises*, including through access to financial services
- g. By 2030, achieve *full and productive employment and decent work for all* women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value
- h. By 2020, substantially *reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training*
- i. Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including *migrant workers, in particular women migrants*, and those in precarious employment
- j. By 2030, devise and implement *policies to promote sustainable tourism* that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products
- k. By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization

## EFFECTIVENESS

**Results were reported against P&B indicators in programme Implementation Reports, though the evaluation team had concerns about the accuracy and validity of some results.**

145. Table 10 summarizes the results reported for the period against the outcome 2 performance indicators.

Table 10. Reported Results – outcome 2 (Total)<sup>52</sup>

	2010–11	2012–13	2014–15	TOTAL	TARGET	Target v Performance	
						Difference	%
2.1	7	12	17	36	39	–3	92
2.2	5	7	8	20	21	–1	95
2.3	2	3	5	10	20	–10	50
2.4	7	8	11	26	18	+8	144
2.5	14	14	23	51	43	+8	119

Source: P&B Implementation Reports (detailed versions with commentaries)

146. There were five indicators for outcome 2, four of them related directly to skills work in an explicit way. The evaluation team understands the link between indicator 2.4 on employment services and skills development but the actual indicator and measurement criteria did not make the theory of change explicit. Against three of the four skills-related indicators, reported results were below target, significantly so in the case of Indicator 2.3 (relating to training being more accessible for people with disabilities). Against the fourth (2.5), which related to youth, targets were exceeded. Against

<sup>52</sup> The targets in this table are the adjusted targets (not the original targets set out in the Strategic Policy Framework). The original targets were: 2.1 (22); 2.1 (28); 2.3 (17); 2.4 (15); 2.5 (35).



indicator 2.4, which related to employment services (but for which no explicit skills-related measures were established) the target was significantly exceeded.

147. The evaluation team had concerns about the accuracy and validity of some of the reported results. ILO staff recognized the limits of the current system with one describing it as “more art than science”. In some cases, results described actions that seemed quite removed from the apparent intent of the indicator – i.e. results were allocated to indicators that did not match their description. Some results were counted without having met the required measurement criteria. In other cases, the ILO contribution to the result was relatively minor (for example, in one case, a two-day workshop was all that was done).
148. The rules governing the reporting of results were sometimes perplexing. For example, while the wording of the indicators in the Strategic Policy Framework suggested that reports reflected “*the number of member states*” to have achieved results under each indicator over the period of the Strategic Policy Framework, in practice, this was not the case. According to a guidance note provided to regions by PROGRAM, individual CPOs linked to indicators could be counted multiple times, provided certain criteria were met.<sup>53</sup> This meant that in some Strategic Policy Framework outcomes, the final count of “number of member States” to achieve a result was in fact far higher than the total number of ILO member States (for example, outcome 18, Indicator 18.1 counted 228 “member states” achieving the result – 41 more than the total number).
149. The evaluation attempted a comprehensive analysis of the results reported in the Programme Implementation Reports to derive a more accurate picture of effectiveness. However, it soon became clear that there was so much room for subjective judgement in the interpretation of the reports that an analysis would itself be of questionable accuracy. A number of errors were identified, however, and so the reported results can be said to be overstated. (Given the issues described above, it may not be restricted to outcome 2.)
150. The indicators and criteria strictly limited what countries could report and this meant that the ILO reported just a small amount of the actual activities and results achieved. The indicators covered the results for skills efforts related to youth, people with disabilities and rural people. These are priorities, but the ILO's skills work is broader than this and covers the needs of other vulnerable groups (such as refugees, retrenched older workers needing retraining) and industry. It is noteworthy, that Bangladesh is showcased as the “gold standard” in ILO skills work in terms of the breadth and depth of its work, but is only counted twice in the reports.
151. Given the above, the question to be asked is whether the system in place at the time for reporting results was “fit for purpose” as a measure of organizational effectiveness. It is difficult to see how it has generated any insights that would influence strategy, approach or action in order to improve results. Indeed, the reports that are generally available are stripped of most of the qualitative data. What remains is a table of numbers that are of questionable relevance and, it could be argued, provides a misleading picture of performance (for example, the “number of member States” issue).
152. At the very least, there is a need to strengthen processes for the verification of results presented in the Programme Implementation Reports. Reported results need to be reviewed more thoroughly and only be included where the ILO has made a substantial and verifiable contribution. Many of the results are not supported by any evidence or outcome data. Some countries provide data (for example, numbers of people employed) to support assertions that post-training job placement has been achieved. However, many results have no data or evidence and are very scantily described. As the results are currently reported, it would be very difficult to verify them. (See **Recommendation 6**).

<sup>53</sup> That is, if the result is substantively different or if different measurement criteria apply.

Data on other targets included in the STRATEGIC POLICY FRAMEWORK and P&B were collected, but do not appear to have been given much attention in organizational review of performance.

153. The Strategic Policy Framework included some sub-targets for outcome 2 that related to achieving results in Africa. The background and rationale for setting these targets do not appear to have been documented and they are difficult to make sense of on their own (for example, there is a target for each biennium for Indicator 2.1, targets just for 2010–2011 for 2.2, 2.4 and 2.5, and none at all for 2.4). The evaluation notes that given its inclusion in the Strategic Policy Framework targets, there was an intention at some point to provide the Africa region with focussed attention. Unfortunately, Implementation Reports are silent on this aspect of performance and it seems to have been ignored or forgotten. The evaluation team requested clarification but due to staff turnover, did not receive an answer.
154. **Table 11** sets out the results. Areas shaded in grey had no targets set. (The total target figure cannot therefore be compared with total results as it only includes the years with targets.)
155. Assessment of performance based on these figures is not very enlightening, but does raise the issue whether the ILO needs to consider the geographical reach of its skills development work and to more fully and proactively explore how skills might support the achievement of decent work goals in “priority regions or countries”, whatever they might be (see **Recommendation 2**).

Table 11. Reported Results – outcome 2 (Africa Only)

	2010–11	2012–13	2014–15	Total	Target
2.1	2	4	6	12	9
2.2	3	4	4	11	4
2.3	1	1	2	4	0
2.4	2	1	6	9	2
2.5	4	4	6	14	6

Source: P&B Implementation Reports (detailed versions with commentaries)

156. The Strategic Policy Framework also included another measure under outcome 2 that appears not to have been monitored or reported on. This “Position to be reached by 2015” seems to have been an attempt at defining an overall strategic goal and was:

*“Over 30 member States have aligned training supply and demand, extended access to training opportunities to a wider proportion of workers and have integrated skills development in sector and national development policies and in responses to global drivers of change such as technology, trade, and global warming.”*

No specific data were collected that related to this (it had no link to the other performance data that were) so there was no way of measuring the results of the ILO’s work towards this goal. However, the evaluation will consider this goal again when it assesses impact later in the report.

**Based on the evaluation’s field visits, the ILO’s skills work was regarded as relevant and effective by its constituents and stakeholders, but more needs to be done**

157. A detailed analysis of the effectiveness of the many skills-related projects and activities carried out globally by the ILO was outside the scope of this High-Level Evaluation. Based on the six countries

visited, constituents and stakeholders in these countries were satisfied with progress, but there are still many gaps that demand the continuing attention of the ILO.

158. **Bangladesh** – Local stakeholders and constituents painted a detailed picture of the extent of ILO involvement in reform of the training system in Bangladesh, one which contrasts with the relative small effects captured in the Implementation Reports summarized above. The situation prior to ILO involvement was described as one where employers had “lost faith” in the capacity of the system to meet their skills needs. Now, thanks to the reforms, in some sectors at least, the relationship is much stronger.
159. Stakeholders described examples of the effectiveness of the ILO's work in the period. The scope of this work has already been discussed earlier in this report, but constituents especially highlighted the importance of ILO support in the development of a new national skills policy, sector-specific support in four industries (including establishing Industry Skills Councils to align training with demand, and creating 51 new qualifications and skills standards), the introduction of competency-based training (“we knew nothing about this before”), systems and documentation for Quality Assurance, a national qualification framework, recognition of prior learning and training provider accreditation processes, and assistance with a Management Information System. Work was done too in establishing prevocational courses for the educationally disadvantaged, including programs targeting women and people with disabilities, and in supporting skills development and recognition for departing and returning migrant workers and for developing a new Quality Apprenticeship strategy. Government officials especially highlighted the importance of ILO expertise and support in policy development, not just the National Skills Policy, but also in related areas such as policies supporting the participation of women and people with disabilities in TVET and for a Youth Action Plan
160. An employer representative described the ILO as being a “very committed partner” that is focused on meeting the country's needs. It had provided a “continuity of support” through the long process of reform. Some ILO staff had been there throughout the reform process (8 years) and this allowed the formation of deep relationships and knowledge.
161. In terms of perceived results to date, there was agreement that “we are not there yet”. Systemic challenges remain. Broader inroads need to be made in engaging the private sector. Employers pointed out that the private sector would only fully embrace the new training system if its benefits are tangible and understandable. In some respects, the model is still theoretical – “nobody knows what it really looks like yet or how it really works”. The idea of an employer-driven training system led by Industry Skills Councils is theoretically sound, but, as one stakeholder said, “they can turn into bureaucrats if they don't have real links with employers” – that is, there was a risk that the wrong people would be involved and that they become too process-driven. Institutional capacity was still low, and although some government people have been trained, these are not necessarily the people delivering the training.
162. There was general agreement that much more needs to be done for the 89 per cent of people in Bangladesh in the informal economy. One senior government official described this group as “the black hole of the economy of Bangladesh”. Many of these people are illiterate and currently have no opportunity to access training in the formal training sector. “You have to go to the poor places – pilot programs there, look at creating informal apprenticeships.”
163. This was a perspective shared by the unions, which indicated that they were supportive of the direction of training reform but commented on the relative lack of attention given to the informal sector. The unions would also like to see the reforms become a vehicle for the promotion of other aspects of the decent work agenda – for example, by ensuring that Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) is embedded in skills training – “there are many people in Bangladesh who don't know how to operate industrial machines properly or safely.”

164. **The Russian Federation** – The ILO’s work supporting the Russian Federation in the modernization of its training system was described earlier in *Case Study 3*. Constituents clearly valued the ILO’s support in this large and complex undertaking, and saw it as the latest stage of a long history of co-operation with the Moscow Office.
165. At the government level, the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection said, “all of the topics of interest to the ILO in skills are very important for us”. The ministry detailed a list of these topics that it said demonstrated “why we couldn’t have got along without the ILO” in skills system development – the establishment of new skills advisory institutions; the establishment of a new National Qualifications Framework; the processes used for developing standards and skills descriptions; how to ensure proper engagement with constituents, especially employers, to better understand skill needs; and assessment methodologies. Across all of these areas, the Ministry said the ILO shared its expertise, highlighted various international models and provided practical advice.
166. From the Employers’ perspective, efforts were initially hampered by the lack of a local dedicated specialist in Employers’ Activities in Moscow, but this has since been corrected. The new specialist has a very good understanding of the training reform agenda in the Russian Federation and the peak employer body reported that the ILO “did the utmost to engage” with it. Employer cooperation in the period also included a major youth employment initiative conducted through a ground-breaking technical cooperation agreement between the ILO and LUKOIL, one of the Russian Federation’s largest oil companies. Commencing in January 2013, the project aimed to support youth policy and programme development in three countries (Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and the Russian Federation) and included skills components such as skills anticipation, skills-based ALMPs delivered through the Public Employment Service and the establishment of a new Quality Apprenticeship model.
167. Moving forward, development of the TVET system in the Russian Federation was described as being of great importance, but it faces many challenges. In the Soviet era, TVET served two roles – it provided vocational skills to the young, but it was also perceived as the option for those who were not academically strong or who were “problem kids”. As one stakeholder said, it was spoken of as an inferior outcome for students – a lesser place where young people might end up if they did not work hard in their studies. This entrenched an image and a status problem for TVET and so, when the old system ended, there was an exponential growth in university enrolments at the expense of TVET. As the existing skilled workforce ages, skill shortages now loom as a result. As one stakeholder put it, in the future: “If you need a skilled tradesperson, you might have to settle for a recent migrant from Tajikistan – or a local economics graduate.”
168. **Armenia** – Aspects of the ILO’s skills work in Armenia were outlined earlier in *Case Study 4*. The ILO’s presence in Armenia is very small (a National Coordinator and a Project Coordinator) compared with other country offices visited as part of the evaluation, but it has good relationships with the constituents and other stakeholders and its work in skills is seen as making a difference. Skills work is fairly new to the ILO in Armenia – the G20 Project provided it with its first real opening in this field.
169. Work included the institutional capacity building described earlier, development of policy papers, relating to disability inclusion, labour market information management, the governance of TVET Colleges, and monitoring and evaluation of State-run ALMPs (including skills); creating a system of “peer review” of policies between Armenia and similar countries in the region; a labour market study looking at skill supply and demand mismatches; support for Public Employment Service in the implementation of ALMPs; support for career guidance and professional orientation services linked to the effective operation of TVET systems; and the implementation of the SKOLKOVO tools relating to Managing TVET institutions and to skills anticipation.
170. All the constituents and many of the other stakeholders highlighted the benefits of the ILO’s tripartite approach in its work in Armenia. Trade Unions expressed support for training system reform

and said that a well-functioning training system addressed two of their concerns – stability of labour relations and better understanding of worker rights through training. They believe that many young people are working outside the formal labour market in the “grey economy”, a problem exacerbated by an ineffective labour inspection system, which had been merged with the sanitation department of the Ministry of Health and had lost its focus as a result.

