

Final Review

DECENT WORK COUNTRY PROGRAMME SERBIA 2019-2022

February 2023

Period of evaluation
December 2022- February 2023
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List of abbreviations

CATUS	Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia
CCA	Common Country Analysis
CPO	Country Programme Outcome
CSO	Civil Society Organizations
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
DWT/CO-Budapest	Decent Work Team/Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
EESE	Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises
EO	Employers' Organization
ERP	Economic and Social Reform Programme
ESC	Economic and Social Council
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
EUD	Delegation of the European Union to Serbia
FE	Final Evaluation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HLE	Independent High-Level Evaluation of ILO's COVID-19 response 2020-22
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILS	International Labour Standards
LC	Labour Code
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession
IR	Inception report
KII	Key Informants Interviews
LI	Labour Inspectorate
NEET	Not in employment, education or training
NES	National Employment Service
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MLEVSP	Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy
NC	National Coordinator
OB	Overview Board
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicator
RF	Results Framework
RSD	Serbian dinar
SAE	Serbian Association of Employers
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SMART	Specific Measurable Accepted Realistic Timely
SME	Small and medium enterprises
SOE	State-owned enterprises
SoV	Sources of Verification
ToR	Terms of Reference
TU	Trade Union
UNCF	United Nations Cooperation Framework
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

UNEG	UN Evaluation Group
UN SWAP	UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
USDOL	United States Department of Labour

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The review¹ of the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) Serbia for the period 2019-2022 was carried out with the aim to generate insights into joint performance of the ILO and its constituents in delivering planned outputs and supporting the achievement of outcomes within the context of the ILO's results-based management system. The review presents the findings based on the assessment of the context of DWCP implementation and the extent to which international labour standards were mainstreamed in the implementation of activities undertaken within DWCP; on the analysis of relative effectiveness under each outcome, and examination of programme performance in regard to gender equality and non-discrimination. The recommendations are prepared with a view to the next stage of cooperation regarding new DWCP 2023-2027.

Scope The review covered all activities carried out under the Decent Work Country Programme from its start through completion. The review focused on the progress made on seven outcomes under two DWCP priorities in the framework of the Decent Work concept: (1). Labour market governance and (2) More and better jobs. ² The final evaluation covered the entire period of implementation of the DWCP from March 2019 until December 2022.

The main clients of the review are the specialists and management of the The International Labour Organization Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe (ILO DWT/CO Budapest), ILO country staff, including development cooperation projects, ILO Regional Office for EUROPE, technical departments at the Headquarters, UN agencies, donors, tripartite constituents, and national implementing partners in Serbia.

Final beneficiaries are the tripartite constituents in Serbia, namely the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy, Labour Inspectorate of the Republic of Serbia, Agency for the Peaceful resolution of Labour Disputes, Trade Union "Nezavisnost", Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia (CATUS), Serbian Association of Employers, Directorate for Occupational Safety and Health.

Mixed methods were applied in this evaluation to draw on multiple lines of evidence and multiple means of analysis to triangulate findings. Three main methods were used for collecting evaluation data: (a) document review, (b) 15 interviews with LO regional and country office senior management and staff in Budapest and Serbia; DWCP constituents such as the high-level representatives of government, employers' and workers' organizations; UN Country Team and UN Population Fund representatives in Serbia; etc., and (c) case studies/good practice examples.

Summary of the evaluation findings

The evaluation followed the OECD-DAC framework and principles for evaluation based on the following key criteria for the review: 1) relevance and 2) coherence of the interventions 3)

¹ In this report the terms "review" and "evaluation" are synonyms and are used interchangeably

² **The DWCP priorities and outcomes are: Labour market governance: 1.1** New labour legislation adopted in line with ILS and improved legal basis created for social dialogue and collective bargaining; **1.2** Increased usage of peaceful settlement of labour disputes; **1.3** Stronger employers' and workers' organizations. **More and better jobs: 2.1** A comprehensive national employment strategy (2021-30) is adopted in line with ILS and good practices; **2.2** Improved working conditions and protection from unacceptable forms of work; **2.3** Reform measures adopted for creating an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises; **2.4** Improved minimum wage fixing mechanisms

effectiveness in achieving outcomes, 4) efficiency and 5) sustainability of the results. Ratings against the criteria use a six-point scale (with 1 being “highly unsatisfactory” and 6 being “highly satisfactory”).

As the review shows, DWCP remained relevant all the way through. COVID-19 pandemic that started in March 2020 further highlighted the relevance of the DWCP outcomes for Serbia. This most likely explains why the Overview Board decided not to change them although at certain point it was clear that some of the outcomes did not stand chance of being met. The programme coherence was particularly strong in the conceptualization phase and at the beginning of the DWCP implementation as the outcomes and outputs mirrored national, UN and EU priorities. With the COVID-19 breakout and early parliamentary elections in 2020 and 2022 DWCP consistency was fractured and the programme was slowed down. Some outputs were cancelled, some new introduced, primarily with the aim to keep DWCP going.

The effectiveness of DWCP efforts had mixed results. All the partners forged partnerships with various external actors but not with DWCP priorities in mind. In this regard, collaborative programme efforts were not particularly visible. On the other side, DWCP knowledge products were highly praised: they provided insights that were incorporated into national employment strategy, enterprise support measures, and sectoral responses. Analyses and surveys supporting the protection of all workers helped the constituents to implement their immediate COVID-19 responses, including in the most-affected sectors and occupations. Yet, the assessment of the negative effects of the pandemic on fundamental principles and rights at work, on informality, and on women and vulnerable workers was not among DWCP leading achievements.

Efficiency of DWCP was assessed by taking into account the monitoring of the DWCP progress, budget allocations and risk planning. On one side the ILO regularly tracked the progress of the DWCP implementation through annual progress reports and monitoring matrices which were put in place from the very beginning of the programme. They fed into the regular Overview Board meetings. Budget flexibility also allowed adaptations while maintaining accountability. Thus far, the revisions of the DWCP occurred only at the output level despite dramatic changes due to COVID -19 outbreak and changing political setting in Serbia, this showing weak understanding of the OB regarding the monitoring and evaluation systems. COVID-19 also highlighted partial success of the ILO in adapting its planning and reporting systems to track its COVID-19 response and measure its effectiveness.

The review of the DWCP revealed weak ownership of national constituents over DWCP. In this regard DWCP had limited impact on forming sustainable partnerships, policies and stakeholders for effective, inclusive, accountable and participatory Decent Work Programme in Serbia. Last but not least, gender-specific and anti-discrimination initiatives were included in the DWCP in the conceptualization phase, but were not consistently addressed during DWCP implementation.

Conclusions

As the review shows, DWCP goals remained relevant from the times of its formulation and throughout its implementation, mirroring national, UN and EU priorities. The programme coherence was undermined with the COVID-19 breakout and continuous elections in the country, this also including gender-specific and anti-discrimination initiatives which sidelined during the DWCP implementation.

The effectiveness and efficiency of DWCP efforts had mixed results. Collaboration between constituents around specific DWCP outcomes was weak. Frail social dialogue between the constituents impacted the effectiveness of the DWCP. On the other side, high quality policy products ensured DWCP relevance in national policy making. The efficiency of DWCP was reflected in careful monitoring of the DWCP progress, flexible and responsible budget allocations. On the other side the risk planning and mitigation, regular risk assessments, programme outcome revisions were lacking showing inadequacy of the DWCP oversight mechanisms.

Weak ownership of national constituents over DWCP undermined the programme sustainability. Policy impact remained fragmented due to inability of the constituents to push the DWCP agenda with the Government of Serbia. However, strong ILO partnerships with the major bilateral and multilateral partners in Serbia can allow robust impact of the future DWCP on the government policies and regulations.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

RELEVANCE	5.3
COHERENCE	4.7
EFFECTIVENESS	4.1
EFFICIENCY	4.1
SUSTAINABILITY	4.5
Overall rating	4.5

Scoring criteria: 6 = Highly satisfactory, 5 = Satisfactory, 4 = Somewhat satisfactory, 3 = Somewhat unsatisfactory, 2 = Unsatisfactory, 1 = Highly unsatisfactory.

Lessons learned and emerging good practices

The ILO's response to the weak ownership of the DWCP by the constituents showed the need to put in place the right collaborative and empowering structures that can improve the delivery and sustainability of the DWCPs. The current scope and structure of the Overview Board (OB) requires rethinking so that the OB can really fulfil its role aimed at promotion and monitoring of the DWCP implementation.

The COVID-19 pandemic pointed out to the importance of risk assessment and risk mitigation in ILO response, including also the DWCPs. There is a need to introduce risk management matrix to anticipate, manage and mitigate risks at both ILO country level and as a part of the DWCP planning and implementation.

Combined regular and extra-budgetary contributions to DWCP implementation showed good results. Further strengthening of partnership between ILO and other major bilateral and multilateral actors, and international and European financial institutions (e.g. EBRD) can enhance the reach and scale of the DWCP. Moreover, strong alignment with the EU accession agenda can lead to echo effect: on one side it can boost ILO position in the country while also impacting the future DWCP results feeding into the government policies and regulations.

The pandemic and early parliamentary elections in 2020 and 2022 put pressure on ILO under the DWCP to focus on the production of knowledge content and products. They were highly praised by different stakeholders ranging from the UN organizations, bilateral and multilateral actors, social partners and programme beneficiaries, etc. With appropriate communication and advocacy strategy this line of work can improve the relevance, effectiveness and potential impact of the future DWCP.

The review showed the importance of gender specific and anti-discrimination practices particularly during the crisis. This approach needs to be strengthened to enhance the impact of DWCP outcomes and outputs on one side³, but also to ensure that gendered policies and the ones addressing vulnerable populations are in place and effective in the times of crisis.

Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1 - Consultation process was a key to the formulating of well-grounded DWCP. The DWCP 2023-2027 should follow the same path of programme design engaging the Government's ministries of labour, economy and finance, and social partners into the discussion. Informal consultations with civil society organizations and professional associations could also help in creating well informed country programme.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO DWT/CO Budapest NC Tripartite Constituents	High	Low	Short-term

RECOMMENDATION 2 - Continue to strengthen the capacity of the tripartite constituents to enhance their internal planning processes and adapt their services to contribute to the development of effective national policies and actions facilitated by DWCP. Social partners shall be supported to formulate development strategies with the aim of setting the vision, goals and theory of change for their organizations so to foster their engagement in social dialogue.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO DWT/CO Budapest ILO NC	High	Medium	Medium-term

RECOMMENDATION 3 - Develop inclusive, gender-responsive and anti-discrimination policies as a part of the new DWCP as growing inequalities remain a serious impediment to a just society. Gender and anti-discrimination shall be reflected in the DWCP Theory of change, while the Checklist for Gender Mainstreaming in Project and Programmes can be a useful guide in determining access to resources, roles, and responsibilities, constraints, and priorities according to gender. Responding to the urgent need to provide protection for emerging diverse forms of work, the DWCP needs to accelerate support for gender-responsive policy and regulatory actions, in respect of the protection of wages, working time, care responsibilities, safety and health, the elimination of violence and harassment, and inclusive access to social protection.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
Tripartite Constituents ILO/DWT/CO Budapest ILO NC	High	Medium	Medium-term

RECOMMENDATION 4 - The ILO together with social partners should work to implement a whole-of-government understanding of the obligations under the applicable Conventions and support policies that are applicable at all times, especially during crises, that are rights-based and intersectional. ILO's watchdog role in safeguarding international labour standards shall be reinforced. For example, the COVID pandemic exposed a lack of understanding of applicable international labour standards in the transport and courier services, among others, pointing to the gap that ILO shall fill in.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO DWT/CO Budapest ILO NC	High	Low	Medium-term

RECOMMENDATION 5 – Develop promotion (communication) and advocacy strategy for new DWCP with clear targets and roles for DWCP constituents. Influential and impactful DWCP programme requires good planning and engagement of all parties in the process of the programme implementation. Joint work may eventually increase the sense of ownership over DWCP.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO DWT/CO Budapest ILO NC	Medium	Medium	Short to Medium-term

RECOMMENDATION 6 – Support ILO Country Office in its efforts to ensure higher impact and visibility of DWCP. The MAP project on child labour, and other collaborative actions with multilateral and bilateral donors, and financial institutions, enhanced the reach and scale of DWCP, particularly if strongly aligned with the EU accession agenda. Resource mobilization, communication and advocacy, production of high quality analyses and reports, safeguarding the adherence to the international labour standards in the country, support to constituents calls for strong technical support by ILO Budapest and Geneva to DWCP implementation. For example, ILO experts’ advisory missions, technical support and trainings of constituents would demonstrate ILO institutional capacity and strength, which in turn can reinvigorate the DWCP process.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO Regional Office/ ILO DWT/CO Budapest	High	Medium	Short to Medium-term

RECOMMENDATION 7 - The role of the Overview Board should be revisited to ensure enhanced engagement of social partners in the monitoring of the DWCP implementation, and its promotion. Participatory planning and joint workshops that provide space for rethinking of the OB successes and challenges, for example related to risk management and the overall DWCP 2019-2022 implementation should be considered. Reflecting on the past action could be a useful guide for the future.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO DWT/CO Budapest ILO NC Tripartite constituents	High	Medium	Short-term

1. Introduction

The final review³ of the Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) Serbia for the period 2019-2022 was carried out with the aim to generate insights into joint performance of the ILO and its constituents in delivering planned outputs and supporting the achievement of outcomes within the context of the ILO’s results-based management system. The review presents the findings based on the assessment of the context of DWCP implementation and the extent to which international labour standards were mainstreamed in the implementation of activities undertaken within DWCP; on the analysis of relative

³ In this report the terms “review” and “evaluation” are synonyms and are used interchangeably

effectiveness under each outcome, and examination of programme performance in regard to gender equality and non-discrimination. The recommendations are prepared with a view to the next stage of cooperation regarding new DWCP 2023-2027.

The DWCP has been carried in consultation with The International Labour Organization Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe (ILO DWT/CO Budapest), and in accordance with the guidelines⁴ of the Evaluation Office at the ILO headquarters in Geneva. The DWCP review is part of the internal process of the DWCP progress monitoring, reporting and evaluation.

The report begins with a brief country background. This is followed by the sections outlining the evaluation scope and objectives, and evaluation approach. Next chapter present findings and conclusions according to the evaluation criteria in relation to the outputs of the programme. Lessons learned are briefly presented in the section to follow. The report is concluded with a set of recommendations concentrating on the key issues important for the planning of the new DWCP 2023-2027, as well as observations, insights and innovative practices extracted from the field research, highlighting good practices stemming from the DWCP implementation.

2. Background

The major change affecting the implementation of the DWCP 2019-2022 was the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, only one year after the programme's commencement. Two rounds of parliamentary elections also took place in the period of the DWCP execution, first in June 2020, and then in April 2022. Even though the same political party remained in power, the leadership of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy was changed in 2020 and in 2022, which stripped the Ministry of the decision-making power for quite some time during the DWCP implementation.

Serbia was among the least affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in emerging Europe (OECD, 2021). According to the ILO⁵, the Covid-19 pandemic only led to a mild contraction of GDP in 2020 (-1%) and growth picked up quickly in 2021 (+7%, est.). A large but not very targeted response package of the government in 2020, corresponding to around 13% of GDP, helped to mitigate the economic fall out of the pandemic. The impact of the pandemic on labour markets was stronger with a decline of working hours of 4.7% in 2020 which according to ILO calculations is equivalent to 170,000 full time jobs. In 2021, labour markets saw a small increase of working hours (+0.9%), but the recovery of labour markets was still lagging in 2022. In spite the challenges, the unemployment was record low in 2022, standing at 8.9 % in the third quarter of 2022 (LFS, 2022) while the rate of long-term unemployment also recorded fall (LFS, 2022). Formal employment continued to grow in 2022 (1.6% y/y).

GDP grew by 2.3% in 2022, with a slowdown in the latter half year, a result of stagnation in total investment. A significant factor in this decline with the reduction in FDI from the EU, whose share in Serbia's FDI fell to 32%. This can be attributed to uncertainty surrounding Serbia's position on the war in Ukraine and its decision to remain close to Russia. At the same time, Serbia' EU accession negotiations are ongoing.

⁴ <http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationpolicy/lang-en/index.htm>

⁵ Source: ILO.org, web page About the ILO in Serbia.

3. Evaluation scope

The DWCP Serbia for the period 2019–2022 was prepared in the ILO DWT/CO Budapest consultation with the Government of Serbia as well as the social partners with the aim of creating employment, extending social protection, guaranteeing rights at work and promoting social dialogue as key components of economic and social policies. The DCWP was implemented during two ILO's Biennium budget cycles (2018-2019, and 2020-2021). Although the ILO's strategic framework changed during that period, this did not have an effect on DWCP.

The review focuses on the DWCPs two priorities identified for collaboration between the ILO and the tripartite constituents in the framework of the Decent Work concept, which refers to policies promoting employment, *which should be safe and secure, decently remunerated, ensure social protection of workers and their families, give voice to workers, and guarantee equal opportunities and treatment for all*. The two priorities are: **(1)**. Labour market governance and **(2)** More and better jobs. They encompass seven outcomes as shown in the table below.

TABLE 1. DWCP 2019-2022 priorities and outcomes

Priority	Outcomes
I. Labour market governance	1.1 New labour legislation adopted in line with ILS and improved legal basis created for social dialogue and collective bargaining
	1.2 Increased usage of peaceful settlement of labour disputes
	1.3 Stronger employers' and workers' organizations
II. More and better jobs	2.1 A comprehensive national employment strategy (2021-30) is adopted in line with ILS and good practices
	2.2 Improved working conditions and protection from unacceptable forms of work
	2.3 Reform measures adopted for creating an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises
	2.4 Improved minimum wage fixing mechanism

The priorities and intended outcomes are placed within Theories of Change and have a basic set of monitoring baselines and targets, including against Serbia's SDGs.

3.1 Scope of the final evaluation

The scope of the final evaluation relates to results, timeframe, geography and organization. The review focuses on the progress made on tangible outcomes (seven in total) directly resulting from ILO contributions as presented in the Table 1.

The review covers all activities carried out under the Decent Work Country Programme from its start through completion (March 2019 – December 2022).

The main clients of the review are the specialists and management of the ILO DWT/CO Budapest, ILO country staff, including development cooperation projects, ILO Regional Office for EUROPE, technical departments at the Headquarters, UN agencies, donors, tripartite constituents, and national implementing partners in Serbia.

3.2 Key evaluation criteria and questions

In line with the evaluation framework and protocol produced by the ILO Evaluation Office on the collection of evaluative evidence on DWCP, the final evaluation focuses on the following criteria: 1) relevance and 2) coherence of the interventions 3) effectiveness in achieving outcomes, 4) efficiency and 5) sustainability of the results. Also, the evaluation considered additional cross-cutting criteria – gender equality and non-discrimination. In this context, the review adhered to the UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation⁶.

The review takes both a summative as well as formative approach. It provides insights into the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the DWCP 2019-2022 (summative). It is also forward looking by providing lessons learned and emerging good practices for improved decision-making within the context of the next strategic framework (formative).

The review applied a theory of change (ToC) and outcome-based approaches as the analytical frameworks against which processes, and results were measured. The final evaluation focuses around seven key evaluation questions. The evaluation questions are included in **Annex B: Evaluation questions and Evaluation question matrix**

4. Evaluation approach

4.1 Data collection methods

The methodology was based on 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 Evaluation⁷ The evaluation was participatory. It paid specific attention to responding to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate, gender equality responsiveness and contribution of the ILO to the relevant targets set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In addition, a gender and inclusion dimension as well as environmental issues and social dialogue were considered as cross-cutting concerns throughout the methodology, deliverables and final report of the evaluation. Moreover, the evaluators assessed the relevance and effectiveness of gender-responsiveness and disability-inclusion-related strategies and outcomes.

The review used primary and secondary data sources to ascertain the plausibility of causal relationships between the DWCP achievements and respective outcomes. Mixed methods were applied to draw on multiple lines of evidence and multiple means of analysis to triangulate findings. Three main methods were used for collecting evaluation data: (a) document review, (b) interviews, (c) case studies/good practice examples. Data were assessed using both qualitative and, where appropriate, quantitative approaches. Continuing COVID-19 travel restrictions meant that interviews were undertaken remotely.

