



## Internal Mid-Term Evaluation

### Market Systems Development for Decent Work, The Lab: Phase 2

April 2019

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## Summary

The Lab is a SECO-funded, ILO global initiative that tests, scales and shares strategies to maximize the impact of market systems development interventions on Decent Work. This mid-term internal evaluation assesses progress, relevance and effectiveness of the Lab at the mid-way point of Phase 2, which started in October 2017 and runs through September 2020.

A participatory ‘Delphi’ methodology – a structured approach to qualitative research – was used, aimed at generating consensus among a group of diverse stakeholders. Data collection consisted of a document review, stakeholder surveys and group discussions.

Overall, the evaluation found that the Lab’s mandate of generating knowledge on how a market systems approach can be used for decent work outcomes was seen as very relevant to the core audience of donors, practitioners and the ILO.

The Lab is making good progress against expected results set out in its project document. Currently, 80% of logframe indicator targets are either on track, or have already been achieved. The project is being implemented within budget and has so far raised over USD 750,000 in co-funding from partners as contributions to shared research objectives.

Projects and organizations collaborating with the Lab appear highly satisfied. In the anonymous online survey, 85% of respondents indicated they were either ‘very satisfied’ or ‘satisfied’ with the Lab. This compares favourably to a score of 79% in 2017, where the same question was asked to a sample of partners.

However, more could be done to deepen the Lab’s impact and embed a market systems approach to decent work beyond the lifetime of the project. These efforts should focus less on ‘top down’ institutional structures of departments, units, policies and processes; and more on networks of people in the ILO who can act as market systems ‘champions’ to drive forward change from the ‘bottom up’.

To that end, the evaluation makes five recommendations:

1. Develop a strategic framework for institutionalisation
2. Undertake an influence mapping to identify key leverage points in the ILO
3. Scope out a Systems Accelerator (training plus mentoring programme)
4. Introduce go/no-go criteria for supporting market systems analysis
5. Shift from knowledge generation to knowledge synthesis
6. Contribute to addressing the MSD evidence gap

# 1 Background

The Lab (GLO/17/06/CHE) is an International Labour Organization (ILO) global initiative that tests, scales and shares strategies to maximize the impact of market systems development interventions on Decent Work. The second phase of the Lab runs from October 2017 through September 2020 and is funded by Switzerland's State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO).

By understanding the market incentives to improve working conditions in advanced developing countries, the Lab identifies innovative 'win-win' solutions that lead to growth and improved competitiveness while at the same time boosting job quality for vulnerable populations.

Bridging the worlds of research and practice, the goal is:

Learning through measuring impact, to take...

Action that catalyses...

Better jobs, sustainably and at scale.

The Lab's bottom line is to deliver more and better jobs through improved market systems.

This second – and final – phase of the Lab has a particular focus on value chains such as agri-business export commodities, tourism, manufacturing and construction that have a high waged labour potential, but still face considerable poverty and development problems. The Lab is also focused on mainstreaming knowledge into both the ILO and SECO such that both organisations will continue to develop and implement sound, sustainable and scalable programmes that address market incentives to tackle decent work challenges, without continued support from the Lab.

The Lab's four product lines and results areas are:

- Analysis. Market research and analysis. Understanding the business case for improving working conditions, and the underlying sector constraints inhibiting decent work outcomes.
- Action. Market systems interventions. Supporting interventions to improve selected decent work deficits, through cost-sharing, convening actors, brokering relationships and providing technical advice.
- Learning. Measuring, evaluating and reflecting on what's working, and why, to adjust strategies and document knowledge.
- Sharing. Knowledge products. Generating flagship global public goods on proven business models and market analysis methodology, disseminated through running events and supporting communication between practitioners and policymakers.

## 2 Purpose, clients and scope of the evaluation

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to inform mid-stream adjustments to the project strategy.

The clients of the evaluation are:

- The lab project team.
- The donor (SECO)

- The wider SME Unit and ENTERPRISES teams in ILO headquarters, as well as collaborating field projects.

The evaluation covers the period from the beginning of Phase 2 (in October 2017) to March 2019. The internal evaluation was led by Matt Ripley, an external consultant and senior adviser to the Lab, with the active participation of the whole Lab team<sup>1</sup>.