171. Officials of the Ministry of Labour said that the ILO was very professional, easy to work with and its work had led to positive results. Much of the work so far has focused on the Labour Ministry's institutions and programmes, however – the Ministry of Education had been involved, but the ILO had not been as involved in shaping reform in their jurisdiction.
172. Employer representatives similarly valued the ILO's work, bringing a “new culture and understanding” of skills to Armenia – something that many employers need to understand. The G20 introduced new methods and, through its skills foresight tool, highlighted skill gaps that need to be filled to foster economic development. Much more needs to be done, however.
173. Moving forward, some stakeholders saw an opportunity for the ILO to do more to help “build the bridge between education and employer demand”. Development of a “point-by-point” agenda for training system reform in Armenia, one that outlines possible ways forward and brings all the stakeholders together might lead to an agreed position that could be presented to political decision makers – “the ILO can help shape this” and link it to the Sustainable Development Goals. Additional work in skills anticipation was also seen as needed, especially in sectors where Armenia sees itself as having certain competitive advantages, such as the IT sector.
174. **Viet Nam** – As mentioned earlier, the support of the ILO in updating and restructuring the TVET legal framework (revising the TVET Law, development of supporting decrees and decisions, and development of the TVET Strategy 2011–2020) was highly valued by stakeholders. This revision represented a major reform for Viet Nam.
175. Most government and social partners, as well as other development partners, indicated that the ILO was a crucial player in the skills field. As the official United Nations Agency responsible for labour, other partners recognized the ILO's major role in terms of technical assistance for development of policy and legal framework, and this role was highly valued. There was an understanding that the tripartite nature of the ILO, particularly the strong link with employers, gave it a special role and value, both in policymaking, and at the local level in piloting tools and models. In addition, the normative role of the ILO was acknowledged and valued.
176. Support for other skills-related priorities in the period included input into the development of the National Qualifications Framework, and capacity building for vocational training centres. Viet Nam was also a site for the “Implementing the G20 Project” which applied (somewhat idiosyncratically) the STED model for the development of skills in the tourism sector in two provinces. The ILO office is supporting the General Department of Vocational Training (GDVT) with mutual recognition processes in the region. The most progress seems to have been made in the Tourism sector, with the establishment of a Viet Nam National Professional Board and incorporation of ASEAN standards into vocational courses.
177. In terms of gaps, several informants were concerned that there is tension between responding to what the country requests, and “guiding” it to be more forward looking and positioning it for the future. In particular, for middle income countries such as Viet Nam where growth was built on cheap labour, there may be insufficient focus on preparing for the implications of mechanisation on low-skill manufacturing jobs and adjusting for the economy of the future – low carbon, IT and robot intensive opportunities, etc. The DWCP for Viet Nam does not specifically address this issue – rather Viet Nam is aiming to become a ‘modern industrialized country which seems to ignore the challenges of increased globalization and integration.



178. The opportunities of IT and new technologies for vocational training, such as distance delivery, virtual reality, activity based learning, etc. were also observed to be missing from the country's skills strategies. Viet Nam (and other countries in the region) still tends to be largely focused on traditional centre-based training. While there is increasing emphasis on industry-based and on-the-job training in the laws and policy documents, in practice it is still very limited. Alternative methods of training, such as community based training, peer to peer training, etc. are generally considered an alternative or 'add on' for specific (usually marginalized) groups, rather than part of mainstream TVET systems. For example, in Viet Nam the C-BED entrepreneurship training has only been supported by ILO with people with disabilities, reinforcing views that people with disabilities are unable to access mainstream TVET and need specialized, separate services, and that the activity based learning approach is mainly appropriate for marginalized groups.
179. **Zambia** – The evaluation's mission to Zambia focused exclusively on its activities in improving the disability inclusiveness of its TVET system and *Case Study 7* outlined the key activities and results.
180. Government stakeholders saw the ILO as having made a very important contribution – in the words of one "it opened our eyes to the importance of inclusiveness" – and this led directly to the assessment of the system as a whole, revision of curriculum, institutional reform and teacher training and sensitization. The government had committed to new Disability Policy prior to this, but it was the technical expertise provided by the ILO that helped turn this into practice in TVET.
181. Moving forward, there was some concern expressed that, without continuing guidance in this area, the cultural change that had started in the Zambian TVET system might not be completed. The project has created good advocates within the key institutions, but there is a need for the ILO to continue to reinforce the reforms and to offer technical assistance into the future.
182. The senior union representatives consulted in the evaluation had not had much involvement in the project, but spoke more generally of the ILO's role and the importance of skills. They particularly highlighted the need for better policy cohesion between the Ministry of Labour and other ministries in the area of skills, perhaps through a policy framework of some type. They believed that the ILO could play an important role in this, facilitating tripartite forums and identifying practical ways forward in skills, including improvements in connecting providers to employers and using apprenticeships to help young people develop skills and transition to work.
183. **Zimbabwe** – The main ILO work in skills in the period related to the implementation of a Danish-funded project – see *Case Study 6* – that saw a fairly large-scale application of TREE throughout rural provinces and the upgrading of training in urban areas through Quality Informal Apprenticeships. The project far exceeded its participation targets – 5,547 were engaged through TREE (50 per cent above target) and 1,450 were engaged in Informal Apprenticeships (80 per cent above target).
184. Government representatives were enthusiastic in their assessment of the effectiveness of the ILO's work through this project. Creating meaningful income generating opportunities for the considerable numbers of unemployed young people in rural and urban areas was a clear focus. The conventional training system was described as being unsuited to these young people. They need short courses that are directly related to available work opportunities. What is being implemented is working, according to the stakeholders. The demand from districts for the approach to be extended to them is growing.
185. The effects were described as life changing for the young people involved enabling those who had been struggling to subsist to improve their lives, build houses and cars and buy biogas and solar technology. It has empowered women to escape from abusive relationships. It has allowed some to employ others in the community and to develop their businesses.
186. The union representative described the project as "perfect" and that it showed great insight, clarity and planning to be able to achieve such a good result. One employer organization described the project as

“amazing” for its success in equipping young people with the skills they needed to make productive use of the available resources. One beneficiary had increased his income from zero to US\$900 per year. Another had used previously unused land and was now producing 4.5 tonnes of potatoes a year.

### There were other indications that the ILO's work in skills was regarded as being effective and of good quality

187. The survey of staff and stakeholders included a number of other indications that the ILO's skills work was relevant and effective. These included the following:

- a. Satisfaction with relevance and level of support provided by the ILO to support formal training system – 61.11% were satisfied or very satisfied; 9.26% were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Do Not Know
0.93% (1)	8.33% (9)	19.44% (21)	41.67% (45)	19.44% (21)	10.19% (11)

- b. Satisfaction with relevance and level of support provided by the ILO to support informal training system – 44.86 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied; 13.08 per cent were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Do Not Know
2.8% (3)	10.28% (11)	26.17% (28)	35.51% (38)	9.35% (10)	15.89% (17)

- c. Satisfaction with relevance and level of support provided by the ILO to support other mechanisms for skills development (including ALMPs, PES etc.) – 55.27 per cent were satisfied or very satisfied; 12.85 per cent were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Do Not Know
0.92% (1)	11.93% (13)	24.77% (27)	41.28% (45)	11.01% (12)	10.09% (11)

### Some comments by survey respondents...

#### Support for formal and informal training systems

*“Skills development is a very crowded field at the country level. The ILO's approach at the country level tends to follow the «on-off» approach and because of the lack of funds, is **fragmented** in its approach. **Country offices are isolated and not equipped to engage with various partners** to strategically position ILO's comparative advantage. Why not? Lack of knowledge and awareness about trends and progress on the issue and awareness of new tools being developed.*

*“I think that overall the ILO's **support for formal training systems is more ad-hoc than it should be**, relying **too much on the individual capacity of field specialists**, and **not enough on a common fund of knowledge** on good practice that spans the ILO. The capacity of SKILLS in Geneva to coordinate this has significantly dissipated over time.”*

*“A great many developing countries need to reform their TVET systems, and the ILO's capability to support this at the scale of the whole system is patchy and **dependent on raising substantial funds in competition with other development partners**. Work in this area should be based firmly on **a clearly articulated development theory of change**, rather than on the presumption that the introduction of improved practices will lead to a desirable impact.”*



*“We now have some evidence that **sectoral approaches** to skills development systems can form the basis for meaningful targeted system improvements **that do not aim to directly reform the whole system.**”*

*“There is only so much we can do to trigger change if resources are not available, especially in the field of skills where **ILO expertise is sometimes pushed aside for those donors who come with budget support.**”*

*“Nine times out of 10 support is **relevant, but the level of support is inadequate** 50 per cent of the time .”*

*“The **formal training systems have adequate support** because of the already established structures and systems. The **informal training systems sometimes lack established structures** which can provide smooth support.”*

*“Need practical solution and support for implementation. There is **too much paper!**”*

### Support for other mechanisms

*“ALMPs and PES do **not occupy the place they deserve** in the priority agenda of the department*

*“**Too little is done** in this area.”*

*“The **support diminished** in 2015 when the function was transferred to another unit in Employment Department.”*

*“More collaboration [is needed] with **DEV/INVEST.**”*

*“When it comes to Active Labour Market Policy, often ILO publications seem to be **too prescriptive.** For instance, the advice to encourage investment is to focus on specific sectors. The advice that would be more appropriate is for investment to be encouraged by market data which is **different for each country.**”*

*“This goes to the heart of the **extent to which different units in the ILO engage with the skills branch** as a source of technical inputs. I think it **could be improved** and the best way to do that is by having **explicit indicators and results** criteria included within the programming framework.”*

- d. Satisfaction with the **design of ILO technical cooperation projects** against a number of criteria was good. Satisfaction with coordination with partners and constituents in design was relatively lower, but overall still good.

	Very Unsatisfied	Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Do Not Know
Stated Objectives	0.93% (1)	3.74% (4)	9.35% (10)	49.53% (53)	26.17% (11)	10.28% (11)
Underlying Logic	0.94% (1)	4.72% (5)	15.09% (16)	46.23% (49)	21.70% (12)	11.32% (12)
Sequencing of Activities	0.93% (1)	2.8% (3)	24.3% (26)	42.99% (46)	17.76% (12)	11.21% (12)
Coordination with partners & constituents	0.93% (1)	10.28% (11)	17.76% (19)	33.64% (36)	25.23% (13)	12.15% (13)

- e. Respondents perceived ILO **technical cooperation projects** as being **successful in addressing constraints** to building good skills systems – 68.52 per cent said they were successful or very successful and only 2.78 per cent said they were unsuccessful.

Very Unsuccessful	Unsuccessful	Neither unsuccessful nor successful	Successful	Very Successful	Do Not Know
0.0% (0)	2.78% (3)	16.67% (18)	50.93% (55)	17.59% (19)	12.04% (13)

- f. A high proportion of respondents perceived ILO **global products** as being of high quality – 73.37 per cent said they were of high or very high quality and only 2.75 per cent said they were of low quality.

Very poor quality	Poor quality	Neutral	High quality	Very high quality	Do Not Know
0.0% (0)	2.75% (3)	12.84% (14)	55.96% (61)	17.43% (19)	11.01% (12)

- g. A high proportion of respondents perceived ILO support and technical cooperation projects as being effective in developing **inclusive skills development** systems and/or services – 70.37 per cent said effective or very effective and zero said it had been ineffective.

Very Ineffective	Ineffective	Neither ineffective nor effective	Effective	Very Effective	Do Not Know
0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	15.74% (17)	53.70% (58)	16.67% (18)	13.89% (15)

### Some comments by survey respondents...

#### Project Design

*"Constituents are not early-enough informed and **consultation is ad hoc.**"*

*"If you include other dimensions like: **Period of analysis and evaluation of a project** = Unsatisfied. Bureaucracy involved in evaluation of a project = Unsatisfied. Time to respond in terms of analysis and evaluation of a project = Unsatisfied."*

*"**Skills Specialists play a key role** in the design and development of TC Project."*

*"The ILO does have competent staff who are fluent with log frames, but often times, these people are not very conversant with **theory of change.**"*

*"It appears the designers were considering the reform process of the TVET System only as a purely 'technical' exercise, whereas the **social aspects of the proposed reform** are by an order of magnitude more complex, challenging and time-consuming."*

*"The project design and appraisal process in theory provides opportunities for **inputs from technical units** within the ILO but it seems that the **process is not consistently followed** across the regions."*

#### Project Effectiveness

*"Most ILO project interventions are focused on the strategic level. For Tunisia we **need more practical interventions.**"*

*"**Depends on the project.** Taking skills-related projects as a whole, some seem to be systemically effective. Others seem to have low systemic impact."*

*"Very successful where sufficient resources were mobilized. **Building systems requires time and resources.**"*

#### Global Products

*"We do not have yet **an assessment tool for national skills development systems** that reflect ILO principles. ILO global products, while of good quality, lack often the big picture ETF, OECD and WB analyses provide at country level."*

*“We need support for the **adaptation of these products** to the country specifications.”*

*“While the product quality is high, the **product marketing, client buy-in and overall execution** require substantial improvement.”*

*“We need more ILO products that focus on **practical application at the country/sector/company** levels.”*

*“Do we have any global products on skills development?”*

### Inclusion

*“Support has to be continuous, based on developments in Armenia.”*

*“The projects have been effective in integrating inclusion of persons with disabilities, support to youths withdrawn from worst forms of child labour, and skills for rural youth, but **the ILO needs to work further on systemic inclusion of other vulnerable groups** such as the poor, those impacted on by HIV, the typically excluded by virtue of remote rural residence, illiteracy and other factors, etc.”*

## The ILO has engaged with United Nations partners and other development actors in the skills field and this work appears to have been well coordinated and complementary.

188. As mentioned earlier in the discussion of “global outputs”, the ILO has taken a lead role in the Inter-Agency Working Group on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). This includes the ILO, European Commission, European Training Foundation, OECD, UNESCO, World Bank and the regional development banks). Collaboration and coordination in research and policy advice was good and contributed to the G20 Training Strategy. The strategies of the respective organizations are compatible and the evaluation visits suggested that implementation of skills-related activities in-country are also complementary.
189. The survey of staff and stakeholders indicated a generally positive perception of the level of complementarity between the ILO, partners, multilateral and bilateral organizations. 66.66 per cent of respondents saw work as being complementary or highly complementary while 2.78 per cent saw it as not very complementary.