Document review Relevant policy, strategy, programme and project documents were reviewed as well as the tools, policy guides and research papers prepared to support the ILO's constituents. In

⁶ <http://www.uneval.org/document/download/1294>

⁷ Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development / Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC), Network on Development Evaluation, Better Criteria for Better Evaluation Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use, 2019, available at: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/revised-evaluation-criteria-dec-2019.pdf>

addition, annual progress reports and other mechanisms that allow to monitor the progress and status of the ILO assistance to constituents in accordance with the ILO Programming Framework were considered. [The list is presented in Annex C.](#)

Interviews Interviews were held during the course of December 2022 with 15 (80 per cent female) constituents and their staff, ILO senior management and staff in Serbia and Budapest Regional Office, UN in Serbia:

1. ILO regional and country office senior management and staff in Budapest and Serbia
2. Constituents: high-level representatives of government, employers' and workers' organizations (namely, the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy, the Serbian Association of Employers, and the United Branch Trade Unions (UGS) Nezavisnost
3. UN organizations collaborating with the ILO such as UN Population Fund (UNFPA), and UN Country Team Resident Coordinator
4. Representatives of other governments' bodies and agencies, such as the Republican Agency for peaceful settlement of labor disputes, Labour inspectorate of the Republic of Serbia, Directorate for Occupational Safety and Health
5. ILO project managers engaged on the regional Employment and Social Affairs Platform 2 project (ESAP 2), and country based Measurement, awareness raising, and policy engagement project (MAP).

Only one interview could not be organized, this being the interview with the General Secretary of The Confederation of Autonomous Trade Unions of Serbia (CATUS). The interview was not carried out despite numerous attempts to reach out the General Secretary via e-mail and phone. [See Annex A: List of Key Informants/ Interviewees](#)

Good practice examples were identified during the data collection phase, pointing to "topical" case studies. They were explored to identify positive response in terms of the DWCP implementation and factors underpinning the success. One focuses on knowledge management and research during COVID-19 pandemic response, the other assesses the project on child labour [See Chapter 8 for more details.](#)

4.2 Data limitations

The evaluation took place during the Christmas and new year holiday season which impacted on the pace of interviews. Despite the hurdle, they were all successfully organized in December 2022. As already mentioned only one interview was curtailed due to the continuous inaccessibility of CATUS General Secretary. The breadth of topics, policy areas, programmes and services covered by the evaluation meant that not all could be covered in equal depth.

4.3 Ethical considerations

The evaluation followed the guidelines presented in the OECD DAC ethical considerations for development evaluations⁸ and United Nations Ethical Guidelines⁹, paying particular attention to the principles of impartiality, credibility, and accountability. Ethical considerations were especially in focus in the course of interviewing Key Informants and respecting their personal rights. The review respected informants' right to provide information in confidence and also ensured that sensitive

⁸ <https://www.oecd.org/development/evaluation/qualitystandards.pdf>

⁹ United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG), UNEG Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation- UNEG/N/CoC , 2008.

information cannot be traced to its source. Original data, including interview records and notes from interviews, are retained in confidential files until completion of the evaluation.

5. Findings and conclusions by evaluation criteria

This section presents the findings of the review against the set criteria and related questions (see Annex B: Evaluation questions and Evaluation questions matrix). Ratings against the criteria use a six-point scale (with 1 being “highly unsatisfactory” and 6 being “highly satisfactory”). The ratings are based on the assessments of the interviews, and analysis of various reports collected for this evaluation. Summary of results and achievements are briefly presented per each of the outcomes against set criteria.

5.1 RELEVANCE OF DWCP

The relevance of the Decent Work Country Programme Serbia for the period 2019 – 2022 was assessed through the following Key Questions:

Key Question 1: To what extent do the ILO interventions in the country address the beneficiaries’ needs?
Key Question 2: What has been the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the implementation of the programme and if/and how well has the ILO adapted to the crisis?

Cross-cutting: Has DWCP considered rights-based approach and gender equality, and followed the “no-one is left behind” principle during its design and implementation?

KEY FINDING 1

The DWCP Serbia for the period 2019–2022 was prepared in extensive consultations with the Government of Serbia as well as the social partners throughout 2017 and 2018. The Programme was endorsed in March 2019. The consultations distilled lessons learned from past cooperation that served as guidelines to setting a new programme. As per the accounts from the interviews, the consultative process identified key labour market and social protection concerns important for the country. At the time of the programme formulation, DWCP also took into account the national development priorities as identified by the Economic Reform Programme for the 2018-2020 (ERP 2018-2020). The ERP recommendations focused on improving employability of the youth, women, and vulnerable populations through active labour market programmes; decreasing the pay gap between men and women; addressing informal employment (ERP 2018-2020). The National Strategy for Gender Equality (2016-2020) was also considered as a reference point for DWCP (DWCP Serbia, 2019).

The DWCP programme revolved around seven outcomes under two priority areas (presented in the table 1 above). The outcome structure did not change throughout the programme implementation. As noted in the interviews and based on the desk review, DWCP outcomes remained relevant throughout the four-year programme regardless of the outputs being aborted, changed, fulfilled, added, or partially met.

For example, under the Priority 1 (Labour market governance) the first out of three outcomes aimed to address much needed reform of the Labour law. This has been a condition for advancing the EU agenda (EC Progress Report, 2018) as the law amended in 2014 was only partially aligned with the acquis (EC Progress Report, 2022). The change of the law has been further seen as instrumental to improving the legal basis for social dialogue (considered as rather weak) and collective bargaining leading to stronger

social partners. DWCP addressed this challenge through the third DWCP outcome which aimed at increasing the relevance of social partners (the Serbian Employers Association and two representative trade unions - CATUS and Nezavisnost) in the public policy and social dialogue arena.

Under the Priority 2 (More and better jobs) the first of the four outcomes related to the formulation of the national employment strategy. The Strategy was considered as an important instrument in addressing both the supply and demand sides of the labour market, while also enhancing the employment dimensions of other existing policies in the fields of education, industry, etc. (ERP 2018-2020).

According the testimonies from the interviews and available reports, the DWCP focus on improving working conditions and protection from unacceptable forms of work (Outcome 2.2) addressed very appropriate topics in the national and global contexts: a) the void in policies related to child labour, and weak capacities of the Labour Inspectorate to deal with this issue. The topic of child labour also became more important due to the government's increased promotion of dual vocational education and training (dual VET), where a large portion of the training takes place in a workplace. In the early stages of introducing dual VET, students were not sufficiently protected against hazardous forms of work-based learning, which made making the on-site practice perilous.

b) the need for the adoption of the new Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) of Serbia was further emphasized with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (ILO, 2022). Other outcomes also stood the test of time: the creation of an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises aimed at fostering the development of sustainable small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) which are usually hit harder by uncondusive business environment than larger enterprises. This was particularly visible during the COVID-19 (Smart Kolektiv, 2020; CEVES 2020).

Lastly, the fourth outcome related to the minimum wage fixing mechanism has been considered of high relevance for securing the livelihood of workers and family members. When the DWCP was launched the minimum wage in Serbia was EUR 308.0 increasing to EUR 423.6 in 2022 (Eurostat, 2022). Serbia is among the countries with the lowest minimum wage in Europe (Eurostat, 2022) which continues to impact negatively on workers wellbeing.

To conclude, the selected DWCP outcomes remained highly relevant throughout the four-year period and most of them remain valid for the new round of collaboration.

KEY FINDING 2

In the second year of the DWCP implementation, COVID-19 pandemic broke out. In order to contain the virus, on 15 March 2020 the Government of Serbia declared a state of emergency, which ushered in emergency response measures, both health-oriented and socio-economic. All activities related to the forthcoming elections (planned for April 2020) were postponed until the end of the state of emergency. Elections eventually took place on 21 June 2020, six weeks after the termination of the state of emergency. The government was formed in November 2022.

In the first year of the pandemic, the DWCP implementation was slowed down not only because of COVID-19 but also because of the stalemate due to the long formation of the government. In this state of limbo, the ILO in Serbia organized a number of online meetings and agreed with the partners about possible

future activities as the interviewed stakeholders pointed out. Some activities were delayed or eventually cancelled, while some other took place instead. During that period, ILO supported or conducted several studies and assessments which were highly appreciated by various stakeholders.

For example, under the Outcome 1.3 (Stronger employers' and workers' organizations) two relevant outputs were completed in 2020 - the Analysis of collective bargaining in the metal sector (in cooperation with CATUS Metal workers and the Industrial trade union) and the Serbian Association of Employers' survey about the impact of Covid-19 pandemic (DWCP Annual Report 2021). The enterprise survey conducted in collaboration with the ILO and the EBRD, highlighted the vulnerability to shocks of certain categories of enterprises in specific sectors.

Under the Outcome 2.1 (adoption of the comprehensive national employment strategy in line with International Labour Standards and good practices) the ILO in 2020 completed three assessments which led to the drafting of the National Employment Strategy – the functional analysis of the Ministry's Employment department, the functional analysis of the National Employment Service and an assessment of readiness of national labour market institutions for the introduction of the Youth Guarantee (DWCP Annual Report 2021). All three documents were validated with the national authorities and were highly appreciated by all the partners involved in the drafting of the Strategy.

At the same time, the tripartite constituents in Serbia gave up the revision of the minimum wage fixing mechanism in 2020 (Outcome 2.4, Improved minimum wage fixing mechanism) while the revision of the labour legislation was further delayed.

After the initial shock, constituents' engagement continued but at the slower pace. The ILO gave relevant support to workers' and employers' organizations as they grappled with the crisis, including in respect of addressing OSH issues, and enhancing their relevance through new tools and resources (interviews, December 2020; Western Balkans Initial Desk Review 2022, Independent High Level Evaluation of COVID-19 Response 2020-22).

CONCLUSION

As the review shows, DWCP goals remained relevant from the times of its formulation and throughout its implementation. The Theories of change were well reflected in the set outcomes. COVID-19 pandemic that started in March 2020 highlighted the relevance of the DWCP outcomes for Serbia although the revisions of the goals to reflect on massive changes brought by COVID were missing. If the revisions occurred, they would have resulted in the introduction of new outcomes or deletion of some others given the changed scenery. At the same time, their implementation was delayed.