### 3 Methodology and evaluation questions

#### 3.1 Evaluation questions

The evaluation follows OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) set of evaluation criteria, which served as guiding principles. The following evaluation questions were addressed:

<b>1. Relevance and strategic fit</b>
1.1 Are the objectives of the Lab consistent with user priorities, including ILO and non-ILO practitioners, partners and donors?
1.2 Is the project helping the ILO establish a comparative advantage in the knowledge base for systemic approaches to creating more and better jobs?
1.3 Concerning wider development practice, how far has the Lab influenced debates on job quality and quantity improvement?
1.4 To what extent does the Lab strategy build on the findings and recommendations of the final independent evaluation of the Lab's first phase?
1.5 How is the Lab's role and value-add perceived both inside and outside the ILO?
<b>2. Progress and effectiveness</b>
2.1 Is the project being delivered on time, in scope (against the Logframe) and on budget (in line with expected resource utilisation)?
2.2 Concerning the internal environment, how successful has the Lab been in showing how sustainable market systems solutions can help deliver improved working conditions?
2.3 Which elements of the market systems approach to decent work are showing most promise in being institutionalised and mainstreamed, both inside and outside the ILO?
2.4 What lessons or components of the Lab approach can be integrated into future project design in the SME portfolio?
<b>3. Impact orientation and sustainability</b>
3.1 If the Lab was to stop now, would (key elements of) the market systems approach to decent work be up-scaled in the ILO or replicated elsewhere (including in SECO)?
3.2 To what extent has the Lab had a 'spill over' effect on more sustainable approaches to decent work and results measurement within the ILO or SECO (beyond the Lab's portfolio of direct partners)?
3.3 What could be done to deepen the Lab's impact and embed a market systems approach to decent work beyond the lifetime of the project?

#### 3.2 Evaluation methodology

A combination of primary and secondary data collection and analysis was used to generate an evidence base to answer the evaluation questions. The following methods were deployed: 1) desk review and data extraction; and 2) the *Delphi Method*, consisting of a series of group discussions and surveys.

<sup>1</sup> According to the ILO's *Development Corporation Internal Governance Manual*, a project with funding between USD 1million and USD 5million must undergo at least one independent budget evaluation. The Lab will have its independent evaluation as the final project evaluation.

## Desk Review & Data Extraction

The desk review generated relevant evidence to answer the evaluation questions against each core objective of the project. It involved extracting relevant data from secondary sources, provided by the ILO, and obtained through the Lab's website and other sources such as relevant project websites (e.g., BEAM Exchange). An initial list of documents reviewed is set in Annex 1.

## Delphi Method

The Delphi method is a structured approach to qualitative research that aims at generating consensus among a group of diverse stakeholders to ensure that no one dominates discussions, and everyone has an equal opportunity to participate<sup>2</sup>. It solicits opinions from groups in an iterative process of question-and-answer. After each round the responses are summarised and redistributed for discussion in the next round. Through a process of convergence involving the identification of common trends and inspection of outliers, a consensus is reached.

The evaluation used an adapted version of the Delphi Method, in particular to answer evaluation questions 1.2, 1.5, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3. It took place over four rounds:

Round One: A random sample of respondents, drawn from the list of Lab external stakeholders in Annex 2, were invited to complete a fully anonymous online survey. This elicited open-ended responses against some of the core evaluation questions. Five responses were received. Questions were purposefully broad to invite participation in the spirit of brainstorming. Responses were summarized and put into a (word)map that helped the Lab team see patterns and understand the collective intelligence better in the next round.

Round Two: Internal stakeholders (i.e. the Lab team) verified the relative accuracy of the summarized Round One information and turned to the questions that were generated by that information. A face-to-face meeting with core Lab team members was held on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019. This involved:

- Individual work. Working individually and without discussion, each person responded to the (grouped) evaluation questions.
- Small groups. Participants come together in twos. They prepared a group list of information (answers to each question), arranged in order of importance.
- Whole group. In turn and for each question, each group contributed the most important item on their list not already on the whole group list.

Round Three: Based on the Lab team discussion, a set of more specific questions was developed by the evaluation lead to be sent to the full stakeholder group<sup>3</sup>. The list of survey questions is included in Annex 3.

Round Four: In late March the Lab team met to reflect on their Round Two responses – this time armed with the stakeholder survey responses from Round Three. The same individual-small group-large group process was run, with participants asked to answer questions that verify the summarization of their previous responses. They were given an opportunity to verify the collective responses, or to change their answers or comment further to clarify. Once a sufficient amount of

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<sup>2</sup> An example of a completed Delphi can be found here: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK259769/>

<sup>3</sup> Due to logframe reporting requirements, one of these questions was mandated to measure satisfaction levels: "Percentage of the project clients of the Lab satisfied with Lab support"

information had been collected and the evaluation questions had been answered, and the respondents were in broad consensus, the Delphi survey process came to an end.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis followed a triangulation approach, weaving together primary and secondary and quantitative and qualitative data to robustly answer the stated evaluation questions.