Not at all complementary	Not very complementary	Moderately complementary	Complementary	Highly complementary	Do Not Know
0.0% (0)	2.78% (3)	14.81% (16)	44.44% (48)	22.22% (24)	15.74% (17)

190. The survey conducted among the members of the Inter Agency Working Group on TVET showed an even more positive perception of the level of complementarity between the ILO, partners, multilateral and bilateral organizations. 85.71 per cent of respondents saw ILO’s work as being complementary or highly complementary while no respondents saw it as moderately or not complementary.

Not at all complementary	Not Very complementary	Moderately complementary	Complementary	Highly complementary	Do Not Know
0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	57.14% (4)	28.57% (2)	14.29% (1)

## EFFICIENCY

**ILO work in the area of skills development seems generally efficient and cost-effective, but data limitations do not currently allow a detailed analysis.**

191. The ILO's existing information systems do not allow an analysis of the regular budget costs associated with specific activities and reported results. This type of analysis would require data on the cost of all resources used to undertake activities, information on how these activities were linked to outputs and how they contributed to the achievement of outcomes.
192. While comparisons between countries are very difficult to make,<sup>54</sup> especially in the diverse field of skills, the ILO currently has a limited view of efficiency and cost-effectiveness from this perspective. Based on the evaluation's visits and review of documented country outputs and achievements, the US\$21.5 million expended in Bangladesh over the three biennia was the largest investment in outcome 2, but much has been achieved there. In contrast, the fifth largest investment, and the largest outside Asia, was in Benin. It expended \$8.5 million, but, based on the desk review case study, the evaluation was unable to find sufficiently detailed information on results. The system should better document institutional memory so that the experiences are preserved. (see **Recommendation 7**).
193. The survey provided a qualitative perspective on the issue, with 71.15 per cent of respondents saying that they thought ILO support and projects were either efficient or very efficient and only 3.82 per cent saying they were inefficient or very inefficient. (However, the fairly high number of people who thought the ILO was "neither inefficient nor efficient", does suggest that there is some room for improvement):

Very Inefficient	Inefficient	Neither inefficient nor efficient	Efficient	Very Efficient
0.96% (1)	2.88% (3)	25.00% (26)	68.27% (71)	2.88% (3)

**A number of significant constraints to operational efficiency and effectiveness were identified through the survey.**

194. According to the survey, the biggest constraints on operational efficiency and effectiveness were **"number of staff in country/regional office with requisite technical expertise"** (52.7 per cent), the **"time required for internal decision making"** (46.3 per cent) and the ability to **secure RBSA and XBTC funding** (42.06 per cent for each).

	Not a Constraint	Minor Constraint	Moderate Constraint	Substantial Constraint	Very Substantial Constraint	Do Not Know
No of staff in country/region office with requisite technical expertise	7.41% (8)	10.19% (11)	17.59% (19)	29.63% (32)	23.15% (25)	12.04% (13)
Time required for internal decision-making	8.49% (9)	8.49% (9)	20.75% (22)	24.53% (26)	21.70% (23)	16.04% (17)
Ability to secure RBSA funding	4.67% (5)	12.15% (13)	14.02% (15)	20.56% (22)	21.50% (23)	27.10% (29)
Ability to secure XBTC funding	5.61% (6)	11.21% (12)	19.63% (21)	21.50% (23)	20.56% (22)	21.50% (23)
Ability to secure Regular Budget (RB) funding	4.72% (5)	6.60% (7)	20.75% (22)	21.70% (23)	19.81% (21)	26.42% (28)

<sup>54</sup> Full details of expenditures (RBSA, RBTC and XBTC against outcome 2 are available upon request.

	Not a Constraint	Minor Constraint	Moderate Constraint	Substantial Constraint	Very Substantial Constraint	Do Not Know
Ability of HQ staff to commit sufficient time to providing assistance	10.38% (11)	14.15% (15)	19.81% (21)	27.36% (29)	8.49% (9)	19.81% (21)
Number of staff in HQ technical units with requisite technical expertise	12.15% (13)	14.95% (16)	17.76% (19)	18.69% (20)	14.95% (16)	21.50% (23)
Ability to recruit qualified external collaborators (consultants)	12.04% (13)	24.07% (26)	18.52% (20)	22.22% (24)	9.26% (10)	13.89% (15)
Ability to recruit qualified chief technical advisors (CTA)	12.04% (13)	15.74% (17)	21.30% (23)	15.74% (17)	12.96% (14)	22.22% (24)
Ability to draw on ILO knowledge-base	15.74% (17)	14.81% (16)	26.85% (29)	20.37% (22)	9.26% (10)	12.96% (14)

**While promoting proven approaches in skills development are important, the ILO could instead lead the way, exploring new approaches that might be less costly, more readily scaled up, and easier to sustain.**

195. Some ILO staff consulted during the evaluation questioned whether the organization was wedded to certain traditional approaches and was too risk-averse when it came to introducing different ways of promoting and achieving skills development. The implication was that there might be a cycle where the ILO sourced funding from donors, made progress for a period of time in a particular country, then moved on to try the same approach somewhere else. As one person in Headquarters asked:

*“Are we stuck to old fashioned, circular activities? Can we be more innovative, particularly in crisis countries. We tend to offer packages and have limitations in evaluating needs and what really fits.”*

196. Finding new models that are effective, scalable and cost effective should be a priority. For example, the Community-Based Enterprise Development (C-BED) approach used in the Asia-Pacific region, operates through a highly decentralized model that facilitates self-directed, “peer-to-peer” learning without the need for external trainers. The ILO develops the learning materials, which it makes freely available to partner organizations, who host and facilitate the learning, but without experts or “master trainers”. It operates under a very different paradigm to the traditional model of ILO action in the field, but it is one that has been shown by evaluations to work. Moreover, it can be scaled up, massively so in some cases – for example, the Indonesian Ministry of Agriculture is training 65,000 agricultural extension workers in the model to support the skills development of 7,000,000 rural entrepreneurs and farmers.
197. It is clear that the application of this particular model to vocational skills development (as opposed to enterprise skills) might be more limited, but it is raised here as an example of the type of innovation that is possible. Other novel approaches, including technology-based solutions, need also to be considered. CINTERFOR, for example, is actively exploring the vocational learning possibilities flowing from the age of “ubiquitous learning” that the Internet has created – accessible from anywhere and at any time, in the contents, interactions and learning activities required by the user. Even in poorer countries, access to the Internet, particularly among youth, is growing and the ILO needs to be a leader in this field. For example, in Africa, there were 226 million smartphone connections to the Internet at the end of 2015 and this is forecast to grow to 720 million by 2020.<sup>55</sup> (see **Recommendation 4**).

<sup>55</sup> Cisco. Cisco Visual Networking Index: Global Mobile Data Traffic Forecast Update, 2015–2020 White Paper. Available at <http://www.cisco.com/c/en/us/solutions/collateral/service-provider/visual-networking-index-vni/mobile-white-paper-c11-520862.html> (Accessed 26 July 2016).

**The relative cost effectiveness and the time required to achieve results of different ILO approaches to skills need to be assessed. This information should be used in the determination of future priorities.**

198. There was also some debate, both in Headquarters and in the field, about the relative cost-benefits of approaches that focused on the development of formal training systems and those that were more community-centred, shorter in duration and targeted to the needs of the poor and less educated. Although people recognize the benefits of formal training system modernization in some countries (for example, Bangladesh and the Russian Federation) this is a lower priority in other countries (for example, Zimbabwe). Both are of value and are supported by key ILO policy documents, but what offers the best return for the investment of the ILO and its donors? To what extent do short and medium term results for individuals and communities take priority over long-term results in systems' reform. As one survey respondent put it:

*"The ILO needs to make decisions where it wants to invest its time and efforts in SKILLS and where it will not work on SKILLS. Current capacity is not sufficient."*

199. This raises the issue too of geographic focus. Is there a need for a more proactive approach to skills development in some regions? Is the balance of investment overall geographically right? The evaluation is not in a position to answer such questions, but they are important considerations for a future Strategic Policy Framework. It could be that the type of skills-related projects that are needed in places such as Africa require a different emphasis by the ILO – more TREE and less STED, for example. It could also be that doing more in these places is harder and requires a much bigger investment, but this needs to be offset by the potential benefits, especially in the context of the SDGs. Skills expert Paul Bennell explains that:

*"Although the most economically vulnerable are generally the hardest to reach, the potential 'pay-offs' of being able to reduce significantly the number of people who are living in the greatest poverty are enormous."*<sup>56</sup>

## IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

**Based on the site visits, ILO's skills work has had some impact on policy development, institutional capacity and the extension of training opportunities to certain groups. Impact on the countries' ability to align training supply and demand is not yet evident in practice, but the logic of the reforms seem sound in this respect.**

200. Because of the inadequacy of the performance indicators as a measure of progress towards the ultimate goal of "alignment of the training supply and demand and extending access to training", it is not possible to say how many countries reached the impact target (which was set rather ambitiously and without a baseline at 30). This is reinforced by the fact that biennial Implementation Reports were silent on progress towards this target and whether it was ultimately achieved.
201. Based on the sample of countries visited in the evaluation, there are signs of progress in different aspects of the goal. This includes policy development and improved institutional capacity to

<sup>56</sup> Bennell, P. Learning to change: Skills development among the economically vulnerable and socially excluded in developing countries. Employment and Training Papers, No. 43. (ILO, Geneva, 1999).

implement new methods, but “alignment of training supply and demand” has, in practice, not been achieved. The situation in these countries is summarized below:

- **Bangladesh** – the ILO has acted as the designer and engineer for much of the new training system machinery that has been put in place, but more needs to be done to fully realize the vision behind the reforms. There is confidence and pride among constituents that the model is right and that it will significantly improve alignment of formal sector labour supply and demand, but there is no real evidence yet of impact in this respect.<sup>57</sup> Careful steps have been taken to build into the model improved access for people from disadvantaged groups, including people with disabilities and those in the informal sector, but again no evidence of substantial impact in terms of participation is yet apparent. The size of the informal sector in Bangladesh – 89 per cent – and the low level of education of a significant proportion of this group present major barriers to their engagement with the formal sector.
- **Russian Federation** – the ILO has provided much-valued technical support and advice to the Russian Federation to support its efforts to overhaul and to modernize their vocational training system. The country has set a very ambitious pace for this reform process and is learning as it proceeds. The ILO’s input has been significant, providing it with different models from around the world, including the conduct of a study tour to Ireland. This has been highly valued by the constituents and has influenced their decision making. However, the Russian Federation is still in the early stages of modernizing its system, and there are no observable improvements as yet in better aligning supply and demand. The ILO has also provided significant input in the Lukoil-funded technical cooperation project that focuses on youth employment and training and there are some promising results coming from the pilot programmes conducted, including a new apprenticeship model.
- **Armenia** – The G20 project which started in 2012 was the first real skills project in Armenia and, compared with other countries visited, had a small budget. Impact under these circumstances has therefore been modest, but progress has been made in policy development (including ILO input on disability policy, labour market information, monitoring and evaluation, and VET college governance) and institutional capacity building (career guidance, public employment services and, through the SKOLKOVO tools, TVET college management and skills anticipation). In the short term, a second phase of this project will consolidate this progress.
- **Viet Nam** – Institutional reforms created by the new legislation (involving the consolidation of the TVET function in one ministry) have considerable potential to improve system effectiveness, but this has not yet been implemented fully. ILO sectoral level work, especially tourism, has had good impact including the formation of a new industry training advisory body and improved cohesion with ASEAN standards. The “Implementing the G20” Project has seen the STED model implemented and training recommendations implemented and piloted in the tourism sector in two provinces.
- **Zambia** – Key government TVET institutions are very committed to improving the inclusiveness of vocational training delivery in Zambia and a new model has been tested in five colleges. At the college visited as part of the evaluation, it was clear that it had already earned a reputation for its services for people with disabilities and that numbers of students from this group had increased. Since the end of the project, the local office has less ability to support further expansion, but there is commitment from the constituents to maintain momentum.
- **Zimbabwe** – Very significant impact was evident at a community level from the implementation of TREE among rural youth and Quality Informal Apprenticeships with urban youth. Impact on beneficiaries was evident and all constituents agree that there is immense potential to extend

<sup>57</sup> Anecdotal information was provided that indicated that in the Bangladesh garment sector, training under the new arrangements had a 90 per cent job placement rate. Training system performance data was not made more generally available.