Rating for the Relevance criterion: 5.3

5.2 COHERENCE OF DWCP

The coherence of the Decent Work Country Programme Serbia for the period 2019 – 2022 was assessed through the following Key Questions:

Key Question 3: Has DWCP contributed to the national development plans and broader development objectives as spelled out in the SDGs Agenda 2030, and EU acquis?

Key Question 4: Has DWCP contributed to the attainment of the development of outputs and outcomes initially expected/stipulated in the project document?

Cross-cutting: Has DWCP considered rights-based approach and gender equality, and followed the “no-one is left behind” principle during its design and implementation?

KEY FINDING 3

DWCP was from the onset designed to respond to the national development plans and related strategies and regulations. In this regard, DWCP outcomes mirrored government objectives. According to the government ERP 2022-2024, key priorities stemmed from the Employment Strategy 2021-2026 which ILO supported through DWCP, such as the support to active labour market policy measures, increased employability of hard to employ populations, fight against informal employment, etc.

Moreover, DWCP formulation and implementation was harmonized with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs, especially SDG 8), and to the United Nations Development Partnership Framework (DFP – UNDAF for Serbia 2016–2020, particularly Pillar 3 on inclusive labour markets and decent job creation. The new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2021-2025) was endorsed by the Government on 4 February 2022 with three strategic priorities – Harnessing of the full potential of a green, sustainable and inclusive economy; Wellbeing, social equity and human potential at the heart of systems, policies and practices and Building trust and mutual accountability through the rule of law, the rights and duties agenda. ILO is listed as one of the strategic partners under the Priority One.

DWCP to high extent responded to the challenges hampering Serbia’s EU accession process. According to the 2018 annual progress report from the European Commission, the preparedness of Serbia in meeting the accession criteria in the area of social policies and employment (Chapter 19) was moderate. The recommendation set in the EC 2018 Progress Report were reflected in the DWCP outcomes addressing Labour Code, social dialogue, national employment priorities targeting the youth, women and long term unemployed. Given the slow pace of changes in the key labour legislation in the four years of DWCP implementation, majority of outcomes outlined in DWCP remained valid as per the EC Progress Report 2022.

The Table 2 shows the linkages between the priority areas, outcomes, UNDAF, and ILO strategic frameworks put in place at the times of the programme commencement.

TABLE 2. DWCP 2019-2022 priorities and outcomes

Relevant National development priority and/or UNDAF Outcome (as applicable):
Employment and Social Reform Programme of Serbia

Pillar 3 Inclusive labour markets and decent job creation of the United Nations Development Partnership Framework (2016-2020)

Priority	Outcomes
I. Labour market governance	1.1 New labour legislation adopted in line with ILS and improved legal basis created for social dialogue and collective bargaining
	<i>Linked to ILO Policy Outcome 2 Ratification and application of international labour standards/Indicator 2.2</i>
	1.2 Increased usage of peaceful settlement of labour disputes
	<i>Linked to ILO Policy Outcome 7 Promoting safe work and workplace compliance including in global supply chains/indicator 7.2</i>
	1.3 Stronger employers' and workers' organizations.
	<i>Linked to ILO Policy Outcome 10 Strong and representative employers' and workers' organisations</i>

Relevant National development priority and/or UNDAF Outcome (as applicable):

Employment and Social Reform Programme of Serbia

Pillar 3 Inclusive labour markets and decent job creation of the United Nations Development Partnership Framework (2016-2020)

Priority	Outcomes
II. More and better jobs	2.1 A comprehensive national employment strategy (2021-30) is adopted in line with ILS and good practices
	<i>Linked to ILO policy outcome 1 More and better jobs for inclusive growth and improved youth employment prospects/Indicator 1.1</i>
	2.2 Improved working conditions and protection from unacceptable forms of work
	<i>Linked to ILO policy outcome 7 Promoting safe work and workplace compliance</i>
	2.3 Reform measures adopted for creating an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises
	<i>Linked to ILO policy outcome 4 Promoting sustainable enterprises</i>
	2.4 Improved minimum wage fixing mechanism

During the DWCP implementation, as accounted by the interviewees, the ILO worked to ensure that its institutional governance and policy responses were based on tripartism and supported by international labour standards, which were used as a “decent work compass” for the ILO’s response.

KEY FINDING 4

As noted earlier, DWCP revolved around seven outcomes under two priority areas. The outcome structure has not been changed throughout the programme implementation, however some outputs were canceled and some new introduced during the course of the implementation. The pandemic was one of the reasons for the DWCP changes given that some activities could not take place as initially planned. But, as the evaluation shows, the continuous changes of the government as a consequence of early elections in June 2020 and April 2022 had much higher impact on the DWCP attainment of outputs. According to the interviewees, long formation of governments prevented any serious engagement on major endeavors planned under the DWCP, such as the reform of the labour law, formulation of the new Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health, improvements of minimum wage fixing mechanisms. In this regard the DWCP coherence was affected, this requiring flexibility leading to the formulation of new outputs that were identified as needed under the framework of set outcomes. The [Table 3](#) below shows the output changes during the course of the DWCP implementation (the outputs in red font were introduced later; the outputs in blue were cancelled)

TABLE 3. CHANGES AT THE LEVEL OF OUTPUT IN DWCP

PRIORITY ONE: LABOUR MARKET GOVERNANCE		
Outcomes	Outputs planned	Outputs realized
1.1 New labour legislation adopted in line with ILS and improved legal basis created for social dialogue and collective bargaining	<p>Technical comments provided on draft legislation</p> <p>Three tripartite consultation on the labour law reform facilitated</p>	<p>Analysis of Serbian legislation on violence and harassment in the world of work with the provisions of the ILO Convention 190 prepared</p>
1.2 Increased usage of peaceful settlement of labour disputes	<p>Training about peaceful settlement of labour disputes organized for 30 mediators</p> <p>20 new mediators trained in the best practices in peaceful settlement of labour disputes in the region</p> <p>A three months long informational/educational campaign about peaceful settlement of labour disputes organized</p>	<p>Training about peaceful settlement of labour disputes organized for 30 mediators</p> <p>20 new mediators trained in the best practices in peaceful settlement of labour disputes in the region</p> <p>A three months long informational/educational campaign about peaceful settlement of labour disputes organized</p>
1.3 Stronger employers' and workers' organizations.	<p>Two policy position papers including references to gender developed by the SAE, and TUs</p> <p>Two new services/products developed or improved by the SAE and TUs</p>	<p>First and Second phase of Employers' survey about the impact of COVID-19</p> <p>Analysis of collective bargaining in the metal sector (in cooperation with CATUS Metal workers and the Industrial trade union)</p> <p>Strategic analysis of development plans of branch trade unions of metal workers and forestry workers</p> <p>Preparation of an online application for reporting of violation of workers' rights (TU Nezavisnost)</p>
PRIORITY TWO: MORE AND BETTER JOBS		

<p>2.1 A comprehensive national employment strategy (2021-30) is adopted in line with ILS and good practices</p>	<p>Organizational review of the Employment Department and the Group for Normative Affairs of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia</p> <p>Rapid assessment of the administrative capacity of the National Employment Service of Serbia</p> <p>Feasibility assessment of introduction of the European Youth Guarantee in Serbia</p>	<p>ILO Study about the progressive taxation of labour income in Serbia</p> <p>Ex-post analysis of the implementation of the Law on professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities</p> <p>Organizational review of the Employment Department and the Group for Normative Affairs of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia</p> <p>Rapid assessment of the administrative capacity of the National Employment Service of Serbia</p> <p>Feasibility assessment of introduction of the European Youth Guarantee in Serbia</p>
<p>2.2 Improved working conditions and protection from unacceptable forms of work</p>	<p>Study analysing the root causes of poor prevention in the construction sector in the context of supply chain</p> <p>Training needs assessment</p> <p>A strategy for establishing mechanisms for OSH training of construction workers</p> <p>Ex ante analysis of the introduction of light work for children into Serbian labour legislation</p> <p>Guidelines/instructions for the courts on their judgements in the case of undeclared work in construction sector</p> <p>Rapid assessment of child labour in child begging</p>	<p>Ex ante analysis of the introduction of light work for children into Serbian labour legislation</p> <p>Guidelines/instructions for the courts on their judgements in the case of undeclared work in construction sector</p> <p>Rapid assessment of child labour in child begging</p>

<p>2.3 Reform measures adopted for creating an enabling environment for sustainable enterprises</p>	<p>National EESE report prepared and validated</p> <p>Reform proposals developed based on recommendations of National EESE report and validated by the SAE</p> <p>Technical comments to the draft Law on Social Entrepreneurship</p>	<p>National EESE report prepared and validated</p> <p>Reform proposals developed based on recommendations of National EESE report and validated by the SAE</p> <p>Technical comments to the draft Law on Social Entrepreneurship</p>
<p>2.4 Improved minimum wage fixing mechanism</p>	<p>Tripartite workshop on minimum wage including experience in EU countries</p> <p>Analysis of the level of harmonization of Serbian legislation with the Convention 131</p>	<p>Tripartite workshop on minimum wage including experience in EU countries</p> <p>Study on wage collective bargaining in Serbia</p> <p>ILO Global Wage Report translated into Serbian and presented to the members of ESC</p>

KEY FINDING 5

Towards the goal of leaving no one behind, gender-specific and anti-discrimination initiatives were included in the DWCP in the conceptualization phase. The National Strategy for Gender Equality (2016 to 2020) was considered as a reference point (DWCP, 2019), while other relevant documents also pointed out the need to focus more on the position of youth, women and vulnerable groups in the labour market (ERP 2018-2020; ERP 2021-2022; EC Progress Reports). Several social and ethnic groups — notably the Roma, rural communities, LGBTQI, persons with disabilities, migrants, survivors of gender-based violence, children and youth exposed to poverty and social exclusion, and older persons — remained vulnerable, discriminated against, and sometimes excluded from the labour market (ibid.)

DWCP reflected on gender specific and anti-discrimination topics throughout the document, with some outputs and/or targets being set from the beginning. For example, one was related to the increase in the settlement cases, including gender discrimination and sexual harassment (Outcome 1.2, Increased usage of peaceful settlement of labour disputes). However, as per the interview accounts, this aspect was neglected during the implementation.