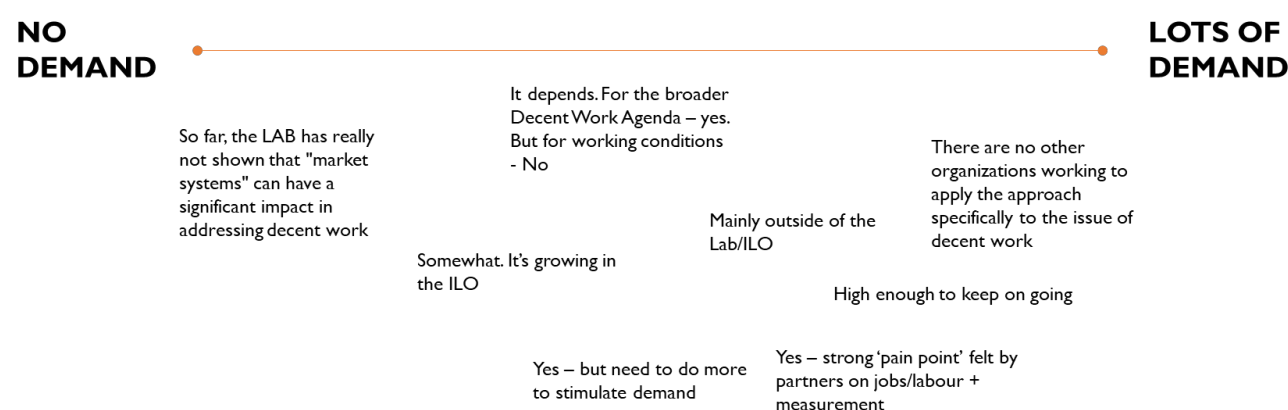
# 4 Main findings

## 4.1 Relevance and strategic fit

Overall, the Lab’s mandate of generating knowledge on how a market systems approach can be used for decent work outcomes was seen as very relevant to the core audience of donors, practitioners and the ILO. This was because the Lab both responds to a ‘pain point’ being felt by stakeholders (the continuing need to create more and better jobs) and comes at a time when there is increasing attention on how international development aid can be better leveraged to catalyse systemic changes – that is, lasting solutions to address the root cause of issues like low wages and poverty, rather than short-term temporary ‘band aids’.

Figure 1, below, summarises the range of stakeholder opinions on the demand for the Lab. A few patterns emerged. First, it was felt that demand for the Lab was marginally higher outside of the ILO, rather than inside. This is likely due to the strong network of MSD practitioners already active globally. It was felt that demand from within the ILO was growing, albeit from a low baseline where a market systems approach is still seen as very new. The Lab is perceived as having a ‘unique’ mandate as there are no other initiatives dedicated to the topic of both decent work and MSD.

Figure 1. Stakeholder perceptions of the demand for Lab areas of work



Accordingly, Figure 2 below shows stakeholder perception of the Lab’s value add in terms of influencing debates on job quality and quantity. Again, it was felt that influence was greater ‘externally’ rather than within the ILO. As one Lab team member noted, “*our scope of influence (in the ILO) might be limited....even to within the SME Unit...we need to engage more with the ‘traditional’ ILO and the areas that influence the ILO’s mandate/direction*”. At the same time, however, it was felt that the Lab needs to be realistic about the extent to which it can influence long-standing practices in a large organization, especially given the staffing, resource and time limitations of the project.

Figure 2. Stakeholder perceptions of the extent to which the Lab has influences debates on job quality and quantity



**NOT AT  
ALL**

**LOTS**

Within the ILO, to a limited extent as many other departments remain sceptical about the market systems approach

Externally medium; internally low

The topic of job quality is particularly difficult; nonetheless, I think the world looks to the Lab for pointers on this.

Limited scope of influence – be realistic

Yes, look at human capital and people networks!

Other challenges included:

- The Lab continues to generate relevant and strategic knowledge on aspects of decent work such as income and jobs, but has made less headway on other aspects of working conditions.
- Advocacy on a market systems approach continues to be hindered by the lack of evidence that the approach works; this ‘evidence generation’ is a challenge as it takes long timeframes for systemic change (at least 5 years) and the Lab acts as an adviser, without any implementation capacity, which limits the project’s ability to generate results on-the-ground.

Table 1 summarises how the Lab has fully integrated the recommendations of the end-of-phase-one independent evaluation exercise.

Table 1. How has the Lab responded to the findings of the Lab 1 independent evaluation?