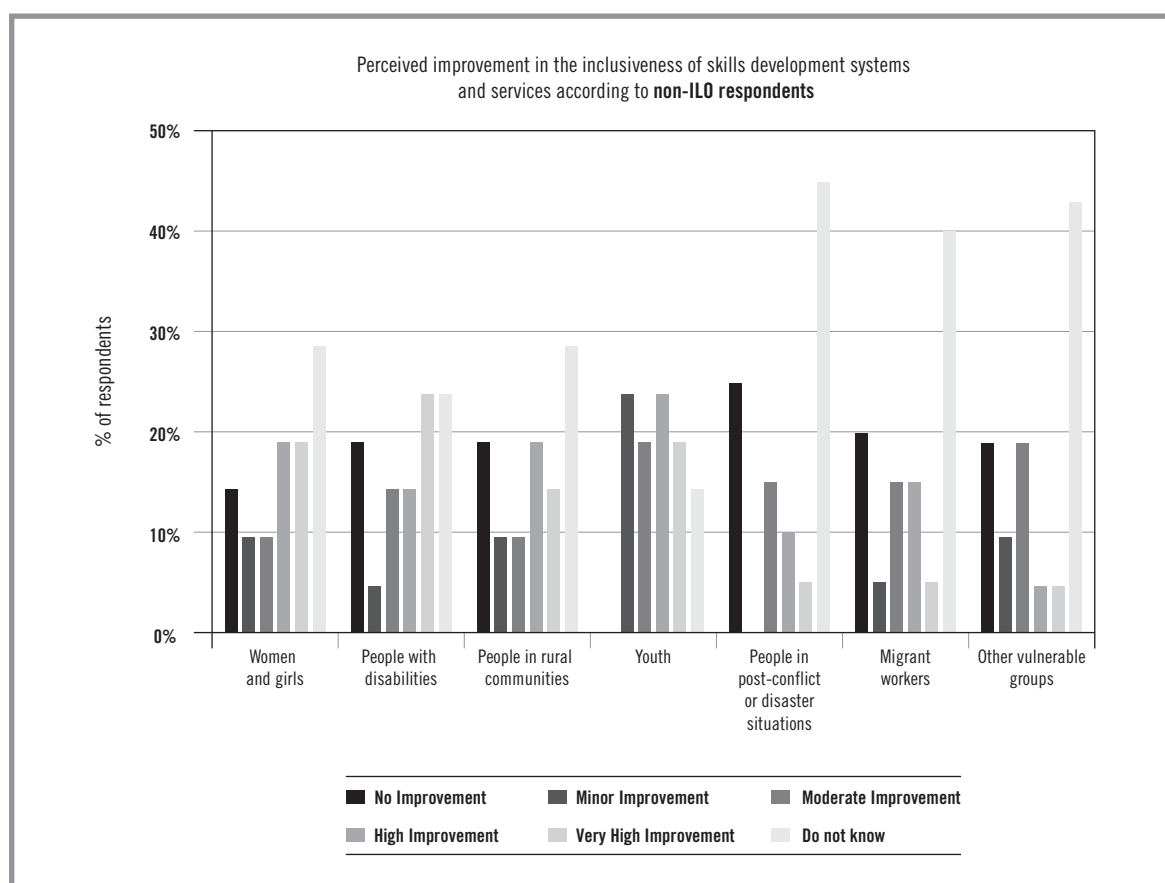
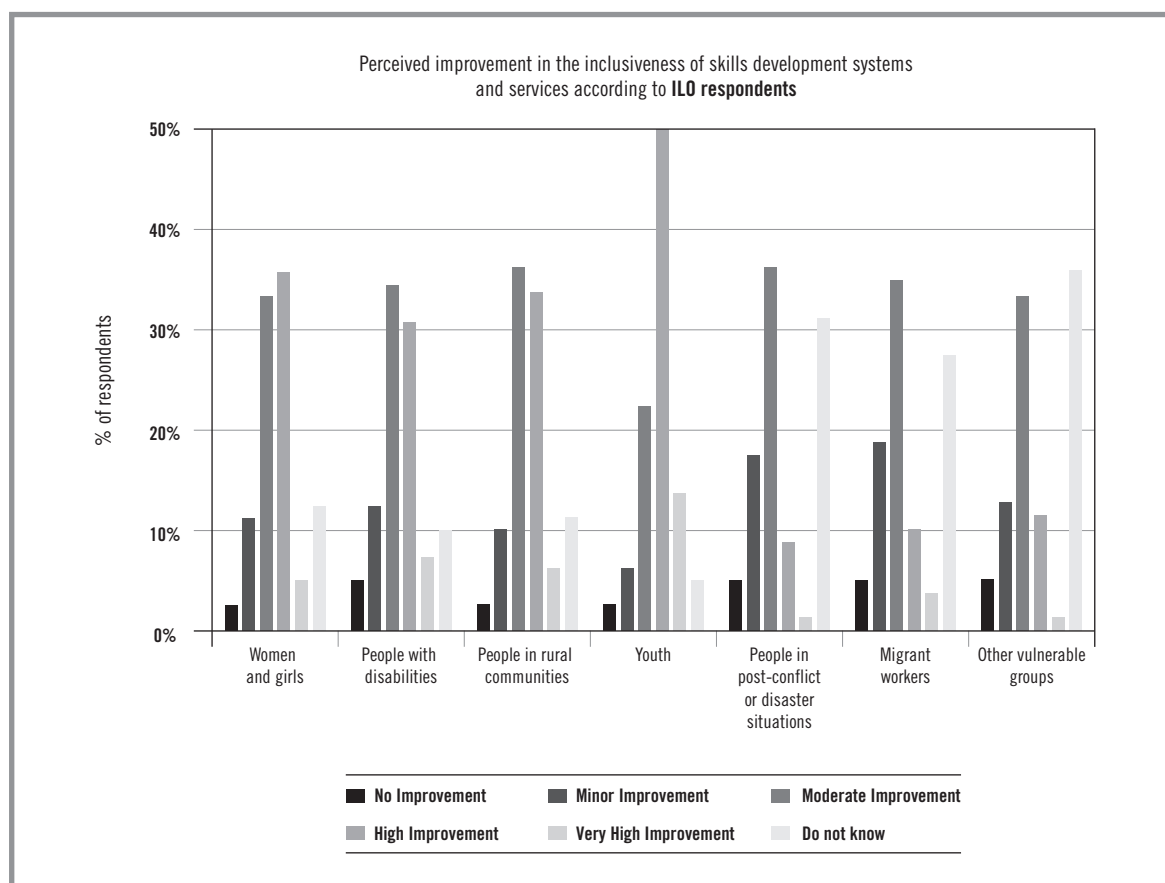
these models across the country. Despite the government having difficulties with its budget, it has responded to strong demand from provinces to expand by allocating US\$75,000 per district to replicate the model nationally. This money has yet to be allocated, but once it does, there is an established institutional structure that can be used at the national and district level to mainstream the initiative. ILO support has, however, been very intensive and it remains to be seen if Zimbabwe is ready to run these programmes on its own and if government funding will be sufficient.

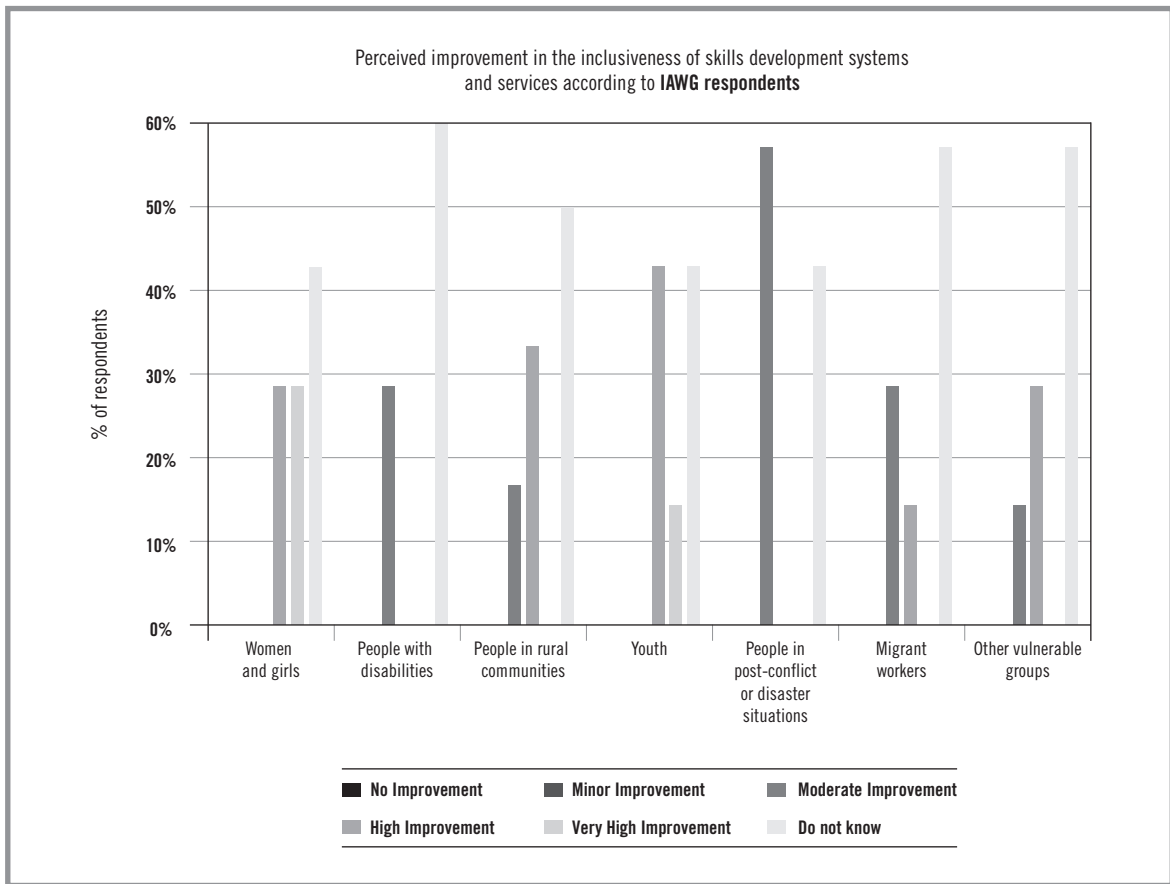
**Sustainability is always considered in the design of ILO skills interventions, but achieving sustainable change may be easier when working with government systems**

202. Sustainability of ILO interventions is considered in the design and implementation process, but its achievement is never guaranteed. Work in skills policy development and training system reform probably offers the best prospects for sustainability. These both involve working mainly with government stakeholders in developing new processes and procedures. If successful, these processes and procedures become a permanent and enduring marker of the ILO's work. The skills work in Bangladesh is certainly in this category, and there is potential too in the Russian Federation, Armenia, Viet Nam and Zambia for the ILO's policy, legislative and systems development support to create a similar legacy.
203. On the other hand, when the ILO's work is focused more on community economic development and the skills needed by individuals to elevate them from poverty, sustainability is more "hit or miss". Although Zimbabwe is completely sold on the benefits of TREE, has a potentially good network structure to adopt it as a mainstream programme, and has even allocated a modest budget for its expansion, the evaluation was nevertheless left with some doubts about its sustainability. The fact that TREE has reportedly only been mainstreamed into the national budgets of two countries (Pakistan and the Philippines) suggests that sustainability is hard to attain.
204. Yet, compared with all of the other site visits, it was only in Zimbabwe that the evaluation saw significant numbers of people whose lives seemed to have been changed as a result of an ILO intervention. Policy work elsewhere might one day have this effect too, but it is hard not to be attracted to an approach that is having an immediate result for people in need rather than to the long term improvement of a government system. The results of programmes like TREE might very well be sustainable for individual participants, but without ongoing support, the intervention itself might not be.

**Staff and stakeholders perceive the ILO skills work as having had a sustainable impact on extending access to training systems and services**

205. Regarding the impact and sustainability of ILO skills work on different groups of people, staff generally considered the ILO's skills work as having achieved moderate or high levels of improvement in the inclusiveness of skills development systems for some groups, but especially for youth. External stakeholders, including Inter-Agency Working Group members, often were unaware of the impact and sustainability of these interventions, but the responses they did make were quite different to those of ILO staff. The sample size from these groups was relatively small and may reflect other factors, such as awareness of some interventions, but not others. Results for three groups (ILO staff, IAWG members and non-ILO) are summarized below:





## CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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### CONCLUSIONS

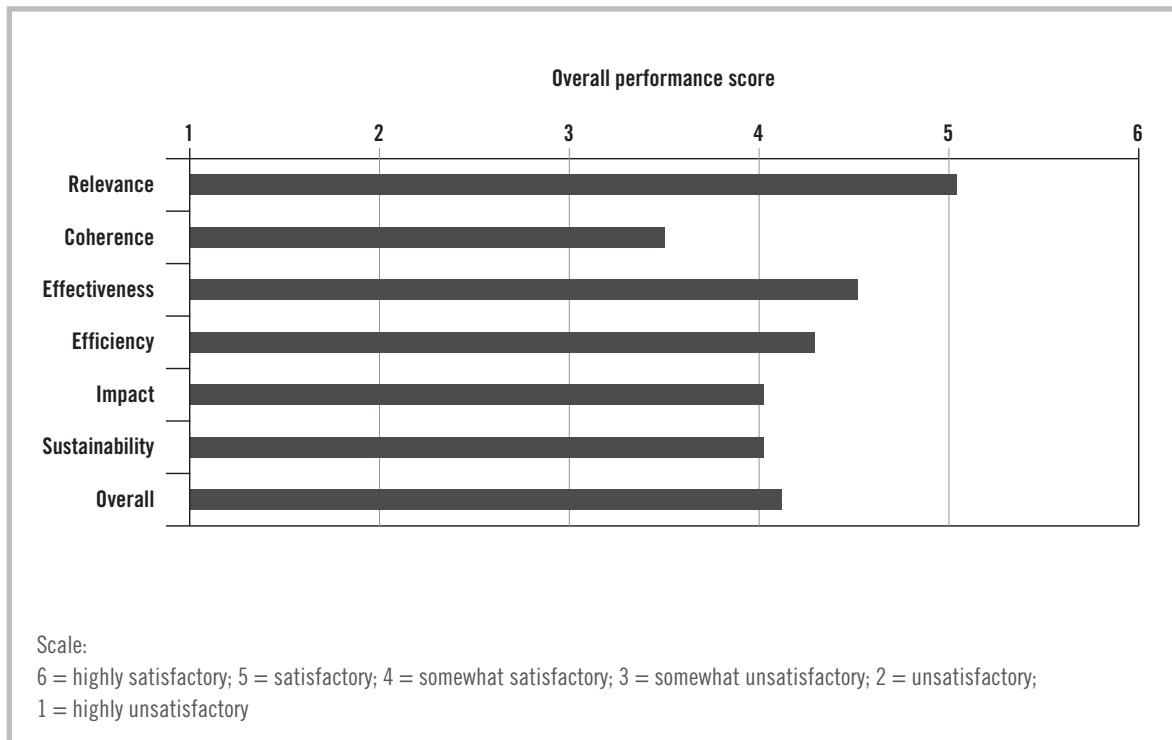
206. The considerable scope and complexity of the ILO's work in skills make any broad judgement of performance in this area very difficult. For example, work in national training system reform is hard to compare with projects that build skills to improve livelihoods in rural communities. Moreover, success in one type of work in one country might be counter-balanced by relative failure in a similar field in another.
207. The lack of any coherent organizational strategy for skills work globally meant that much of the work performed, though following a recognized agenda set out in key policy documents, did not reflect the Strategic Policy Framework, P&B and the indicators they used to measure results. The evaluation team was therefore put in the invidious position of evaluating strategic performance with no clear strategy and with performance indicators that were poorly defined.
208. Keeping these important factors in mind, the evaluation considered how well the organization performed in skills against the Strategic Policy Framework indicators and through direct observation from the field visits and from the survey results, and draws the following conclusions:
209. **Relevance:** Although some of the skills work done by the ILO in the period found no natural home among the Strategic Policy Framework performance indicators, in all other respects, including commitments made by the ILO to key Conventions and Recommendations and to supporting countries to implement the G20 Strategy, the activities and approach were relevant and appropriate. In the countries visited in the evaluation, constituents were clearly supportive of the ILO's approach. While there are many other development agencies and United Nations partners working in the field of skills, ILO activities were seen to be complementary and harmonizing well with the strategies these organizations had adopted. ILO was seen as a natural leader in the area of skills work by surveyed stakeholders and the recognition by the G20 in asking the ILO to take the lead to develop the G20 Training Strategy has placed ILO as a global influencer in skills development work.
210. During the reporting period, internal collaboration and synergy between different branches of the ILO might have been constrained to some extent by the inability of the planning process to assign activities to more than one outcome in the Strategic Policy Framework, but this does not seem to have been a problem in the field as the various activities seem to converge more naturally there. At the strategic management level, there is a need to provide more guidance as to the priority areas for intervention both in terms of the level of intervention (for example, long-term training system reform

or short to medium term community based action) and, perhaps, geographical focus. None of this guidance, however, should be in the form of a highly prescriptive strategy.