The programme also envisaged that social partners (trade unions CATUS and Nezavisnost, and SAE) prepare recommendations on economic, social and employment policies taking also the gender aspect into account (Outcome 1.3, Stronger employers' and workers' organizations). According to the interviews with social partners, gender was entirely dropped out (TU Nezavisnost) or partially addressed (SAE). For instance, during the acute COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 AES enterprise reviews assessed the position of men and women and proposed support for women entrepreneurs and cooperatives.

Furthermore, one of the indicators set for the National Employment Strategy (2021-2026) related to the inclusiveness and employment practices taken on board the Strategy, including those that are gender sensitive (Outcome 2.1, A comprehensive national employment strategy adopted in line with International Labour Standards and good practices). Yet, the follow up reporting identifying the achievement under the indicator never took place.

In October 2021 the Serbian government adopted new Gender Equality Strategy (2021-2030) with the aim to overcome gender gap and achieve gender equality. DWCP constituents and partners in the interviews reflected on this strategic goal of the government, pointing that gender was not particularly considered as a point of high importance.

ILO and the DWCP partners overlooked another important document: OCHA Report¹⁰ on the "Impact of the COVID-19 on vulnerable groups and groups at risk - causes, outcomes and recommendations". This OCHA-supported report looks in detail at the effects of COVID-19 on vulnerable groups in Serbia. It contains substantial analysis, based on documents and surveys and makes recommendations in such areas as economic support to companies, informal sectors, social protection, Occupational Safety and Health, socially disadvantaged workers and disabilities. Since these areas all have significant overlap with the

¹⁰ "Impact of the COVID-19 on vulnerable groups and groups at risk - causes, outcomes and recommendations." United Nations Office for Human Rights (OHCHR). Surge II. initiative. Belgrade 2020.

DWCP, it was a surprise that the report's recommendations were never considered given the possibility to introduce changes at the output level.

On the positive side, ILO assessed feasibility of introducing the European Youth Guarantee in Serbia; a few activities not initially planned under DWCP were carried out such as the Analysis of Serbian legislation on violence and harassment in the world of work with the provisions of the ILO Convention 190 and Ex-post analysis of the implementation of the Law on professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities.

To conclude, the DWCP at first sight recognized the relevance of gender-specific and anti-discrimination concerns in the document. But, as accounted in the interviews with almost all the parties, they were sidelined during the DWCP implementation. In this regard, DWCP lacked coherent approach to the themes of gender specific and anti-discrimination initiatives.

CONCLUSION

The evaluation points out that DWCP outcomes and outputs to large extent mirrored national, UN and EU priorities. The programme coherence was particularly strong in the conceptualization phase and at the beginning of the implementation. With the COVID-19 breakout and continuous elections in the country DWCP coherence was somewhat fractured. DWCP was hardly reflected in the new UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2021-2025) which included ILO in the priority One related to Harnessing of the full potential of a green, sustainable and inclusive economy. Last but not least, gender-specific and anti-discrimination initiatives were included in the DWCP in the conceptualization phase, but were not coherently addressed during DWCP implementation.

Rating for the Coherence criterion: 4.7

5.3 EFFECTIVENESS OF DWCP

The effectiveness of the Decent Work Country Programme Serbia for the period 2019 – 2022 was assessed through the following Key Questions:

Key Question 3: Has DWCP contributed to the attainment of the development of outputs and outcomes initially expected/stipulated in the project document?

Cross-cutting: Has DWCP considered rights-based approach and gender equality, and followed the “no-one is left behind” principle during its design and implementation?

KEY FINDING 6

DWCP was jointly implemented by the constituents and the ILO. A tripartite Overview Board (OB), composed of all DWCP signatory parties (the Ministry of Labour, CATUS and Nezavisnost trade unions, and Serbian Association of Employers), was set up to monitor and promote its implementation. Technical cooperation projects, advisory missions, capacity building and information dissemination constituted parts of the ILO support. Extra-budgetary and ILO's regular budget resources were used to finance the implementation of DWCP.

Although the DWCP outcomes were clearly identified as important by all the constituents, the review showed that joint effort towards their achievement and promotion was missing. In the process of evaluation, the constituents continuously highlighted the differences in opinion and expectations between them (the trade unions, SAE and government). At the same time, social partners pointed out that the value of social dialogue as a consensus building mechanism was only technically recognized by the government, which according to the testimonies continued to sideline trade unions and association of employers in discussions about labour legislation reform, minimum wage fixing mechanism, etc. According to the interviews, the social dialogue potential to resolve important economic and social issues remained fragile. This resulted in weak sense of ownership over the DWCP. At the same time, all the parties pointed to the unique architecture of DWCP which brings three parties together in an institutionalized way. DWCP thus allows for structured dialogue around important topics of labour and employment in the country and eventual trust building between the constituents. Such internal coordination behind the closed doors can have a positive and lasting impact on society.

On the other side, DWCP success was reflected in the production of knowledge content and products at the output level, some being stand-alone and some leading to the realization of the set outcomes. For instance, three assessments directly fed into the drafting of the Employment Strategy 2021–2026: the functional analysis of the Ministry's Employment department, the functional analysis of the National Employment Service and an assessment of readiness of national labour market institutions for the introduction of the Youth Guarantee. All three documents were validated with the national authorities and were highly appreciated by all the partners involved in the drafting of the Strategy. In addition to that, upon request for support by the Ministry of Labour, the ILO carried out more activity the Ex-post analysis of the implementation of the Law on professional rehabilitation and employment of persons with disabilities.

Partnership between ILO and EBRD resulted in support to the Serbian Association of Employers to conduct two enterprise surveys which highlighted the vulnerability to shocks of certain categories of enterprises in specific sectors. The findings of these report were assessed as important for the SAE members who welcomed the much needed information about COVID-19 impact but also the government programmes that allowed the survival of SMEs. As shown the by assessments, microenterprises who were hit the hardest (more than one in four completely ceased operating) and had least access to funds to support recovery (only 30 per cent of respondents). At the same time, the impact of the crisis on health and care workers, and in the transport and currier services, exposed a lack of understanding of applicable international labour standards in these highly exposed sectors. With the exception of those operating in the textile, transport, and tourism sectors, businesses have generally managed to keep the dismissal of workers below 9 per cent. In doing so, they remained eligible for the most generous and powerful financial assistance measure offered by the Government, employment retention subsidies which for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises amounted to about 65 per cent of total labour costs (for workers receiving the minimum wage).

Another success was achieved by the project “The Measurement, Awareness Raising, and Policy Engagement Project to Accelerate Action against Child Labor and Forced Labor” (MAP16). The project aimed at helping to build and apply the critical knowledge needed to inform the policy choices to combat child labor and forced labor and to support measures to address these challenges in key countries, regions and sectors. MAP Serbia has successfully prepared the draft decrees on hazardous work for children and on light work for children. It organized the trainings of labour inspectors, social workers, the policemen and the public prosecutors aiming at identification and prevention of child labour. The project was funded by the US Department of Labor's (USDOL) Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB). Prepared Decrees

help regulate this area in the expectation of the new Labour Code which is the umbrella for this kind of action.

As already discussed, DWCP was less successful in relation to the production of policy products addressing gender-specific and anti-discrimination initiatives.

The table below (Table 4) show full list of achievements. As explained earlier, changes were made only at the output level.

CONCLUSION

The effectiveness of DWCP efforts had mixed results. Collaborative efforts between constituents around specific outcomes were not particularly visible. Weak social dialogue between the constituents impacted the effectiveness of the DWCP and the ownership. On the other side, the evaluation found examples of effective policy products, which were highly praised: they provided insights that were incorporated into national employment strategy, enterprise support measures, and sectoral responses. This work also helped the constituents to implement their immediate COVID-19 responses, including in the most-affected sectors and occupations. Yet, the negative effects of the pandemic on fundamental principles and rights at work, and on women and vulnerable workers was not among DWCP leading achievements.

Rating for the Effectiveness criterion: **4.1**

TABLE 4 – STATUS OF INDICATORS, RESULTS, RISKS AND RESOURCES						
INDICATORS	STATUS OF INDICATOR	ADJUSTMENT (YES/NO)	RESULTS	POTENTIAL RISKS/MITIGATION MEASURES	COMMENTS	RESOURCES
1.1.1	Aborted	No	The inputs for the new Labour Law have been prepared through the study on C 190 and through the work of the MAP Serbia project on child labour, but the drafting of the new Labour Law has been postponed for mid-2023.	None	ILO will be involved in the process from 2023 through the IPA 2022 social dialogue project (DWCP 2023-20227)	RBTC 8,000\$ MAP Serbia 20,000\$
1.1.2						
1.2.1	On track	No	Mediators and arbiters of the Agency for peaceful settlement of labour disputes covered by trainings	None		ESAP 250,000\$
1.2.2	On track	No	The number of labour disputes settled rising steadily, achieving the 10% growth rate	Participation of the ILO NC in awareness-raising activities of the Agency for peaceful settlement of labour disputes		
1.3.1	On track	No	Position papers developed as planned by both the employers' organization and the trade unions	Extended involvement of the ILO NC and the trade union specialist was required, due to very low absorption capacities of the trade union		RBTC 30,000\$
1.3.2						
2.1.1	On track	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Organizational review of the Employment Department and the Group for Normative Affairs of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia - Rapid assessment of the administrative capacity of the National Employment Service of Serbia 	None	Further assistance provided with regards to the Youth Guarantee Implementation Plan	RBTC 80,000\$
2.1.2						

			- Feasibility assessment of introduction of the European Youth Guarantee in Serbia			
2.2.1	Partly on track	No	Study analysing the root causes of poor prevention in the construction sector in the context of supply chain conducted	Two consecutive postponements of adoption of the new Law on Occupational Safety and Health of Serbia made the attainment of this indicator impossible	Follow-up will be done through the IPA 2022 project on occupational safety and labour inspection, under the new DWCP for Serbia	RBTC 20,000\$
2.2.2	Partly on track	No	MAP Serbia has successfully prepared the draft decrees on hazardous work for children and on light work. It has organized the trainings of labour inspectors, social workers, the policemen and the public prosecutors aiming at identification and prevention of child labour.	Postponement of development and adoption of the new Labour Law delayed the incorporation of the decrees into the legislation of Serbia, despite the best efforts of the ILO team		MAP Serbia 260,000 \$
2.3.1	On track	No	EESE report prepared and validated			
2.3.2	On track	No	ILO inputs to the Law on Social Entrepreneurship provided in 2019	The Law was adopted in February 2022		RBTC 15,000 \$
2.4.1	On track	YES	Upon request of the constituents the indicator was reformulated	Study on wage collective bargaining in Serbia was completed in early 2021		10,000\$

5.4 EFFICIENCY OF DWCP

The efficiency of the Decent Work Country Programme Serbia for the period 2019 – 2022 was assessed through the following Key Questions:

Key Question 5: Has the implementation of DWCP been efficient concerning adherence to the work plans (timely implementation), flexibility and responsiveness?