Area of recommendation	Actions taken
Taking a systemic approach to design and delivery of Phase II	The Lab dropped Objective 3 (training) from Phase 2, and built in a more explicit emphasis on knowledge generation and its dissemination and adoption through wider networks of other knowledge hubs and international agencies
Make strategic changes for maximising impact and sustainability, including to institutionalise the Lab’s thinking and approach within the ILO	During Phase 2 the Lab has engaged more deeply within the ILO both at headquarters, such as with PARDEV on project design guidance, and in the field through the ILO’s social partner structure, for example training the Montenegro Employer’s Federation on market systems analysis.
Creating an environment for learning and evidence-driven design	The Lab has introduced regular (every 6 months) strategy review meetings and now has a more structured approach to monitoring key ‘step changes’ in the results chain. An Influence Tracker has also been introduced to help measure project, procedure and policy changes that can be connected to Lab thought leadership.

## 4.2 Progress and effectiveness

The Lab is making good progress against the expected results set out in the Phase 2 project document. Currently, 80% of Logframe indicator targets are either on track, or have already been achieved (10 have been achieved, 10 are on track). Just three targets are falling behind; at least one of which the Lab team feels is no longer appropriate to capture the project strategy. Work relating to the final three indicators was not planned to start until later this year.

The project is being implemented within budget, and has to-date raised over USD 750,000 in co-funding from partners as contributions to shared research objectives. This represents 75% of the project target of 1 million, even though Phase 2 has just passed its midway point. In terms of key partnership indicators, the Lab is on track to deliver services to 8 SECO-funded projects. So far the Lab has collaborated with SECO projects including:

- Ukraine Organic Market Development (FiBL), with support to impact evaluation

- Global Quality Standards Programme, Kyrgyzstan, (UNIDO), in a rapid market assessment
- Swiss Import Promotion Programme (SwissContact), to review the programme M&E framework
- The Trade Promotion (WEHU) Unit to review new business line indicators
- ILO SCORE to support the development of a Theory of Change and co-create an SME performance measurement toolkit

Further external partnerships have been executed with Habitat for Humanity (Peru) for a market systems analysis, DFID's PEPE programme in Ethiopia for a results measurement knowledge exchange, and with the RMIT University in Australia to research a lead firm business model in Lao PDR. The Lab has also continued to support ILO projects in Mozambique, Rwanda and Afghanistan, which was fully funded by these ILO projects through financing 'work months', mission costs and report publications. This has allowed the Lab to expand its core team to include two additional full-time professional staff at the time of the evaluation.

Overall, the projects and organizations collaborating with the Lab appear highly satisfied. In the anonymous online survey, 85% of respondents indicated they were either 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the Lab. This compares favourably to score of 79% in 2017, where the exact same question was asked to a sample of partners. Nonetheless, some areas for improvement were noted. These are summarised in Table 2, which sets out the stakeholder-perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Lab. In this sense, it would be helpful to have: A clearer mandate to guide partnership discussions, a set of 'off the shelf' tools that people can run with themselves, further simplification in communicating the approach. The lack of implementing capacity is a given and cannot be addressed given the current set-up of the Lab. The issue of evidence has already been noted.