211. **Coherence:** The coherence of action implemented in the field and the strategy expressed in the biennial P&Bs was poor. This issue has been discussed in detail in the report, but the difficulties experienced in accurately linking the two through the Implementation Reports is a testimony to the gap between them. Countries might have been forced into a difficult choice of either adhering strictly to Strategic Policy Framework (in the process maximizing resource allocation, but inadequately responding to constituent needs and to the “skills agenda”) or adjusting its reporting to better fit with the global results framework.
212. **Effectiveness:** Performance was examined through the lens of the Strategic Policy Framework. Of the five indicators linked to outcome 2, three were not met and two on youth employment and employment services were exceeded. The evaluation team had concerns about the accuracy and validity of some of the reported results. In the countries visited, some of which had large technical cooperation portfolios, major successes were achieved but were not entirely reflected in the implementation reports. Generally, activities in the field visit countries took gender concerns into its implementation but this was not systematic. Gender was not thoroughly reflected in the reporting of results. Staff and constituents interviewed had a favourable view of the effectiveness of the ILO's skills work. Despite some deficiencies of the strategy as a means of guiding work, the ILO's efforts in practice proved to be adaptable, responsive and effective in meeting the differing needs of the constituents.
213. **Efficiency:** A comprehensive assessment of the efficiency of the ILO's skills work would require data that the Office cannot currently provide, including the cost of all resources used to undertake specific skills activities, information on how these activities are linked to outputs and how they contributed to the achievement of outcomes. Although an examination of expenditure on skills by countries raised some questions about relative return on investment, the different circumstances of the countries visited made any judgement based on this sample almost impossible – some had a single project coordinator working in skills, while Bangladesh's successes have led to a separate ILO's skills office with a team of 19 skills specialists. From observations made in the field there was no conspicuous signs of inefficiency – in fact, some had achieved quite a lot with very limited resources. The field visit country sample explicitly included countries where much work was reported to have been done with little funding and the evaluation was able to confirm that this was the case. Survey results showed, amongst others, that the ILO perceives itself to be efficient. A number of constraints to operational efficiency and effectiveness were also identified through the survey including access to technical expertise, the time required for internal decision making, and funding. The evaluation did raise the issue of whether there might be more efficient and cost-effective models that could be developed that are outside the prevailing delivery paradigm, but this is the subject of a separate recommendation below.
214. **Impact:** In terms of the ultimate goal as expressed in the Strategic Policy Framework (the “Position to be reached by 2015: Over 30 member States have aligned training supply and demand, extended access to training”), there were no data available on the actual number of countries that were assessed as having reached this position. The countries visited in the evaluation had all undertaken activities that relate to the goal, constituents in these countries were generally satisfied and survey data suggested that staff and stakeholders believe that the ILO had made a difference. When questioned in the field, however, staff and stakeholders were often unable to present any evidence of impact, especially in respect of “aligning supply and demand” through training system reform.
215. **Sustainability:** The potential for sustainability in policy development and training system reform is naturally greater than that of more community-based approaches that pilot delivery mechanisms. The latter, however, offer a more visible immediate result for beneficiaries and the evaluation saw cases where the sustainable results for individuals were good, even if the sustainability of the inter-

vention was questionable. The ILO needs to consider the relative advantages of these different approaches in the formulation of its strategy, and factor in these differences in sustainability outcomes as part of this process.

Figure 2. Evaluation Criteria Ratings



## LESSONS LEARNED

216. The key lessons learned from the evaluation were:

**Lesson 1: The ILO needs a document that guides its work in skills and establishes priorities over the short, medium and long term.**

217. Skills work is complex and is linked with many different national policies and programmes. Depending on local needs and circumstances, the ILO therefore finds itself addressing skills issues from a **multitude of starting points** – economic development, labour market efficiency, structural adjustment, ALMPs for the unemployed, increasing or diversifying trade, enterprise or livelihood development, Green Jobs, supporting the movement from the informal to the formal economy, improving youth transitions from education to work, addressing the needs of migrant workers, improving inclusiveness etc. In some rare cases such as in Bangladesh, the ILO can position itself as the lead agent in training system reform and attempt to tackle all of these issues as part of a grand plan. But in many other situations, the ILO has a specific problem or systemic “weak link” to address and a skills development activity (or specific policy reform) is just part of the solution.

218. The Office needs to articulate more clearly how it wants its staff to operate within this complex field. This might or might not be a “strategy” in the conventional sense, but some sort of statement or operational framework is needed that makes it clear how and where skills development fits across the whole organization, what opportunities for skills development should be sought, and what the **short, medium and long-term priorities** can be identified for the organization as a whole.

219. At present, skills staff either **do not know or only think they know what the ILO expects of them**. The survey indicated that almost half of the people in the Office who said that skills work was an important or very important part of their work said that they did not know what the ILO's skills strategy was. The half that thought they did know all had different ideas about what the strategy was.

**Lesson 2: Performance indicators and their measurement criteria need to better reflect the work that actually leads to the outcomes being pursued.**

220. A lack of understanding of the ILO's direction and priorities in skills might have contributed to the problems identified in the evaluation in reporting against the performance indicators. The indicators in the Strategic Policy Framework **did not align well with the activities** – or, to reference the G20 Strategy, the “building blocks” – that are recognized as **leading to the outcomes** being sought. The indicators provided some insight into how well access was improved for identified groups, but very little into the complex world of training system reform.
221. These indicators are important and, if they are poorly designed, can misdirect organizational effort. As they were applied in the Strategic Policy Framework 2010–2015, few people in the Office would say that they provided an accurate picture of performance in skills.

**Lesson 3: Training system reform is a fertile field for ILO work, offering sustainability of results and the ability to advance decent work goals, but it can be a slow process.**

222. The experience in Bangladesh shows that, if the ILO can attain a position of leadership in training reform, this can enhance the ILO's capacity both to attract donor funding and to influence employment policy more broadly. Ten years ago, Bangladesh had no projects in its portfolio that were skills-related, but it is now the backbone of the country's operations with a team of 19 skills specialists employed. Over the period of the evaluation, the office attracted over US\$20 million in investment in skills and is about to sign an agreement for another US\$30 million. The breadth of activity covered is described in the report as are the greater prospects for sustainability that are derived from working with constituents to establish systems not projects.
223. The drawback of this approach is that it takes some time for the impact and benefits of such systemic reform to be evident either in terms of labour market efficiency and skills match or for particular groups, especially the most disadvantaged. There is a risk that this type of work will be perceived as offering too few immediate results, especially for the latter.

**Lesson 4: Working at the community level to provide skills to highly disadvantaged groups can have an immediate impact, but sustainability and expansion are hard to achieve.**

224. At the other end of the continuum to training system reform (though it can be an element of this reform) are community-based or informal skills system interventions. In the case of Zimbabwe, the TREE programme, based on this community-based philosophy, has provided individuals with the vocational and entrepreneurial skills they need to climb out of poverty and improve the quality of life for themselves and others. Formal training system providers were involved, but these individuals are unlikely to ever connect with this system much beyond this initial training – certification under a National Qualifications Framework would not offer them much.
225. This sort of work by the ILO has a lot more visceral appeal than policy work, but it has drawbacks too, chief among them being sustainability. For whatever reason, despite constituent approval, TREE has proven hard to sustain. Zimbabwe desperately wants to sustain it, but it needs money and expertise. What is more, despite having helped thousands of young people in the country, to really make a difference it needs to reach *millions*. As quoted earlier in the report, one constituent said “*we are trying to move a mountain with a teaspoon.*”



**Lesson 5: In the ILO's skills work, it is important to ensure that the input of Ministries other than the Ministry of Labour is given equal attention.**

226. In most places, TVET is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education rather than the Ministry of Labour, the ILO's in-country counterpart. The evaluation came across examples where the Ministry of Education may not have been as involved in shaping skills-related activities as it should have. In one case, for example, there was a DWCP Working Group looking at skills policy, but which excluded the Ministry responsible for TVET. While the Ministry of Labour was meant to represent the Government as a whole, it naturally saw issues through the lens of its portfolio responsibilities (for example, the public employment service, ALMPs, retraining the unemployed etc.) Opportunities for addressing TVET system issues might therefore not make it to the table, particularly if employer and worker representatives are not across these issues.
227. There may be a need, therefore, for the ILO to alert its offices and its constituents to the need to ensure inputs from other Ministries are properly sought. In addition to the Ministry of Education, there are others that will also have an interest in skills – including, for example, Ministries responsible for Economic Development, Trade, Business, Infrastructure, as well as sector-specific Ministries.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendation 1: Enhance coherence between the P&B, the key policy documents and the SDGs by mapping key skills development activities to the indicators in the next Strategic Plan/P&B.**

228. By mapping these indicators to key current activity, as well as to broader fields of work mandated by the key Conventions and Recommendations, what fits and what does not fit will become clearer. Where there are gaps – that is, where no home can be found in the Strategic Plan for particular activities – this needs to be highlighted and a high-level decision made that resolves what might have been an unintended consequence of the indicator's design.
229. Although much of the ILO's work relates to SDG Goal 8 (“inclusive and sustainable growth, employment and decent work for all”), its skills work also relates to SDG Goal 4 (“Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning”). The targets set under this goal include access for all women and men to TVET (not just youth), the number of youths and adults that have relevant “skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship”, access to vocational education and training for disadvantaged groups, and increasing participation in vocational training in the least developed countries (especially Africa and Small Island Developing States).
230. All of these issues are in the key ILO skills policy documents, but the Transitional Strategic Plan does not seem to adequately recognize them. Although it includes no outcome for skills, skills work is referenced in three other outcomes (1, 5 and 8) and in two of the Cross Cutting areas (“Gender equality and non-discrimination”, and “transition to a green economy”). Two P&B indicators (1.2 and 1.4) refer to skills, but these are quite narrowly defined – one measures the upgrading of skills development systems only as they affect school-to-work transition, and the other bundles the application of skills anticipation tools with the assessment of policy and the promotion of Industry Skills Councils. This needs to be corrected in the next Strategic Plan.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS and PROGRAM	High	December 2016	Low

**Recommendation 2: Ensure that adequate technical support is available for areas of growing demand and consider the need to target specific skills related activities in “priority regions or countries”.**

231. The evaluation found that demand for different types of skills work can fluctuate and the ILO needs to ensure that it can quickly respond to such changes (for example, at the time of the country visits, both Skills Anticipation and Quality Apprenticeships were clearly arousing the interests of many countries). More generally, skills development is an area where demand for different specialized expertise can ebb and flow, so a broad capacity to respond to such fluctuations is needed, particularly in the context of the next Strategic Plan.
232. The evaluation also found that the focus of ILO activity in skills is Asia – more than half of XBTC project funding with a skills component flowed there, more than three times Africa's share. No doubt there are good reasons for demand for skills in Asian economies and the evaluation's review of a sample of DWCPs shows there is also strong demand in Africa, as well as perhaps some hidden demand. (For example, some African countries prioritized labour intensive infrastructure projects as drivers for youth employment but were silent on skills. This raised the question of how these youths would be trained and would they acquire any transferable skills that would help them beyond the project?)
233. It could be that the lack until very recently of enough skills specialists in Africa may have resulted in insufficient attention being given to the benefits of including different skills elements in projects. Future planning needs to address this, ensuring that regional skills specialists can add value to DWCPs and activities through skills development.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS	Medium	June 2017	Medium

**Recommendation 3: Clarify the full scope of the ILO's skills agenda and communicate this to ILO offices and constituents. Develop tools and guides that support offices and constituents to better integrate skills development activities into the full range of development interventions.**

234. Although skills work touches on many areas of the ILO's operations, the opportunity to include effective skills development elements can sometimes be missed. Practical tools and guides may be needed to assist ILO offices and constituents to better integrate skills into a broader range of activities. This may include such elements as the “building blocks” described in the G20 Strategy, Global Products or parts of these products, or just good practices learned from other projects. These need to be written for a broad audience (not for skills specialists) and be focused on the typical problems or opportunities faced in the field that skills responses can help to address – not on the high-level architecture of training system reform.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS	Low	December 2017	Medium

**Recommendation 4: Encourage innovation in the ILO's skills work by allocating funds to develop and test new models.**

235. The ILO is not regarded as being especially innovative when it comes to skills work. The Office seems to rely heavily on long-standing products and service. The introduction of new approaches and methods seems largely restricted to analytical processes (for example, STED and Skills Antici-

pation) rather than investigating new models for delivery. Some staff expressed frustration with this, questioning why the ILO is “stuck to old fashioned, circular activities” when it could be a leader in the field. There is a need to more actively develop and test innovative models that are both sustainable and have the capacity to be scaled up.