Cross-cutting: Has the DWCP considered rights-based approach and gender equality, and followed the “no-one is left behind” principle during its design and implementation?

KEY FINDING 7

The Overview Board is the primary body in charge of monitoring DWCP implementation and its promotion. A tripartite OB is composed of all DWCP signatory parties. The OB meetings have been attended by two representatives of the Government, trade unions and employers, and occasionally additional Government representatives have been called in when particular issues covered by them were discussed at the OB meetings. The Board has been meeting regularly, at least twice a year. During the pandemic the meetings were held online.

The Board is mandated to review the implementation on an annual basis, suggest necessary adjustments, address bottlenecks and help in resource mobilisation. According to the findings, the OB only partially fulfilled its mission.

The ILO prepared annual progress reports that fed into the work of the Overview Board. The ILO also commissioned an internal mid-term review and the ongoing country programme review at the end of the DWCP cycle to evaluate its relevance, effectiveness and efficiency. According to the available evidence, the ILO regularly tracked the progress of the DWCP implementation. Annual reports and monitoring matrices were put in place from the very beginning offering clear and concise insight into the programme progress.

Although the circumstances called for the revision of outcomes, tripartite constituents in Serbia have given up on their intention to revise selected outcomes, for instance the one on adoption of New labour legislation in line with ILS and improved legal basis created for social dialogue and collective bargaining (1.1), and minimum wage fixing mechanism (2.4). Instead of reformulation of the outcomes changes were introduced at the output level as shown in the Table 2 above. The OB also missed to include risk assessment and risk mitigation in its actions, despite the vastly impactful breakout of COVID-19 pandemic.

KEY FINDING 8

Extra-budgetary and ILO’s regular budget resources were used to finance the implementation of DWCP. However, the DWCP 2019-2022 underlined that “the ILO and the tripartite constituents of Serbia need to continue to mobilise resources together in a coherent manner in order to operationalise the 2019–2022 DWCP for the country”¹¹. The DWCP noted that traditional sources of external support for development

¹¹ DECENT WORK COUNTRY PROGRAMME 2019 TO 2022 SERBIA. Serbia. 2019. P26.

cooperation were decreasing for higher middle-income countries like Serbia, while new forms of assistance are available through the EU accession process.

This rational and urge for fundraising was mirrored in the DWCP budget for Serbia: while the total for 4 years reached USD 693.000,00 out of this amount only one fourth – USD 163.000,00 was generated from the ILO sources (See Table 4, above). Majority of funding was provided through two projects:

- 1) “The Measurement, Awareness Raising, and Policy Engagement Project to Accelerate Action against Child Labor and Forced Labor” (MAP16). The project was funded by the US Department of Labor’s (USDOL) Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB) in the amount of USD 280,000.
- 2) Regional (Western Balkans) Employment and Social Affairs Platform (ESAP) started in November 2019 and completed in the end of October 2022. It is funded by the European Union, with a budget of EUR 2.500,000. Serbia received EUR 250,000 from this budget.¹²

The evaluation found that extra-budgetary resources associated with actions in response to COVID-19 were not raised. However, the interviewees in vast majority of cases paid little attention to the funding issues, viewing ILO primarily as a knowledge and advisory partner. On the side of the budget expenditures ILO successfully disbursed allocated funds during the four-year long programme implementation.

In the internal ILO analysis several reasons were highlighted for the lack of resource mobilization: limited supply/demand relationship with the constituents, lack of ILO capacities in Serbia (Country Office consists of one staff, the National Coordinator solely), unselective support to government activities which hampers ILO interest to take part in joint activities; race for funding among UN agencies, where the big ones usually win over and over. Its relative lack of resources was reported to restrict the scope of its activities. It was also noted that participation in joint projects with several UN partners often proved to be unsatisfactory, as the funding was insufficient to justify the substantial staff inputs required.

KEY FINDING 9

At the time of DWCP preparation, key risks were anticipated to be quickly changing political priorities, lack of strong ownership over the programme and lack of implementation resources. The mitigation considered participatory planning, strengthened role of the OB to minimize the risk of lack of ownership. At the same time, DWCP was closely aligned with Serbia’s EU accession process, which was expected to reduce of risk of major political changes (DWCP, 2019). According to the review findings, risk assessments were partially performed if at all.

When the COVID-19 pandemic was first declared in March 2020, the ILO had accumulated experience in dealing with natural, economic and global health emergencies. But, none of the existing risk management and business continuity plans and procedures offered a road map that ILO management could use to navigate the crisis. This weakness persisted until the end of the programme. At the same time, upon the decision of the OB, DWCP was not adjusted to the to the evolving situation not during the COVID-19 nor later when the two round of parliamentary elections slowed down the pace of activities in

¹² Informal employment and lack of social dialogue take centre stage among the key issues on which the European Commission has asked the Western Balkans to show improvements in order to meet the EU accession criteria in the area of social policies and employment (Chapter 19). Phase 2 of the Employment and Social Affairs Platform (ESAP) consists of three thematic components: Informal Employment and Undeclared Work; Labour Inspection and Social Dialogue

the country. Some measures were however introduced: constituent engagement continued regularly through virtual meetings and conferences as reported by the interviewees.

CONCLUSION

The efficiency of DWCP embodied in regular monitoring of the DWCP progress, in budget allocations and risk planning shows mixed results. On one side the ILO regularly tracked the progress of the DWCP implementation through the annual reports and monitoring matrices which were put in place from the very beginning of the programme. Budget flexibility also allowed adaptations while maintaining accountability. Yet, the revisions of the DWCP occurred only at the output level despite dramatic changes due to COVID -19 outbreak and changing political setting in Serbia, this showing weak understanding of the OB regarding the monitoring and evaluation systems. COVID-19 also highlighted partial success of the ILO in adapting its planning and reporting systems to track its COVID-19 response and measure its effectiveness.

Rating for the Efficiency criterion: **4.1**

5.5 SUSTAINABILITY OF DWCP

The sustainability of the Decent Work Country Programme Serbia for the period 2019 – 2022 was assessed through the following Key Questions:

Key Question 6: Has DWCP contributed to sustainable partnerships, policies, and capacities of stakeholders for effective, inclusive, accountable and participatory Decent Work programme in Serbia?

Cross-cutting: Has DWCP considered rights-based approach and gender equality, and followed the “no-one is left behind” principle during its design and implementation?

KEY FINDING 10

The DWCP achievements directly fed into the government policies and regulations as already presented. In this regard, the realized DWCP activities impacted on achieving government priorities in the selected fields. However, DWCP contribution to building sustainable partnerships with various parties was limited. Each DWCP party was looking for new alliances on its own: trade unions were expanding their networks through the European and International Trade Union Confederations. The SAE was forging partnerships through the International and European employers’ organizations. According to the interviews, the DWCP parties rarely crossed paths in pursuing their partnership agendas. This points to the weak ownership of the constituents over DWCP. Commitment of the DWCP partners at best can be described as lukewarm. On its side, ILO continued to boost its cooperation with major stakeholders in the country, such as the UNCT, the EU Delegation to Serbia, GIZ, USAID, and other bilateral partners. During the four-year period new mechanisms for coherence and collaboration with other UN agencies and multilateral and bilateral partners emerged around DWCP, but required substantial work, and more resources, to realize benefits. The ILO was not always able to play as prominent a role as it would have liked, even if it was the logical and mandated agency to do so. The ILO also lacks the human resources to fundraise and also manage the

workload associated with the potential new cooperation agreements and partnerships, as pointed out by a number of interviewees.

However, there has been renewed impetus for cooperation between the ILO and bilateral and multilateral partners, and international financial institutions that could allow better reach and scaling of DWCP efforts supported by ILO. One example of pulling forces together could be related to the inclusion of a safe and healthy working environment as per the ILO's Convention 155 on Occupational safety and health framework of fundamental principles and rights at work.

Based on the interviews, the collaboration between the constituents through the future DWCP programme which can also bring support of external partners could be further placed for example on the impact of digitalization and automation on labour markets and vulnerable groups; platform economy; developing teleworking policies and guides; protecting and enhancing gendered employment opportunities for various populations of workers including vulnerable groups; strengthening the economic case for employment-rich investments, particularly in the care, digital and green economies; improving productivity and promoting innovation in enterprises; curbing the spread of informality; promoting the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions. Strong association with the EU accession agenda also needs to be considered.

CONCLUSION

Reported weak ownership of national constituents over DWCP undermined the programme sustainability. Policy impact remained fragmented due to inability of all involved parties to push the DWCP agenda with the Prime Minister Office and the Government of Serbia. Established and strong partnerships with the major bilateral and multilateral partners in Serbia can strengthen ILO position and allow strong impact of the future DWCP results on the government policies and regulations.

Rating for the Sustainability criterion: 4.5

5.6 OVERALL RATING

As the review shows, DWCP goals remained relevant from the times of its formulation and throughout its implementation, mirroring national, UN and EU priorities. The programme coherence was undermined with the COVID-19 breakout and continuous elections in the country, this also including gender-specific and anti-discrimination initiatives which sidelined during the DWCP implementation.

The effectiveness and efficiency of DWCP efforts had mixed results. Collaboration between constituents around specific DWCP outcomes was weak. Frail social dialogue between the constituents impacted the effectiveness of the DWCP. On the other side, high quality policy products ensured DWCP relevance in national policy making. The efficiency of DWCP was reflected in careful monitoring of the DWCP progress, flexible and responsible budget allocations. On the other side the risk planning and mitigation, regular risk assessments, programme outcome revisions were lacking showing inadequacy of the DWCP oversight mechanisms.