Figure 3. Level of satisfaction in collaborating with the Lab

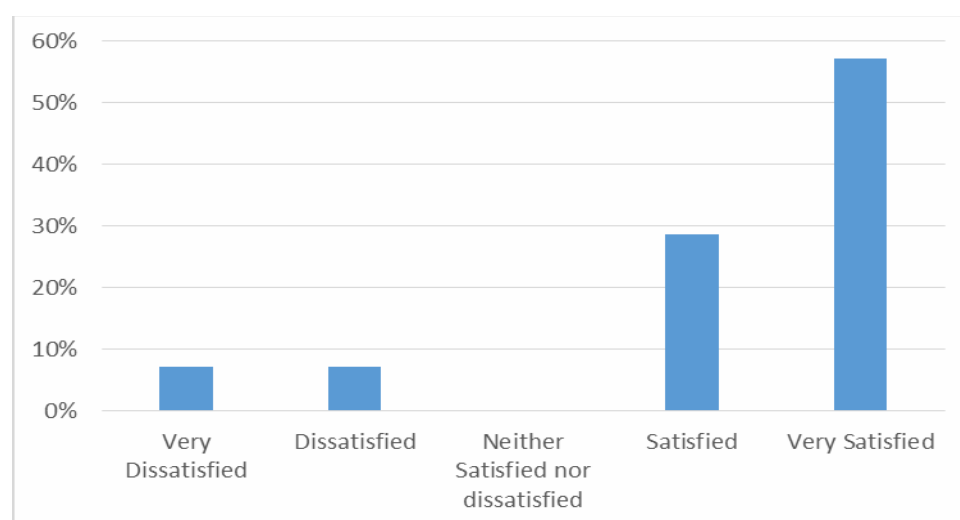


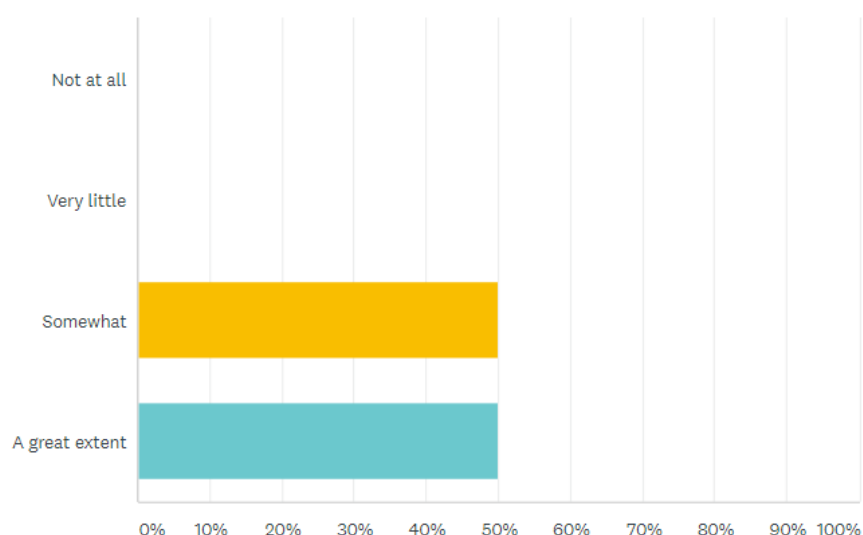
Table 2. Perceived strengths and weaknesses of the Lab

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourages more systemic thinking and looking for tipping points on specific issues</li> <li>▪ High quality case studies and guiding documents</li> <li>▪ Provides operational support and key guides/docs</li> <li>▪ Flexibility to work with others</li> <li>▪ Sound methods</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not much evidence the Lab approach works</li> <li>▪ No project implementation as the Lab needs to rely on ILO field structures to implement</li> <li>▪ No documented toolbox for applying the approach to Decent Work</li> <li>▪ A purist attitude can sometimes be perceived as pretentious and impractical</li> <li>▪ Unclear definition of mandate</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fast and dynamic for UN</li> <li>▪ Credible team delivering high quality outputs</li> <li>▪ Found the Lab team organised and very helpful in adding value to project work</li> <li>▪ Response rate is very high and prompt. Pro-active. Very supportive and willing to engage and support in the field</li> <li>▪ Always positive attitude and an open mind to help facilitate and have a dialogue on challenges.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of in-house influence</li> <li>▪ Need to simplify complex things even more</li> <li>▪ Difficult to turn into implementation</li> <li>▪ In certain countries, lack of in-country presence and, therefore, resources, inevitably leads to reliance on the partner organization</li> </ul>
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Finally, another proxy measure for project effectiveness is how stakeholders assess whether the knowledge or products generated in their collaborations with the Lab has been influential in their own organizations or projects. Here, 50% of respondents noted they had been ‘somewhat influential’, while 50% said they had been influential to ‘a great extent’. The elements of the Lab approach that were noted as being most impactful were market systems analysis, and the particular tools (‘who does/who pays’) used to gauge sustainability in a market systems approach.

Figure 4. Stakeholder perceptions of the degree to which Lab-supported products have been influential in their own organisation



#### 4.3 Impact orientation and sustainability

An overriding objective of the second phase of the Lab was to make headway in ‘mainstreaming’ and ‘institutionalising’ a market systems approach both in the ILO and SECO. Figure 5, below, shows what respondents thought would be the main legacy of the Lab if it were to stop now. Stakeholder opinions ranged from very specific ‘leave behinds’, such as individual elements of the market systems approach like market systems analyses (MSA) and the approach to sustainability; while others saw the Lab’s contribution more extensively as helping shift organizational cultures to start thinking about decent work challenges – and possible solutions – more systemically. One stakeholder felt the Lab had limited legacy as few projects have passed a DCED audit, but this is based on the Lab 1 objective of results measurement, which has been softened during Phase 2.