236. Establishing some form of “innovation fund” to support the development and piloting of promising new models could be considered. These could be stand-alone “experiments” or could perhaps augment activities in larger XBTC projects – even trialling different approaches side-by-side with the traditional approaches used as “control groups”. Finding new models that are effective, scalable and cost effective should be a priority. CINTERFOR’s work in technological innovations in vocational learning should also be followed up.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS and PARDEV	Medium	December 2017	High

**Recommendation 5: Enhance capacity of ILO tripartite partners to participate in ILOs skills work and ensure other ministries are effectively engaged in identifying and addressing priorities.**

237. In its field visits, the evaluation team met with workers’ and employers’ representatives and many were very knowledgeable in skills policy and in matters relating to training system reform and had been playing a very active role in the tripartite Industry Skills Councils. However, there were also some representatives who would benefit from capacity building in this area so that they could better influence skills development. In some countries, there was clearly a risk that government representatives might dominate the process and that this would lead to poorer outcomes for the skills system. Employer and worker representatives have a vital role to play in skills development and their capacity to do so needs to be enhanced.
238. Also, as vocational education and training is often the responsibility of each country’s Ministry of Education and not its’ Ministry of Labour, the ILO needs to ensure that its country-level analysis and planning processes effectively engage with the Ministry of Education. Skills work also extends to other ministries and should have input into the ILO’s skills-related work.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS, ACTRAV and ACTEMP /Country and DWT offices	Medium	December 2017	High

**Recommendation 6: Improve the current systems in place to review and verify results reported in the Implementation Reports and improve the capacity of ILO systems to report on the allocation of RB resources to outcomes.**

239. The office should implement a system to make a more realistic assessment of the ILOs contribution to reported results. Results reported against performance indicators need to be reviewed more thoroughly and only be included in performance reports where the ILO has made a substantial and verifiable contribution. There is no evidence to suggest that this is a problem that is restricted to outcome 2, but is a system-wide problem. Given that some technical interpretation may be required, improving the validity and accuracy of reporting will require the input of both PROGRAM and SKILLS.
240. Adding to the number of evaluation reports which have highlighted this issue, a system should be put in place that better captures the use of resources (including Regular Budget resources) linked to

outcomes. This will reflect and quantify the work undertaken by ILO, including support to constituents and capacity building efforts. For example, there is currently no way to capture the technical support headquarters and skills specialists provides to the constituents on skills work.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
DDG/MR, PROGRAM, DDG/P and technical department	Medium	December 2018	High

**Recommendation 7: Improve institutional record keeping to ensure that important information is not lost when key staff leave the organization.**

241. The evaluation was frustrated at times by an inability to access certain information, including the background of and reasoning behind significant decisions, because individual staff had since left the organization. Some information of this type was apparently kept in emails or personal drives and ceased to be accessible as soon as the person left. For example, the rationale behind setting targets for Africa in the Strategic Policy Framework and their apparently random nature, posed a mystery that evaluation team was unable to solve. No documents were found that explained it and, although the information might still be known by someone in the Office, this person proved to be elusive. Basic record keeping of this type needs to be improved across the organization.

Responsible units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
EMPLOYMENT/SKILLS and PROGRAM	High	December 2016	High

## OFFICE RESPONSE

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242. The Office acknowledges with thanks the evaluation of an important area of work in high demand by the ILO constituents. The responsible technical department, the Employment Policy Department (EMPLOYMENT), appreciates the finding that the ILO's work in skills development is adaptable, responsive and effective in meeting the diverse needs of the constituents, ranging from policy and institutional reform to community-based action. The Office welcomes the recommendations and draws attention to the organizational reforms introduced after 2013. These reforms resulted in better integration of work on skills with the ILO's work on employment policy, synergizing with other outcomes and increasing capacity in the field, from both supply and demand perspectives.

### RECOMMENDATION 1

243. The Office recognizes that the P&B, the Strategic Policy Framework and indicators under outcome 2 covering skills work in the period 2010–2015 did not reflect the full scope of the ILO's skills strategy as deployed at the country level. However, it underscores the internal consistency and coherence of the ILO's strategy, approach and action, as guided by: the normative and policy frameworks of the Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195); the Conclusions on skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development, adopted by the International Labour Conference (ILC) in 2008; and the Conclusions concerning the recurrent discussion on employment adopted by the ILC in 2010 and in 2014. The skills strategy is also reflected in the ILO's G20 Training Strategy, a major outcome of the ILO's partnership and advocacy. While a perfect match of the strategic framework with the full range of support provided through the ILO action may not be feasible, new indicators were already introduced in the 2016–2017 biennium under outcome 1. These indicators are being further refined in the proposals for 2018–2019, in the light of experience and lessons learned. The Office agrees that in addition to SDG 8, much of skills work also relates to SDG 4. Relevant SDG indicators and targets are being fully mapped and reflected in the P&B for 2018–2019.

### RECOMMENDATIONS 2 AND 3

244. To improve the geographical spread of ILO support, two new skills specialists were appointed in the African region in 2016, bringing the total to four posts. The Office expects that these appointments will bolster its work on skills, including by increasing its development cooperation portfolio in Africa. The Office appreciates the need for tools and guides to assist the ILO offices in addressing skills concerns. It has made a head start in this regard, including by preparing a series of policy briefs

to inform technical specialists working in fields other than skills. It will also consider consolidating the ILO skills strategy into a single document, other than the P&B, that addresses a broader audience.

245. The Office is taking several steps to continuously update and adapt its response to rapid changes and evolving conditions in labour markets and the skills needs implications, as well as the diverse and changing needs and priorities of the ILO constituents. Focusing on available as well as additional resources, the Office is emphasizing areas of action in high demand, such as apprenticeships and skills anticipation methodologies. In addition, it has launched a new initiative on jobs and skills mismatches with a view to better assessing and responding to present challenges and future of work issues, as reported under outcome 1 in November 2015.

## **RECOMMENDATION 4**

246. The evaluation highlights the relevance and effectiveness of some well-established ILO models. The development and testing of new models is a part of the ongoing work of the Office. Within the limitation of existing resources, efforts will be made to increase the focus on this aspect of the technical department's work. The Office will also review the feasibility of the creation of an "innovation fund" to support the development and piloting of promising new training models.

## **RECOMMENDATION 5**

247. The Office will intensify its efforts to improve the capacities of worker and employer organizations to engage in the development of skills policies and programmes, including through the development of dedicated knowledge products. Work with government entities other than Ministries of Labour and Employment is taking place, where appropriate, taking into account specific mandates and arrangements. This cooperation will be made more visible.

## **RECOMMENDATION 6**

248. A system for tracking resources to outcomes, enabling the Office to quantify contributions to reported results has been operating for two years and an enhanced model for capturing base data is currently being tested. The Office acknowledges the need for further improvements in the reporting of results in implementation reports, which will be assisted by the implementation of the enhanced data capture model effective January 2017.

## **RECOMMENDATION 7**

249. The Office acknowledges the challenge of maintaining institutional memory, including the need for a record-keeping system that does not depend on staff email accounts. The Office will step up its efforts to devise an electronic system in which records for major development cooperation programmes and key work items are kept centrally.

## ANNEX A – TERMS OF REFERENCE

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### INTRODUCTION

1. Every year the ILO's Evaluation Office (EVAL) holds annual consultations with senior management through the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) and constituents (group secretariats) to select topics for future high level evaluations. The selection of strategic evaluations customarily focuses on strategic outcomes but may also focus on institutional capacity issues. In November 2015, the ILO's Governing Body approved EVAL's work plan for 2016 which included an independent outcome evaluation of "Jobs and Skills for growth." The evaluation was selected for 2016 following consultations with management, the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) and the constituents.

### BACKGROUND

2. Countries at all development levels find that adequate education and skills increase the ability to innovate and adopt new technologies. They make the difference between inclusive growth and growth that leaves behind large segments of society. A workforce that has been appropriately trained and is able to continue learning boosts investor confidence and thus job growth.<sup>58</sup>
3. In low-income countries, scarcity of workers with relevant education and demonstrated skills constrains growth of the productive formal economy. In many middle-income countries, high growth and productivity in some sectors intermingles with low productivity and unrelenting poverty in the large informal economy. Better education and training for young people, workers and entrepreneurs can accelerate the transition to the formal economy, but only as part of the job-centered macroeconomic growth policies and a conducive environment for enterprise growth.<sup>59</sup>
4. Demographic trends together with heightened competition make the risk of skills and talent shortages and mismatches more acute in many OECD, Eastern European and Commonwealth of Independent States countries. Encouraging lifelong learning and improving labour migration policies are among the challenges confronting ageing societies. The low-skilled are often losing out on benefits that globalization can bring. Discrimination on the basis of gender, ethnicity, rural isolation or age constrains equal access to education, training, and employment services that prepare young people to enter the labour market.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> From Brief Profile on Skills and Employability, Skills and Employability Branch, 25 May 2012. Accessed via ILO website November 23, 2015

<sup>59</sup> Idem.

<sup>60</sup> Idem



## THE RESULTS FRAMEWORK

5. The Strategic Framework 2010–2015 identified skills development under outcome 2 with three indicators specifically related to skills development and a fourth which includes components of skills development.
6. The indicators are the following
  - 2.1: Number of member States that, with ILO support, integrate skills development into sector or national development strategies.
  - 2.2: Number of member States that, with ILO support, make relevant training more readily accessible in rural communities.
  - 2.3: Number of member States that, with ILO support, make relevant training more readily accessible to people with disabilities.
  - 2.4: Number of member States that, with ILO support, strengthen employment services to deliver on employment policy objectives<sup>61</sup>
  - 2.5: Number of member States that, with ILO support, develop and implement integrated policies and programmes to promote productive employment and decent work for young women and men.<sup>62</sup>
7. It clearly sets out that by 2015, “Over 30 member States have aligned training supply and demand, extended access to training opportunities to a wider proportion of workers and have integrated skills development in sector and national development policies and in responses to global drivers of change such as technology, trade, and global warming”.
8. ILO's work on skills development touches upon other areas of ILOs work such as Office's support for national employment policies (outcome 1), policy guidance on skills for green jobs, good practices to promote workplace learning on sustainable enterprises (outcome 3), tools to upgrade informal apprenticeships to combat child labour (outcome 16) and training on the regulation of private employment agencies against human trafficking (outcome 15), promoting the inclusion of persons with disabilities (outcome 17), skills recognition programmes for migrant workers (outcome 7) and promoting youth employment.<sup>63</sup>
9. In the 2014–2015 Programme and Budget, the Areas of Critical Importance identified skills as a cross-cutting issue in:
  - Promoting more and better jobs for inclusive growth
  - Jobs and skills for youth
  - Creating and extending social protection floors
  - Productivity and working conditions in SMEs
  - Formalization of the informal economy<sup>64</sup>
10. In the transitional Strategic Plan 2016–17 a specific outcome on skills is no longer identified separately and is embedded in several outcomes on jobs and skills for young people (outcome 1 indicator 1.2, 1.4) and other disadvantaged groups, and decent work in the rural economy<sup>65</sup>, gender equality and non-discrimination, and the green economy.

<sup>61</sup> Only aspects related to skills development of indicator 2.4 will be under the scope of this evaluation.

<sup>62</sup> Only skills development aspects of indicator 2.5 will be covered in this evaluation.

<sup>63</sup> Programme and Budget 2012–13 p. 26–27 P&B also notes that, “progress under the areas of critical important will be measured through indicators attached to the 19 outcomes.” P&B 2014–15 p. 11.

<sup>64</sup> P&B 2014–15 p. 19 and 20.

<sup>65</sup> Based on “Transition from the Strategic Policy Framework for 2010–2015 to the Transitional Strategic Plan for 2016–17: proposals for re-linking CPOs” Program document 28 October 2015.

11. The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization (2008) and the Global Jobs Pact (2009) highlight skills development as central to improving productivity, employability and social inclusion. The Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195) provides guidance on the content of effective skills policies and systems. The Conclusions on skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 97th Session in 2008 established a strategy for skills development. The Strategy subsequently became the foundation of the ILO/G20 training strategy of 2010<sup>66</sup> and 2015.
12. The strategy called for:
  - Integrating skills development into national and sectoral development strategies;
  - Using skills development to maximize opportunities and mitigate the negative impact of technology, trade and climate change;
  - Building seamless pathways of education that connect basic education, vocational training, employment services and lifelong learning and that maintain communication on training needs and quality between employers and trainers; and
  - Extending access to education and training of good quality and relevance to the labour market to those who are disadvantaged in society and promoting business strategies that utilise higher skills and provide on-going training<sup>67</sup>
13. In addition to ILO strategies on skills development the ILO has contributed to the development of multilateral and global strategies on skills and training such as the OECD<sup>68</sup>, World Bank<sup>69</sup> and UNESCO<sup>70</sup> strategies for skills development.

## PURPOSE

14. The purpose of the evaluation is mainly summative with formative aspects. It is to provide insight into the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability and impact of the ILO's strategy, programme approach, and interventions (summative) to promote skills development for employment and growth. It is also intended to be forward looking and provide findings and lessons learned and emerging good practices for improved decision-making within the context of the next strategic framework and the Sustainable Development Goals (formative). The final evaluation report will be submitted to and discussed at the November 2016 Governing Body session.