Weak ownership of national constituents over DWCP undermined the programme sustainability. Policy impact remained fragmented due to inability of the constituents to push the DWCP agenda with the Government of Serbia. However, strong ILO partnerships with the major bilateral and multilateral partners in Serbia can allow robust impact of the future DWCP on the government policies and regulations.

Table 5: OVERALL ASSESSMENT RATINGS BY CRITERION

RELEVANCE	5.3
COHERENCE	4.7
EFFECTIVENESS	4.1
EFFICIENCY	4.1
SUSTAINABILITY	4.5
Overall rating	4.5

Scoring criteria:

6 = Highly satisfactory, 5 = Satisfactory, 4 = Somewhat satisfactory, 3 = Somewhat unsatisfactory, 2 = Unsatisfactory, 1 = Highly unsatisfactory.

3 Lessons learned

The ILO's response to the weak ownership of the DWCP by the constituents showed the need to put in place the right collaborative and empowering structures that can improve the delivery and sustainability of the DWCPs. The current scope and structure of the Overview Board (OB) requires rethinking so that the OB can really fulfil its role aimed at promotion and monitoring of the DWCP implementation.

The COVID-19 pandemic pointed out to the importance of risk assessment and risk mitigation in ILO response, including also the DWCPs. There is a need to introduce risk management matrix to anticipate, manage and mitigate risks at both ILO country level and as a part of the DWCP planning and implementation.

Combined regular and extra-budgetary contributions to DWCP implementation showed good results. Further strengthening of partnership between ILO and other major bilateral and multilateral actors, and international and European financial institutions (e.g. EBRD) can enhance the reach and scale of the DWCP. Moreover, strong alignment with the EU accession agenda can lead to echo effect: on one side it can boost ILO position in the country while also impacting the future DWCP results feeding into the government policies and regulations.

The pandemic and early parliamentary elections in 2020 and 2022 put pressure on ILO under the DWCP to focus on the production of knowledge content and products. They were highly praised by different stakeholders ranging from the UN organizations, bilateral and multilateral actors, social partners and programme beneficiaries, etc. With appropriate communication and advocacy strategy this line of work can improve the relevance, effectiveness and potential impact of the future DWCP.

The review showed the importance of gender specific and anti-discrimination practices particularly during the crisis. This approach needs to be strengthened and included in the DWCP theory of change in order to enhance the impact of DWCP outcomes and outputs on one side, but also to ensure that gendered policies and the ones addressing vulnerable populations are in place and effective in the times of crisis.

4 Recommendations

RECOMMENDATION 1 - Consultation process was a key to the formulating of well-grounded DWCP. The DWCP 2023-2027 should follow the same path of programme design engaging the Government's ministries of labour, economy and finance, and social partners into the discussion.. Informal consultations with civil society organizations and professional associations could also help in creating well informed country programme.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO DWT/CO Budapest ILO NC Tripartite Constituents	High	Low	Short-term

RECOMMENDATION 2 - Continue to strengthen the capacity of the tripartite constituents to enhance their internal planning processes and adapt their services to contribute to the development of effective national policies and actions facilitated by DWCP. Social partners shall be supported to formulate development strategies with the aim of setting the vision, goals and theory of change for their organizations so to foster their engagement in social dialogue.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO DWT/CO Budapest ILO NC	High	Medium	Medium-term

RECOMMENDATION 3 - Develop inclusive, gender-responsive and anti-discrimination policies as a part of the new DWCP as growing inequalities remain a serious impediment to a just society. Gender and anti-discrimination shall be reflected in the DWCP Theory of change, while the Checklist for Gender Mainstreaming in Project and Programmes can be useful guide in determining access to resources, roles, and responsibilities, constraints, and priorities according to gender. Responding to the urgent need to provide protection for emerging diverse forms of work, the DWCP needs to accelerate support for gender-responsive policy and regulatory actions, in respect of the protection of wages, working time, care responsibilities, safety and health, the elimination of violence and harassment, and inclusive access to social protection.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
Tripartite Constituents ILO DWT/CO Budapest ILO NC	High	Medium	Medium-term

RECOMMENDATION 4 - The ILO together with social partners should work to implement a whole-of-government understanding of the obligations under the applicable Conventions and support policies that are applicable at all times, especially during crises, that are rights-based and intersectional. ILO's watchdog role in safeguarding international labour standards shall be reinforced. For example, the COVID pandemic exposed a lack of understanding of applicable international labour standards in the transport and courier services, among others, pointing to the gap that ILO shall fill in.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO DWT/CO Budapest ILO NC	High	Low	Medium-term

RECOMMENDATION 5 – Develop promotion (communication) and advocacy strategy for new DWCP with clear targets and roles for DWCP constituents. Influential and impactful DWCP programme requires good planning and engagement of all parties in the process of the programme implementation. Joint work may eventually increase the sense of ownership over DWCP.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO DWT/CO Budapest ILO NC	Medium	Medium	Short to Medium-term

RECOMMENDATION 6 – Support ILO in Serbia in its efforts to ensure higher impact and visibility of DWCP. The MAP project on child labour, and other collaborative actions with multilateral and bilateral donors, and financial institutions, enhanced the reach and scale of DWCP, particularly if strongly aligned with the EU accession agenda. Resource mobilization, communication and advocacy, production of highquality analyses and reports, safeguarding the adherence to the international labour standards in the country, support to constituents calls for strong technical support by ILO Budapest and Geneva to DWCP implementation. For example, ILO experts' advisory missions, technical support and trainings of constituents would demonstrate ILO institutional capacity and strength, which in turn can reinvigorate the DWCP process.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
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ILO Regional Office/ ILO DWT/CO Budapest	High	Medium	Short to Medium-term
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RECOMMENDATION 7 - The role of the Overview Board should be revisited to ensure enhanced engagement of all the parties in the monitoring of the DWCP implementation and its promotion. Participatory planning and joint workshops that provide space for rethinking of the OB successes and challenges, for example related risk management and the overall DWCP 2019-2022 implementation should be considered. Reflecting on the past actions could be a useful guide for the future.

Addressed to	Priority	Resource	Timing
ILO DWT/CO Budapest ILO NC Tripartite constituents	High	Medium	Short-term

5 Good practice examples

SUCCESS STORY ONE

Project /programme Title: SAE surveys about COVID-19 impact on enterprises

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

Name of Evaluator: Branka Andjekovic

Date: February 2023

GP Element	Text
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<p>Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)</p>	<p>In 2018-19, the Serbian Association of Employers (SAE) developed a comprehensive assessment to identify the key constraints for enterprise development in Serbia. The assessment involved a survey that collected the views of 450 enterprises and focused on major constraints hampering business development in Serbia in six areas, namely (1) good governance; (2) social dialogue; (3) enabling legal and regulatory framework; (4) fair competition; (5) access to financial services; (6) education, training and lifelong learning. SAE defined the priority research areas through a series of qualitative processes consisting of six focus groups with its members across Serbia and designed the survey questionnaire based on inputs collected from enterprises. Furthermore, SAE facilitated the entire research process, which was led by an external economic expert, and validated internally the draft report.</p> <p>SAE finalized the assessment report in 2019 and discussions over the key findings and the way forward were planned to take place in 2020. The process was however disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. SAE give priority to advocacy actions aimed at supporting enterprises to navigate the COVID-19 crisis. After initial plans to postpone the launch of the report, it became clear that the protracted crisis affected severely enterprise viability. SAE therefore considered it imperative to take stock of how the crisis changed or amplified enterprise perception about the need for an enabling business environment. Consequently, SAE, in collaboration with the Center for Advanced Economic Studies (CEVES), updated the initial 2019 assessment report to reflect the post-COVID-19 situation and revisited the list of recommendations aimed at improving the business environment and preparing enterprises for a postpandemic reboot.</p> <p>The SAE published the report on its website. Several discussions were initiated with various decision makers on the SAE's recommendations for improving the business environment.</p>
<p>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</p>	<p>The assessment was carried out before the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic (2019) and repeated during the first year of the pandemic (2020). The assessment was highly relevant in the context of very limited information and anticipation about the impact of the pandemic on SMEs in Serbia.</p>

Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	<p>The ILO provided support to SAE in assessing the business environment, based on the Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises (ESEE) methodology. More specifically, the ILO acquainted the SAE with the survey tool, which was used by them to narrow down the priority research areas to six out of seventeen covered by the ESEE methodology and provided extensive guidance in the development of survey questionnaires by SAE. The ILO helped in building SAE analytical skills by engaging them in the review and write up of specific sections of the report (in particular on social dialogue), as well as in the validation process. The ILO coordinated the research process and provided technical input to the questionnaires applied to enterprises, reviewed and contributed to the ESEE report, including the recommendations stemming from it. The ILO also made available secondary data (economic indicators) from reputable international sources to compare Serbia's performance to benchmark countries (Austria, Croatia, Hungary and Slovenia) across the six ESEE conditions covered by the analysis. Knowledge and experience gained by SAE during the ESEE assessment proved to be instrumental in conducting two subsequent rounds of enterprise surveys on the impact of COVID-19 on business in 2020-2021.</p>
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	<p>Due to increased visibility of its advocacy actions during the crisis, SAE reported a solid 10 per cent increase in membership (individual and collective) between 2020 -2021</p>
Potential for replication and by whom	<p>The project can be replicated by employers' associations across the world with regards to any kind of disasters (floods, earthquakes, droughts, etc) and/or emerging crisis (environmental, financial, economic, health, etc)</p>
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	<p>DWCP 2019-2022: Priority 1: Labour market governance, Outcome: 1.3 Stronger employers' and workers' organizations.</p> <p>Linked to ILO policy outcome 10 1.3 Stronger employers' and workers' organizations.</p> <p>SDG Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all; 8.3 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</p>
Other documents or relevant comments	

SUCCESS STORY TWO

Project /programme Title:

“The Measurement, Awareness Raising, and Policy Engagement Project to Accelerate Action against Child Labor and Forced Labor” (MAP16).

Name of Evaluator: Branka Andjelkovic

Date: February 2023

The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.