Figure 5. Stakeholder perceptions of the Lab legacy, if the project were to stop now

## NEGATIVE

Failed to get many projects to adopt the DCED Standard and pass an audit, which as the Lab's main task

Evidence-based analysis

Increased knowledge and recognition of the MSD for Enterprise Development within the ILO, but maybe not to broader DW agenda

Practical approach to sustainability

Establishing the market systems approach as an approach within the Enterprises department

Developing a wide range of useful case studies and guides

Reinforcing the capacity of ILO staff (HQ and field) to some extent

## POSITIVE

Getting the ILO to be more aware and open to a systems approach

Substantial body of knowledge – but much of it 'tacit' in people's minds

While future trends are hard to predict, Figure 6 shows the likelihood that stakeholders will use a market systems approach in their project or organisation in the next two years. While this is somewhat self-selecting, as the Lab mostly partners with market systems focused programmes, this shows a continuing strong interest in the approach. Whether this interest can be converted into real-world action will also depend on the external operating environment, and particularly the type of projects that donors commission. More narrowly, Figure 7 asks about the likelihood the market systems approach will be used in the ILO in 5 years. Here, stakeholders were very optimistic. However, there was broad consensus that the approach needs to be flexible to 'move with the times', and that a 'purist' application will not lead to institutionalisation. Many felt that the core principles of the approach – analysis-led, addressing root causes not symptoms, intervention through facilitation and adaptive management – will be increasingly used, but they may not necessarily be packaged or promoted as market systems per se.

The main suggestions to deepen the Lab's impact and embed a market systems approach to decent work beyond the lifetime of the project was to focus less on organisations as institutions, and more on the knowledge/networks of individuals within organisations. This comes from a feeling that the biggest successes of the Lab to-date in spreading market systems have come from individual 'champions' who have promoted the approach as they move between projects and units. A key challenge for the Lab will be to work out how to better leverage these champions to have a 'spill over' effect on more sustainable approaches to decent work within the ILO and SECO, beyond the Lab's portfolio of direct partners.

Figure 6. Likelihood of respondent's organisation using the market systems approach in the next two years

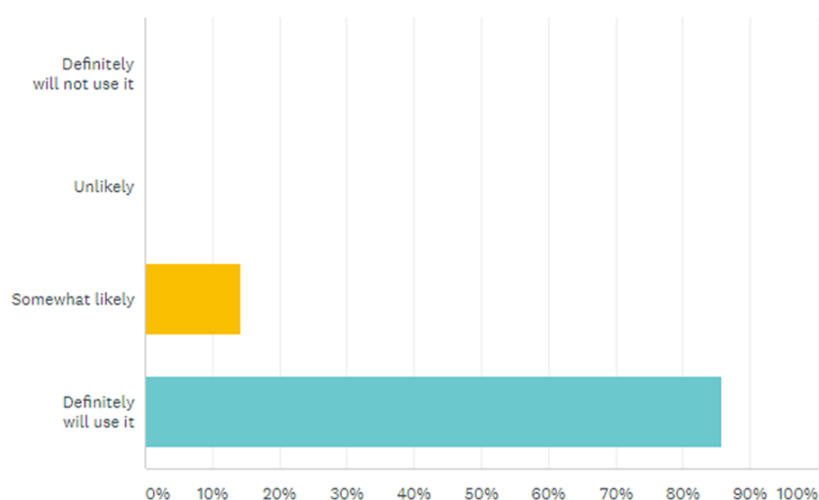
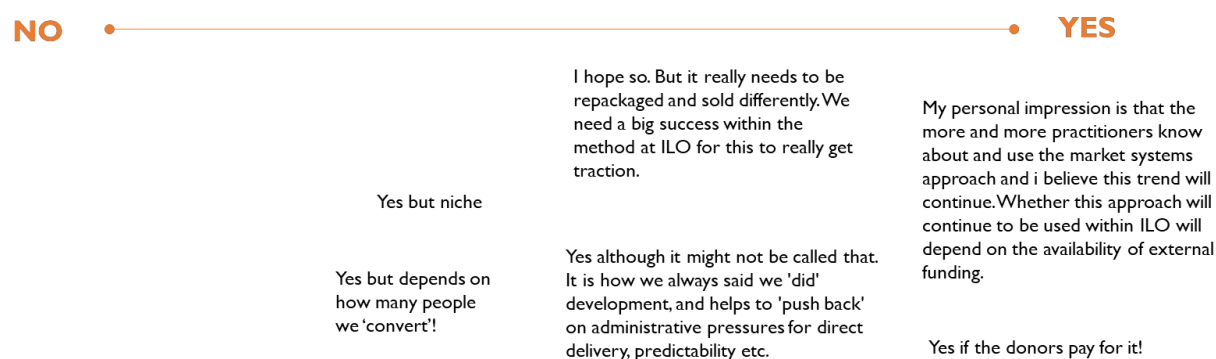


Figure 7. Respondent perceptions as to whether the market systems approach will be used in the ILO in 5 years



## 5 Recommendations

The recommendations below are designed to feed into the Lab's close out-strategy. They consist of practical actions that can be taken during the remainder of Phase 2 to lay the foundations for the sustainability of both the project, and the MSD approach within the ILO.