## SCOPE

15. The evaluation will consider all efforts of the Office in supporting achievement of skills development components under outcome 2 and under other related outcomes. This HLE is not an evaluation of the Skills and Employability Branch and its overall work but the effort of the entire Office on skills development. Given the breadth of action being taken, the scope of the evaluation will be narrowed to the time period from 2010–2015 which is the period of the strategic policy framework. While the focus is on ILO's work on skills development and increased skills of the ILO constituents the evaluation will also assess the ILOs contribution in global skills strategies and its coordination with the multilateral partners (World Bank, UNESCO, OECD, G20) in working together to support developing countries, in particular low-income countries, "to continue to develop employment-related skills that are better

<sup>66</sup> A Skilled Workforce for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth, ILO 2010.

<sup>67</sup> Brief Profile on Skills and Employability Factsheet, Skills and Employability Branch May, 25, 2012 from Skills and Employability Branch website accessed November 27th, 2015.

<sup>68</sup> Better Skills Better Jobs Better Lives A strategic approach to skills policies, OECD 2012.

<sup>69</sup> STEPPING UP SKILLS For more jobs and higher productivity, 2010.

<sup>70</sup> Youth and Skills putting education to work, 2012.

matched to employer and market needs in order to attract investment and decent jobs.”<sup>71</sup> ILOs work in knowledge management and sharing of experiences through online platforms such as the Global Public-Private Knowledge Sharing Platform on Skills for Employment (Global KSP). The ROAP Knowledge Sharing Platform and the CINTERFOR database will also be examined.

## CLIENTS

16. The principal client for the evaluation is the Governing Body, which is responsible for governance-level decisions on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation. Other key stakeholders include the Director-General and members of the Senior Management Team at Headquarters, the Evaluation Advisory Committee, the Employment Policy Department's Skills and Employability Branch, EMPLAB (Youth Employment), Job Creation and Enterprise Development Department (Green Jobs), Governance (child labour and trafficking) Work Quality (disabilities and migrant workers) and Multinational Enterprises and Enterprise Engagement Unit (EMP/MULTI). It should also serve as a source of information for ILO donors, partners and policy makers.

## KEY QUESTIONS

17. The evaluation questions are based on the OECD DAC evaluation criteria of relevance and coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact. Outcome objectives created for the P&B strategy will serve as the basis for the evaluation questions. These questions will seek to address priority issues and concerns for the national constituents and other stakeholders. When designing the questions, the evaluation team will consider availability and reliability of data, how the answers will be used and if the data are regarded as credible. Further evaluation questions will be proposed and refined by the evaluation team during the inception report phase.<sup>72</sup>

Assessment Criteria	Questions to be addressed
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To what extent is the design of the ILO skills strategy relevant to global strategies on skills development and does it address the needs of member States, governments and social partners?</li> <li>■ What means are there to ensure continuing relevance vis-à-vis changing needs and new developments?</li> </ul>
Coherence & Validity of Design <sup>72</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To what extent has the ILO's strategy on skills development been coherent and complementary (in its design and implementation) to activities being carried out under other ILO Strategic Policy Framework outcome Strategies and activities being implemented by other ILO departments?</li> <li>■ How appropriate and useful are the indicators on skills development as described in the ILO's Strategic Policy Framework 2010–2015? Do they effectively assess its results and progress? Are the indicators measurable and traceable?</li> <li>■ Is the strategy coherent and complementary to similar efforts carried out by constituents, United Nations and other partners?</li> </ul>
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To what extent has the ILO fulfilled its objective in skills development using the Strategic Policy Framework and P&amp;B targets as a benchmark.</li> <li>■ How has ILO external coordination (with constituents, United Nations partners, World Bank and G20) and internal coordination (between sectors, technical departments, regions and sub regions) promoted the realization of skills development?</li> </ul>

<sup>71</sup> G20 Training Strategy “A Skilled Workforce for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth”.

<sup>72</sup> There are some gaps and no clear linkage found between the outcomes of the Strategy 2010–2015 and the relevant goals and actions to be taken set out in the 2008 Declaration and the Follow-up to the Declaration. This evaluation will have to point this out in assessing the validity of design of the Strategy 2010–2015 and make necessary suggestions for the new Strategy for 2015–2017.

Assessment Criteria	Questions to be addressed
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To what extent have resources been used efficiently and the programme appropriately and adequately resourced?</li> <li>■ What were the costs associated with the interventions? Could there have been alternative designs that rendered results more efficiently?</li> </ul>
Impact & Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ To what extent have ILO actions had impact in the form of increased capacity, necessary tools and policy improvements needed to work towards the achievement of the outcomes and outputs identified within the Strategic Policy Framework on skills development? Is it likely that the results of the interventions are durable and can be maintained or even up-scaled and replicated by constituents?</li> <li>■ What actions and conditions are required for achieving broader, long-term impact?</li> <li>■ To what extent have ILO interventions been designed and implemented in ways that have maximized sustainability at country level?</li> <li>■ Can observed changes and results be causally linked to the ILO interventions? Did the changes result from the ILO interventions? Are there impact assessments that can support attribution of results to ILO, and if not, what other evidence is there?</li> <li>■ What are the tripartite constituents' perceived benefits (differentiated by groups)?</li> </ul>

## METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

18. This evaluation will be based upon the ILO's evaluation policy and procedures which adhere to international standards and best practices, articulated in the OECD/DAC Principles and the Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations System approved by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) in April 2005. More specifically the evaluation will be conducted in accordance with Eval Protocol No 1: High-level Evaluation Protocol for Strategy and Policy Evaluations.
19. EVAL proposes an effectiveness evaluation approach (also known as outcome evaluation or summative evaluation), which determines whether an initiative has achieved the intended outcome. To this end, the evaluation will seek to determine the degree to which the ILO strategy for skills development and the results framework has actually translated into improved capacity to impart employable skills that contribute to economic growth. Further refinement of the methodology will be identified during the preparation of the inception report.
20. The evaluation will be participatory. Consultations with member States, international and national representatives of trade union and employers' organizations, ILO staff at headquarters and in the field, United Nations partners, and other stakeholders will be done through interviews, meetings, focus groups, and electronic communication.
21. The gender dimension will be considered as a cross-cutting concern throughout the methodology, deliverables and final report of the evaluation. In terms of this evaluation, this implies involving both men and women in the consultation, evaluation analysis and evaluation team. Moreover the evaluators should review data and information that is disaggregated by sex and assess the relevance and effectiveness of gender-related strategies and outcomes to improve skills development for women and men. All this information should be accurately included in the inception report and final evaluation report.
22. The details of the methodology will be elaborated by the selected team of evaluators on the basis of the Terms of Reference (TORs) and documented in their proposal and their inception report, which are subject to EVAL's approval. It is expected that the evaluation team will apply mixed methods which draw on both quantitative and qualitative evidence and involve multiple means of analysis.
23. These include but are not limited to:
  - Desk review of relevant documents such as STRATEGIC POLICY FRAMEWORK and P&B strategies for the period covered by the evaluation; outcome-based work planning (OBW) and technical cooperation portfolios and related reviews; implementation planning, management and

reporting reports (information from the IRIS Strategic Management Module); relevant global reports and meta evaluations; relevant DWCPs and logic model (results framework); relevant DWCP HLEs and DWCP; country programme reviews which will have examined recent performance against stated outcomes, determined what has been achieved, and whether strategies being used are efficient and effective;

- National and sectoral strategic plans and reports related to skills, other relevant national, multilateral and UN policy and strategy documents
- Reviewing evidence of follow up to relevant evaluation recommendations and use of lessons learned by ILO management;
- Interviewing key stakeholders which should reflect a diversity of backgrounds inside the Office, according to sector, technical unit, regions and country situations
- Conducting online surveys and other methodologies to obtain feedback and/or information from constituents and other key stakeholders; and
- Field visits (5 countries)
- Case studies of visited countries (5) plus desk review-only case study countries (3)

## CASE STUDIES

24. The purpose of case studies is to conduct in-depth analysis of one set (or unit) of the ILO's strategic and programme means of action aimed at supporting skills development for employment growth. The case studies seek to determine what happened as a result of ILO's interventions, and determine if these interventions had any observable immediate impacts, and to the extent possible determine the links between the observed impacts and the ILO interventions.
25. Possible themes of the case studies could be focussed on the following ILOs strategy on skills development: (to be further developed with evaluation team and key stakeholders)
  - Technical advice: to identify the effectiveness of ILO action in providing policy guidance to integrate skills development into sector or national development strategies.
  - Capacity development: for skills development to maximize opportunities and mitigate the negative impact of technology, trade and climate change; assess the extent to which policymakers' applied knowledge gained to make relevant training more readily accessible in rural communities, for young women and men and with those people with disabilities, build seamless pathways of education that connect basic education, vocational training, employment services and lifelong learning and that maintain communication on training needs and quality between employers and trainers; and extend access to education and training of good quality and relevance to the labour market to those who are disadvantaged in society and promoting business strategies that utilise higher skills and provide on-going training
  - Knowledge sharing: The case study on this mean of action will seek to assess how effectively ILO has promoted and applied knowledge sharing among constituents, ILO staff and its external partners (UN, G20, and multilateral institutions).
26. The case studies will consist of a combination of methods:
  - Interviews, field studies and participant focus groups,
  - Desk reviews to synthesize and aggregate information such as past evaluations, technical studies, and DWCP reviews from the selected countries and programmes at different times. This will allow greater triangulation while minimizing cost and time being expended on new, possibly repetitive studies.
27. A completed case study report will have detailed descriptions of what happened and the context in which it occurred. The report will feature a factual recounting as well as an analysis of events.

28. The selection of the field visits and the case studies will take into account budgetary expenditure in the country, proportion of budget to overall RB, RBSA and TC on skills development work in each country, balanced geographic spread, bearing in mind the specific targets and priority for Africa in the STRATEGIC POLICY FRAMEWORK, and other selection criteria to be decided in discussion with the Skills and Employment branch and the evaluation team. Initial desk review of the TC portfolio on skills development suggests that the case studies should include operations in Africa, Asia, Central Asian Republic region and the Americas. Additional criteria may be added by the evaluation team.

## SUMMARY RATINGS

29. A summary rating shall be expressed by the independent evaluation team at the end of the six evaluation criteria and the respective questions listed above<sup>73</sup>. The evaluation shall use a six-point scale ranging from “highly satisfactory,” “satisfactory,” “somewhat satisfactory,” “somewhat unsatisfactory,” “unsatisfactory,” and “highly unsatisfactory.”
- Highly satisfactory: when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that ILO performance related to criterion has produced outcomes which go beyond expectation, expressed specific comparative advantages and added value, produced best practices;
  - Satisfactory: when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that the objectives have been mostly attained and the expected level of performance can be considered coherent with the expectations of the national tripartite constituents, beneficiaries and of the ILO itself;
  - Somewhat satisfactory: when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that the objectives have been partially attained and there that expected level of performance could be for the most part considered coherent with the expectations of the national tripartite constituents, beneficiaries and of the ILO itself ;
  - Somewhat unsatisfactory: when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that the objectives have been partially attained and the level of performance show minor shortcoming and are not fully considered acceptable in the view of the ILO national tripartite constituents, partners and beneficiaries;
  - Unsatisfactory: when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that the objectives have not been attained and the level of performance show major shortcoming and are not fully considered acceptable in the view of the ILO national tripartite constituents, partners and beneficiaries; and
  - Highly unsatisfactory: when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that expected results have not been attained, and there have been important shortcomings, and the resources have not been utilized effectively and/or efficiently.

## MAIN OUTPUTS/DELIVERABLES/TIMEFRAME

30. The proposed time frame for this evaluation is from January 2016 to November 2016 in accordance with the following schedule:

TORS drafted and circulated to stakeholders	End January 2016
Evaluation team formed	February 2016
Scoping mission for case studies and inception report drafted	March-April 2016

<sup>73</sup> Independent evaluations in the ILO are conducted by independent external evaluators. The final project ratings are produced by the external evaluators as an outcome of the evaluation process. These ratings are based on actual programme data, interaction with beneficiaries and stakeholders as well as on project performance documents (which include self-assessed ratings).



Evaluation mission and case studies conducted.	May/June 2016
First draft circulated for comments	July 2016
Final draft shared with stakeholders	End July 2016
Final Report	September 2016
Preparation of the final summary, editing and translation	By October 2016

## Management and Responsibilities

31. The Evaluation Office (EVAL) is mandated to manage the evaluation function and ensure proper implementation of the evaluation policy. The evaluation team will be composed of a Senior Evaluation Officer who will lead a team composed of international consultants with expertise in skills development and evaluation, and evaluation team members/national consultants to support the case studies. The director of EVAL will provide inputs and guidance throughout the evaluation process.
32. The Senior Evaluation Officer will play a critical coordination role and will be responsible for the evaluation implementation at the national and regional levels and will:
  - Conduct one case study of a country not selected for a field visit,
  - Participate in at least two of the evaluation missions conducted by the international consultants,
  - Supervise the work of other evaluation team members, review and finalize the final evaluation report.
33. The external evaluator will provide technical leadership and is responsible for:
  - Drafting the inception report, producing the draft reports and drafting and presenting a final report;
  - Providing any technical and methodological advice necessary for this evaluation within the team;
  - Ensuring the quality of data (validity, reliability, consistency and accuracy) throughout the analytical and reporting phases.
  - Managing the external evaluation team, ensuring the evaluation is conducted as per TORs, including following ILO EVAL guidelines, methodology and formatting requirements; and
  - Producing reliable, triangulated findings that are linked to the evaluation questions and presenting useful and insightful conclusions and recommendations according to international standards.
34. An officer from the Skills and Employability Branch will be appointed to facilitate coordination with sector experts and provide relevant documentation as requested by the team. This person will be the key technical liaison to the evaluation team, assisting in the identification of key stakeholders at Headquarters and the field and identification of key resources/documents.
35. This evaluation will be inclusive in nature and seek to involve all key stakeholders. An evaluation support group will be established to facilitate information sharing on the various aspects of the ILO's activities on skills development. Ideally, this group will include specialists from departments who are also working on skills development and who will use, or could influence the use of the evaluation results.
36. The support group is expected to support the evaluation team through:
  - The coordination and facilitation of interviews and consultations on operational matters and among ILO TC managers, Programme Specialists, partners, and relevant stakeholders
  - Facilitation of information and documentation, including country briefs and coordination of national constituents' participation in the evaluation process as requested by the team.
  - Information sharing on ILO activities in the country, including project implementation, project results and impacts, and mainstreaming of ILO objectives in national policy frameworks, etc.