GP Element	Text
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	<p>In 2019 the second round of the project “The Measurement, Awareness Raising, and Policy Engagement Project to Accelerate Action against Child Labor and Forced Labor” (MAP16) was launched. The project aimed at helping to build and apply the critical knowledge needed to inform the policy choices to combat child labor and forced labor and to support measures to address these challenges in key countries, regions and sectors. MAP Serbia has successfully prepared the draft decrees on hazardous work for children and on light work for children.</p> <p>During the project duration, Ex ante analysis of the introduction of light work for children into Serbian labour legislation was carried out; Guidelines/instructions for the courts on their judgements in the case of undeclared work in construction sector were prepared, and Rapid assessment of child labour in child begging was conducted. The project organized the trainings of labour inspectors, social workers, the policemen and the public prosecutors aiming at identification and prevention of child labour. Prepared Decrees are intended to help regulate this area in the expectation of the new Labour Code which is the umbrella for this kind of action.</p> <p>The project was funded by the US Department of Labor’s (USDOL) Bureau of International Labor Affairs (ILAB).</p>

Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	Over the course of the project, the topic of child labour became increasingly important due to the government heightened focus on the vocational education and training (VET) where hazards for children on training were previously not identified making the on-site practice perilous. Due to this project, the National Qualification System with the Ministry of Education and VET recognize light work for children in the education as well as hazardous child labour and is setting standards for employers engaged in VET to follow the rules.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	The ILO provided support to labour inspectors, social workers, the policemen and the public prosecutors aiming at identification and prevention of child labour. More specifically, the ILO acquainted them with the methods and protocols how to address child labour and provided extensive training of these actors. The ILO helped in building Serbian Statistical Office analytical skills by engaging them in the review of light work and hazardous child labour. Together with UNICEF the ILO coordinated the development of the Road map for identifying child labour in Serbia with the aim to streamline the topic across different sectors and data bases. Two ministries are in charge of this topic, the Ministry of Labour and the Ministry of family care, while in addition the Institute for Social protection plays a role in the domain of classification of child labour. The ILO also made available secondary data from reputable international sources to compare Serbia's performance to other countries (Jordan, Myanmar, Bolivia, Morocco, Turkey, Mauritania, Kosovo, Montenegro, Sri Lanka, etc) Knowledge and experience gained through the project proved to be instrumental for national stakeholders to first identify child labour in Serbia and then classify it through various government systems in order to be able to address the misconduct and bring child exploiters to courts.
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	The project introduced the topic of child labour in Serbia, which was completely under the radar of labour and social protection legislators and policy makers. It helped with the classification of child labour which did not exist in the labour and social protection systems. It also introduced the category of child labour into the measurements of the Serbian Statistical Office (SORS)
Potential for replication and by whom	The project can be replicated across EU countries given that the phenomenon of child labour has been increasing globally, including the EU. With VET gaining in popularity, the topic becomes more relevant than ever. However, the EU countries considered child labour as a challenge and problem of underdeveloped and developing countries. For this reason, Eurostat does not collect data and can not provide statistics on child labour.

<p>Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)</p>	<p>DWCP 2019-2022: Priority 2: More and better jobs governance; Outcome 2.2 Improved working conditions and protection from unacceptable forms of work</p> <p>Linked to ILO policy outcome 7 Promoting safe work and workplace compliance</p> <p>SDG Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all;</p> <p>8.7 Make immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, and modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.</p>
<p>Other documents or relevant comments</p>	

ANNEX A: List of Key Informants/ interviewees

Name	Organization	Designation	E-mail	Mode/date of interview
Markus Pilgrim	ILO DWT/CO Budapest	Director	pilgrim@ilo.org	December 14 th , 2022 (Zoom)
Daniela Zampini	ILO DWT/CO Budapest	Employment Specialist	zampini@ilo.org	December 23 rd , 2022 (Zoom)
Ada Huibregtse	ESAP II	Project Chief Technical Advisor	huibregtse@ilo.org	December 12 th , 2022 (Zoom)
Milica Djordjevic	MAP'16	Project Manager	djordjevic@ilo.org	December 1 st , 2022 (Zoom)
Maria Borsos	ILO DWT/CO Budapest	Programme Officer	borsos@ilo.org	November 21 st , 2022 and December 2 nd , 2022 (Zoom)
Jovan Protic	ILO Country Office	National Coordinator	protic@ilo.org	November 21 st , 2022 and December 2 nd , 2022 (Zoom)
Čedanka Andrić	UGS (TU) Nezavisnost	President	predsednica@nezavisnost.org	November 28 th , 2022 (Zoom)
Dejana Kuzmic	Serbian Association of Employers	International Cooperation	d.kuzmic@poslodavci.rs	December 6 th , 2022 (Zoom)
Dragana Savic	Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy	International Cooperation	dragana.savic@minrzs.gov.rs	December 12 th , 2022 (Zoom)
Dragana Kralj	Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Policy	Adviser	dragana.kralj@minrzs.gov.rs	November 28 th , 2022 (Zoom)
Ivica Lazović, Director of the,	Republican Agency for peaceful settlement of labor disputes	Director	ivica.lazovic@ramrrs.gov.rs	December 7 th , 2022 (Zoom)
Maja Ilić	Labour inspectorate of the Republic of Serbia,	Head of Study and Analytical Affairs	majai@minrzs.gov.rs	December 29 th , 2022 (Zoom)
Dunja Cicmil,	Directorate for Occupational Safety and Health,	Director	dunja.radojicic@minrzs.gov.rs	December 15 th , 2022 (Zoom)
Francoise Jacob,	United Nations Country Team	UN Resident Coordinator in Serbia	francoise.jacob@un.org	December 7 th , 2022 (Zoom)
Borka Jeremic	United Nations Population Fund	Head of Country Office	jeremic@unfpa.org	December 12 th , 2022 (Zoom)

ANNEX B: Evaluation questions

The TOR provided the basis for the evaluation questions that the final evaluation consultant analyzed and proposed 7 key evaluation questions, using also questions from the ToR as sub-questions to ensure that all areas indicated under the TOR are considered and covered. The review provided insights into these questions using specific, objectively verifiable indicators (OVI) generated for each EQ to assess the situation, delivery of outputs and progress towards the intended outcome.

Key Evaluation Questions (KQ)	Relevance	Coherence	Efficiency	Effectiveness	Sustainability	Cross-cutting
Key Question 1: To what extent do the ILO interventions in the country address the beneficiaries' needs?	X	X				X
Key Question 2: What has been the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the implementation of the programme and if/and how well has the ILO adapted to the crisis?	X					
Key Question 3: Has the DWCP contributed to the attainment of the development of outputs and outcomes initially expected/stipulated in the document?		X		X	X	X
Key question 4: Has the DWCP contributed to the national development plans and broader development objectives as spelled out in the SDGs Agenda 2030, and EU acquis?		X		X		X
Key question 5: Has the implementation of the DWCP been efficient concerning adherence to the work plans (timely implementation), flexibility and responsiveness?			X	X	X	X
Key Question 6: Has DWCP contributed to sustainable partnerships, polices and capacities of stakeholders for effective, inclusive, accountable and participatory Decent Work programme in Serbia?					X	X

Key Question 7: Has the DWCP considered rights-based approach and gender equality, and followed the “no-one is left behind” principle during its design and implementation?	x				x	x
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X- main evaluation criteria

These evaluation questions, judgement criteria, indicators and evidences, following all the provisions from the ToR have been presented in the evaluation matrix.

Each evaluation criterion will be scored using the evaluation rating scales:

- For effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and cross-cutting:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Highly unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Somewhat unsatisfactory	Somewhat satisfactory	Satisfactory	Highly satisfactory

The contribution analysis (CA)¹³, adjusted for the evaluation of complex programmes¹⁴ is in the centre of the evaluation approach. The DWCP objectives were set at the high level requiring joint work of many partners, which may be challenging or in some cases impossible to achieve. To address these challenges, the FEC applied contribution analysis to facilitate credible causal claims between the DWCP, its results¹⁵ and contributions to respective overall objective.

¹³ John Mayne: „Contribution analysis: Coming of age?” from Evaluation, 2012, Sage Publication, DOI: 10.1177/1356389012451663.

¹⁴ Line Dybdal, Steffen Bohni Nielsen, Sebastian Lemire (Ramboll Management Consulting and Aarhus, Denmark): “Contribution Analysis Applied: Reflections on Scope and Methodology”, The Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation Vol. 25 No. 2 Pages 29–57 ISSN 0834-1516

¹⁵ Also, where a paucity of data necessitates a quick assessment of a contribution, this should be carried out using appropriate evaluation methodologies that identify contributions at the outcome level and ascertain the plausibility of causal relationships between activities and outcomes. More details in John Mayne: „Contribution analysis: Coming of age?” from Evaluation, 2012, Sage Publication, DOI: 10.1177/1356389012451663.

ANNEX C: List of reviewed documents

The evaluation started with an initial review of the documents provided by the ILO National Coordinator in Serbia and accessed via open sources. These include many different levels and types of documents, such as:

- Gender Equality Strategy for the period 2021-2030, Government of Serbia
- ILO DWCP for Serbia 2019-2022
- DWCP 2019-2022 Serbia Results Framework
- Minutes of DWCP Steering Committees meetings
- ILO Mission reports
- ILO NC DWCP annual reports
- ILO NC quarterly reports for Serbia
- ILO monitoring/progress and evaluation reports for technical projects
- Impact of COVID-19 on Micro and Small Enterprises in Serbia (2020), Smart Kolektiv, Belgrade
- Studies and other relevant outputs (e.g. guidelines etc.) elaborated within the frame of ILO technical projects implemented in/covering Montenegro
- ILO SERBIA country factsheet/website
- Independent High-Level Evaluation of ILO's COVID-19 Response 2020-22
- National Strategy for Gender Equality for the period 2016-2020, Government of Serbia
- The COVID-crisis and Serbia's SMEs: Assessment of Impact and Outline of Future Scenarios (2020), CEVES, Belgrade
- United Nations Development Partnership Framework (DFP – UNDAF for Serbia 2016–2020)
- UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (2021-2025)
- UNDAF logical frameworks and reporting
- EC Progress reports for the period 2018-2022
- Economic Reform Programme, Government of Serbia 2018-2020; 2021-2023; 2022-2024
- CCA and RF for the new UNCF
- Minimum wage statistics, Eurostat (2019, 2020, 2021, 2022)