### 1. Develop a strategic framework for institutionalisation within the ILO

The Lab's work on 'institutionalising' the MSD approach would be aided by a clear strategic framework. To-date the Lab has focused more on the entry point of ILO country/regional offices, units and departments – and related policies and manuals. This has led to some success in the VCD guide (and its adaptations by LABADMIN/OSH and, soon, in FUNDAMENTALS), as well as emerging work with PARDEV on theories of change and EVAL on evaluability and adaptive management.

Complementing this more hierarchical approach with a focus on human capital would help introduce a more networked approach to institutionalisation. This builds on the evaluation finding that many of the Lab mainstreaming 'success stories' have come through individual actions, not institutional policies. Such a framework would help the Lab decide how to balance the need to bring both 'policies and people' along on the journey of organisational change. This would also align with 'bottom up' theories of organisational innovation that describe successful organizational change essentially "as conversational shifts."<sup>4</sup> A draft framework is included in Annex 4, which the Lab team should build upon and finalise by August 2019.

*(Responsible agency: ILO Lab; Priority: High; Time implication: Immediate; Resource implication: Low)*

### 2. Undertake an influence mapping to identify key leverage points

A people-centric strategy for institutionalisation is challenging because, in large organisations, it is not possible to reach everyone. Instead, what is important is to identify potential champions of the approach – and how they can act as knowledge 'nodes' within the wider network. The Lab already has an influence tracker recording key products, publications and processes that are starting to gain traction. This could be complemented by developing a living 'network map' of Lab activities and how they are influencing the wider eco-system. This would help the Lab focus on where to amplify and focus efforts on key entry/leverage points – particularly where there is (potential for) concentrated demand, e.g. Southern Africa. The Lab could then support capacity development and improve marketing towards these key influencers (who are outside of the direct Lab team). These champions can then in turn

<sup>4</sup> Journal of Knowledge Management Practice, Vol. 9, No. 4, December 2008: Bottom-Up Instigated Organization Change Through Constructionist Conversation

undertake their own advocacy of the approach, allowing the Lab ‘message’ to spread organically and therefore make strategic use of the Lab’s limited resources. It should be noted that such a mapping can also be included in, and be useful for, the Lab communications strategy. A rough draft of the mapping is included in Annex 5, which the Lab team should build upon and finalise by August 2019.

*(Responsible agency: ILO Lab; Priority: High; Time implication: Immediate; Resource implication: Low)*

### 3. Scope out a Systems Accelerator

One option to speed up the journey of institutionalisation is to create a ‘training plus mentoring’ programme for ILO staff. This would build on the emerging work of the ILO MSD ‘Community of Practice’ but go further by providing training, tools and technical support. The Lab would start to shift from doing things itself (like MSAs), to supporting others to do them. In other words – from *direct delivery* to *facilitation*. This ‘Systems Accelerator’ (working title) could be piloted during the remainder of Lab 2. To create demand, a small number of applicants could be competitively selected to be trained on, *inter alia*:

- 1) Thinking in systems: Doing Developing Differently
- 2) Working politically
- 3) Facilitation in practice
- 4) Navigating the organizational context: Procurement, partnerships, staffing

Follow-up training, mentoring and a helpdesk would then be provided by the Lab for a period of 6 months as staff start to implement market systems approaches in practice. At the end of the Accelerator, participants would ‘graduate’ and some kind of accreditation could be offered to boost career development and help future projects find suitably qualified staff.

The course content would need to be ‘de-jargonised’ and made more applicable to the ILO institutional context. However, much of the material likely already exists from the numerous training courses the Lab has run in the past 5 years, including through ITC-ILO, not to mention the substantive number of case study materials and knowledge products the project has published. These would leverage the suite of Lab ‘how to’ products that are being developed, such as the template and guidance for conducting a market systems analysis.

*(Responsible agency: ILO SME Unit; Priority: Medium; Time implication: Short-term; Resource implication: High)*

### 4. Introduce go/no-go criteria for supporting Market Systems Analysis

A recent internal review of market system and value chain analysis (MSAs/VCA) where the Lab and/or the wider VCD team had participated found that the findings from almost two-thirds of reports were not integrated into project or intervention design. Due to the high level of effort and opportunity cost involved in running an MSA, and the fact that the Lab has already achieved its Logframe target of supporting 4 analyses, the Lab should not engage in further analyses unless it:

- Has *operational value*; will be used by a project that has an explicit market systems focus, and where the Lab will be involved in supporting implementation; and
- Has *strategic value*; will generate substantive new knowledge, or leverage future funding opportunities, such as an analysis focused on a particular under-researched area of working conditions,
- Commissioned by or is of importance to SECO.