## QUALITY ASSURANCE

37. The lead evaluator will be required to ensure the quality of data (validity, reliability, consistency and accuracy) throughout the analytical and reporting phases. It is expected that the report shall be written in an evidence-based manner such that all observations, conclusions, recommendations, etc., are supported by evidence and analysis.

## QUALIFICATIONS OF THE EVALUATORS

38. This evaluation will be managed by EVAL and conducted by a team of independent evaluators with the following competency mix:
- Prior knowledge of the ILO's roles and activities, and solid understanding of skills development in international development cooperation and funding (essential);
  - Demonstrated executive-level management experience in reviewing and advising complex organizational structures, preferably in the field of employment, skills development;
  - At least 10 years' experience in evaluation policies, strategies, country programmes and organizational effectiveness;
  - Proven experience in conducting and writing evaluation reports of large multilateral organizations for high level decision-making;
  - Fluency in English, spoken and written (essential); knowledge of Spanish would be highly desirable.
39. All team members and their qualifications and roles within the team should be made available in the proposal, indicating proven ability to work with others in the development and timely delivery of high-quality deliverables. The organisation of the work should be specified and explained clearly in a detailed timeline.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

40. In assessing candidates EVAL will allocate greater importance to technical factors including the design and methods proposed than to cost factors. Proposals will be assessed in terms of best value to the ILO, with price and other factors considered.

## EVALUATORS' CODE OF CONDUCT AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

41. The ILO Code of Conduct for independent evaluators applies to all evaluation team members. The principles behind the Code of Conduct are fully consistent with the Standards of Conduct for the International Civil Service to which all UN staff is bound. UN staff is also subject to any UNEG member specific staff rules and procedures for the procurement of services. The selected team members shall sign and return a copy of the code of conduct with their contract.



## ANNEX B – LIST OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED/CONSULTED

### ILO – HEADQUARTERS AND REGIONAL OFFICES (35)

Azita Berar Awad	Director Employment Policy Department
Girma Agune	OIC Skills and Employability Branch
Jim Windell	Training Policies and Programmes Specialist
Jeannette Sanchez	Knowledge Management Officer
Michael Axmann	Skills Development Systems Specialist
Kazutoshi Chatani	Skills Development Officer
Paul Comyn	Skills and Employability Specialist
Olga Strietska-Ilina	Skills Policies and Systems Specialist
Laura Brewer	Skills and Employability Specialist
Con Gregg	Technical Specialist, Skills Anticipation
Bolormaa Tumurchudur-Klok	Technical Officer
Jean Duronsoy	CTA
Ashwani Aggarwal	Skills specialist DWT Pretoria, Southern and Eastern Africa
Fernando Vargas	Skills Specialist ILO/CINTERFOR
Carmela Torres	Skills specialist DWT Bangkok South East Asia and East Asia
Akiko Sakamoto	Skills Specialist DWT Bangkok South East Asia and Pacific Islands
Alexis Hoyaax	Turin ILO/ITC Skills and Employability
Céline Lafoucriere	Senior Specialist in Workers' Activities ACTRAV
Zulum Avila	Employment
Jean Francois Klein	Employment department Management and Coordination Unit
Dorothea Schmidt-Klau	Employment department Management and Coordination Unit
Kees Van der Ree	Unit Head Green Jobs
Michael Mwasikakata	Senior Specialist Employment Services
Natalia Popova	Labour economist Migrant
Maria Prieto	Youth Employment

Stefan Tromel	GED
Markus Pilgrim	Head of Unit Small and Medium Enterprises department
Roy Chacko	ACTEMP
Andre Bogui	Director Program, former Director CO Dhaka
Graeme Buckley	Senior Programme Analyst, Program
Ramiro Pizarro	Senior Development Cooperation Officer, PARDEV
David Lamotte	Deputy Regional Director
Maurizio Bussi,	DWT Director Bangkok
Wade Bromley	CBED, Bangkok
Charlie Bodwell	Enterprise specialist, Bangkok

### ITUC AND IOE (3)

Raquel Gonzalez	Director International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)
Roberto Suárez Santos	Deputy Secretary General, International Organization of Employers (IOE)
Pierre Vincensini	Adviser, International Organization of Employers (IOE)

### BANGLADESH (44)

Gagan Rajbhandari	ILO Deputy Director, CO Dhaka
Cezar Dragutan	ILO CTA, B-SEP project
Serajul Islam	ILO Programme Officer, B-SEP
Mohammad Nuruzzaman	ILO Programme Officer, B-SEP
Francis Dilip De Silva	ILO Senior Specialist, Industry Skills Development
Kishore Kumar Singh	ILO Senior Skills Development Specialist
Manas Bhattacharya	ILO Skills Development Specialist
Haripada Das	ILO Programme Officer
A. N. M. Tanjel Ahsan	ILO Programme Officer
Sheikh Abu Reza	Director, Planning and Development Directorate of Technical Education
Begun Shamsun Nahar	Secretary In-Charge, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
Miah Abdullah Mamun	Additional Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment
Engr. Md. Jahangir Alam	Assistant Director, (Planning and Development) Director of Technical Education
Arif Ahmed	Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
Md. Nurul Islam	Director, Training Standard and Planning Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training
Mohammad Rezaul Karim	Director, National Skills Development Council Secretariat Ministry of Labour and Employment
Ashoke Kumar Biswas	Additional Secretary Ministry of Education
Quzi Munirul Islam	Joint Chief, Ministry of Planning
A.B.M Khorshed Alam	Chief Executive Officer, National Skills Development Council Secretariat Ministry of Labour and Employment
Md. Sohorab Hossain	Secretary Ministry of Education

Md. Nasimul Islam	Head of Administration, HR, CSR, Compliance and Civil Engineering Artisan Ceramics LTD and Institute of Social Compliance
Md. Shafiq-ul Islam	Executive Director, Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed (CPR)
Santara Islam	Regional Manager Mirpur Region UCEP
Mohd. Habibur Rahman	Chief Program Officer, UCEP
Abdul Wahed	President, Jatiyo Garments and Dorji Sramik Jote-JGDSJ
Md. Shafiqur Rahman Bhuiyan	Chairman, Centre of Excellence Agro Food Skills (CEAFS) Foundation
Razequzzman Ratan	General Secretary, Central Committee Socialist Labour Front
Nazia Haider	Senior Programme Officer Skills Development, Embassy of Switzerland in Bangladesh
Md. Abu Yousuf	Managing Director, Pacific Furnishers, Pacific Furnishers Ltd, Pacific Timber and Timber Products, Pacific One-Stop Interior Solution
Md. Halimuzzaman	CEO, Healthcare Pharmaceuticals Limited
Rubina Husain	Managing Director and Center Head, Institute of Hotel Management and Hospitality
Naimul Ahsan Jewel	General Secretary and President, Jatiya Shromki Jote-Bangladesh & Jatiya Garments Shromki Jote-Bangladesh
Jurgen Heimann	Minister Counsellor Human and Social Development Delegation of the European Union to Bangladesh
Deidre Yukich	First Secretary (Development) High Commission of Canada
Mir Md Saifur Rahman	Development Advisor, High Commission of Canada
Christopher Duguid	First Secretary, (Development) High Commission of Canada
Pulak Ranjan Dar	General Secretary, Bangladesh Construction and Wood Workers Federation and Publicity Secretary of Bangladesh Free Trade Union Congress (BFTUC)
A.K.M Bari	Chairman, Industry Skills Council Tourism and Hospitality Sector
Tahsinah Ahmed	Director, Skills Development Programme BRAC
AFM Fakhrul Islam Munshi	President Bangladesh Agro-Processors' Association
Mikhail I. Islam	Executive Director, Chittagong Skills Development Centre, (CSDC)
M. Shahadat Hossain	National Coordinator, IFCTU-BC JILAF Field Project
M. Ehsanur Rahman	Executive Director, Dhaka Ahsania Mission
Al-Haz Sukkur Mahamud	President, Jatiyo Sramik League, Bangladesh Shipping Workers' Federation, Mukta Garmets Workers Federation

## VIET NAM (22)

Vu Van Ha	Legal Affairs Dept/ GDVT
Nguyen Xuan Vinh	Policy Dept/ VGCL
Nguyen Huong Tra	Former ILO NPC/ Rural Youth Employment
Chang-Hee LEE	Director, ILO Country Office for Viet Nam
Ngo Quang Vinh	NPO, Skills for Trade project
NGUYEN THI Huyen	NPO, Inland Tourism project
NGUYEN QUYNH Trang	Former NPO PEPDEL
NGUYEN THI Oanh	NPO, PEP Project
Nguyen Chien Cuong	Former ILO NPC/ SCORE & SIYB
SUN Lei	Chief of Education Unit, UNESCO Office in Viet Nam
Vu Xuan Hung	Director, National Institute of Vocational Training

Mr D ng Hà	Manager of Employment Policy, Bureau of Employment, MOLISA
Niccolo' Cipriani and Riccardo Mattei	Italian Development Cooperation Office
Pratibah Mehta	UN Resident Coordinator
Vu Quoc Tri & Ms Mary McKeon	Project Director & Team Leader, ESRT project
Lê D ng	Director, ICD, Viet Nam's Cooperative Alliance
Minoru Ogasawara	CTA, Child Labour Project
Nguyen Thi Mai Oanh	NPO, Child Labour Project
Khuong Ta Thuy Linh	Project Coordinator, KfW Office in Ha Noi
Mai Hong Ngoc	Deputy Director in charge/BEA-VCCI
Britta van Erckelens	Deputy Program Director/GIZ
Lisa-Marie Kreibich	Technical Advisor/GIZ

## ARMENIA (21)

Boris Kharatyan	Deputy chairman, Confederation of TU in Armenia
Lilit Beglaryan	Deputy Director Global Development Fund NGO
Arthur Kesoyan	Head of Disability Dept. Head of Regional State Employment Agency MOL&SA
Tadevos Avetisyan	Head of Employment department of the MOL&SA
Gagik Makaryan	Chairman Republican Union of Employers of Armenia
Shushanik Barseghyan	Deputy Chairwoman Republic Union of Employers of Armenia
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## ANNEX C – SUMMARY OF ISSUES IN KEY SKILLS POLICY DOCUMENTS

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**Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142)** states that the ratifying States are required to formulate and implement policies and programmes of vocational guidance and vocational training in cooperation with employers' and workers' organisations, closely linked with employment, in particular through public employment services. For this purpose, the States are further required to develop open, flexible and complementary systems of general, technical and vocational education, educational and vocational guidance and vocational training, and to extend them gradually to young persons and adults, including appropriate programmes for the disabled).

**R195 – Recommendation No. 195, 1975** calls on Member States to develop and implement, through the process of social dialogue, education, training and lifelong learning policies that promote people's employability throughout their lives. The SDPs should be an integral part of comprehensive economic, social and labour market policies and programmes for economic and employment growth. It recognizes that education and training are a right of all people and advocates for promotion of equal education and training opportunities for all. The enterprises should play an increasingly role in enhancing the investment in training and in providing workplace-based learning.

In 2008, government, worker and employer representatives at the **International Labour Conference (ILC)** adopted a set of **Conclusions on skills for improved productivity, employment growth and development**. They stressed that education, training and lifelong learning foster a virtuous circle of higher productivity, more employment of better quality, income growth and development. The Conclusions state that countries that have succeeded in linking skills to productivity, employment, development and decent work, have targeted their skills development policies towards three main objectives:

- a) matching supply to current demand for skills;
- b) helping workers and enterprises adjust to change; and
- c) building and sustaining competencies for future labour market needs.

The ILC recommended a holistic approach for skills development, which encompasses the following features (ILO, 2008):

- a) *continuous and seamless pathways of learning* that start with pre-school and primary education that adequately prepares young people for secondary and higher education and vocational training; that provide career guidance, labour market information and counselling, as young women and men move into the labour market; and that offer workers and entrepreneurs opportunities for continuous learning to upgrade their competencies and learn new skills throughout their lives;
- b) development of *core skills* (including literacy, numeracy, communication skills, teamwork and problem-solving and other relevant skills) and learning ability, as well as awareness of workers' rights

and an understanding of entrepreneurship as the building blocks for lifelong learning and capability to adapt to change;

- c) development of *higher-level skills* – professional, technical and human resource skills – to capitalize on or to create opportunities for high-quality or high-wage jobs;
- d) *portability of skills*, based first on the core skills to enable workers to apply knowledge and experience to new occupations or industries, and second, on systems that codify, standardize, assess and certify skills, so that levels of competence can be easily recognized by social partners in different labour sectors across national, regional or international labour markets; and
- e) *employability* (for wage work or self-employment) that results from all these factors – a foundation of core skills, access to education, availability of training opportunities, motivation, ability and support to take advantage of opportunities for continuous learning, and recognition of acquired skills – and that is critical for enabling workers to attain decent work and manage change and for enabling enterprises to adopt new technologies and enter new markets.

The **G20 Training Strategy** sets out the reasons why a skills strategy is needed; a conceptual framework for such a strategy; and recommendations for its effective implementation. It recommends nine building blocks for effective policy implementation:

- anticipating skills needs;
- participation of social partners;
- sectoral approaches;
- labour market information and employment services;
- training quality and relevance;
- gender equality;
- broad access to training;
- finance;
- and assessing policy performance.

(Above adapted from Ashwani Aggarwal and Vladimir Gasskov, Comparative Analysis of National Skills Development Policies: A guide for policy makers, International Labour Office, Decent Work Technical Support Team for Eastern and Southern Africa – Pretoria: ILO, 2013)

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