More selective engagement in MSA exercises would free up Lab staff time and resources to engage in the type of sustainability activities recommended in points 3 (training/mentoring) and 5 (knowledge synthesis).

*(Responsible agency: ILO Lab; Priority: High; Time implication: Short-term; Resource implication: Low)*

## **5. Shift from knowledge generation to knowledge synthesis**

The Lab has produced a vast array of knowledge products over Phases 1 and 2. This has included blogs, case studies, think pieces, briefs, analyses, evaluations, evidence reviews – and more. These have covered sectors from agriculture to garments to construction; and covering the full project cycle from design to evaluation. However, it is felt that much of this knowledge has not been adequately disseminated and absorbed by intended audiences (and sometimes the Lab team is not even aware of their existence). Instead of focusing on just generating new knowledge products, therefore, the Lab can shift to ensuring that knowledge that has already been generated is taken up. This could start by compiling a list of all key products and key knowledge areas. The core messages from existing publications could then be synthesised and packaged in different formats to both publish, and present at webinars and in conferences, as part of the new Lab communications strategy. Linking back to the institutionalisation drive, this could also include a stronger focus on framing knowledge for ‘policy interventions’ rather than just micro/macro business areas to increase relevance in the ILO context.

*(Responsible agency: ILO Lab; Priority: Medium; Time implication: Short-term; Resource implication: Medium)*

## **6. Contribute to addressing the MSD evidence gap**

The mid-term evaluation found that many stakeholders still need to be convinced about the ‘impact’ case for taking a market systems approach to decent work. The type of evidence-generating activities that were a core focus of Lab 1 could therefore be selectively (re)engaged in. A stronger evidence base would help support institutionalisation by enhancing knowledge about effective MSD implementation.

This could involve developing products to highlight cases where the MSD approach shows results for job quantity and quality, both inside (e.g. Road to Jobs) and outside the ILO (e.g. Helvetas Western Balkans portfolio). It would also be valuable to produce a case study on how MSD has addressed specific aspects of working conditions, such as working time and work-life balance (and its implications for gender impact). The Lab could also consider backing the type of ‘action research’ initiatives it engaged in during Phase 1, for example in Peru, which proved to be a relatively low-cost way to not just passively rely on other projects to generate impact that can then be evidenced, but for the Lab to pro-actively engage in generating impact alongside evidence.

*(Responsible agency: ILO Lab; Priority: Medium; Time implication: Short-term; Resource implication: Medium)*

## Annex 1: Key documents reviewed

Lab project document  
Lab rolling work plan and six-monthly strategy documents  
Progress reports 2017 and 2018  
The Lab SWOT, 19<sup>th</sup> February  
Project intervention guide and results measurement data  
Lab influence tracker  
Lab website ([www.ilo.org/thelab](http://www.ilo.org/thelab))

## Annex 2: Organizational Stakeholders

ILO Headquarters: Enterprise Department/SME Unit  
ILO Headquarters; PARDEV  
ILO Enterprise Specialists (Field)  
TC Projects in Afghanistan, Rwanda, Mozambique and Zambia  
ILO Myanmar  
ILO Tanzania  
ILO Nepal  
Regional Office in Pretoria  
Sida  
Habitat for Humanity  
UNCTAD  
UNOPS  
African Development Bank  
UNIDO  
Montenegro Employers Federation  
FiBL  
RMIT University  
SIPPO  
DCED  
SECO



### Annex 3: Delphi Survey Questions

#### Round One (all open ended)

- ✓ To what extent do you think there is demand for the Lab's work generating knowledge about a market systems approach to decent work?
- ✓ To what extent has the Lab influenced debates to job quality and quantity within your organisation/the international development industry?
- ✓ If the Lab was to stop now, what do you think the legacy of the Lab would be?
- ✓ Please name one key strength and one key weakness of the Lab
- ✓ Do you think a market systems approach will be used within your organisation/the industry in 5 years' time? Why, why not?

#### Round Three

1. Please indicate how satisfied you have been in your collaboration with the Lab

Response scale: 5 point from very satisfied to very dissatisfied

Can you explain why?

2. To what extent has the knowledge or products generated in your collaboration with the Lab been influential in your project/organisation?

Response scale: 4 point from A great extent to not at all

Why/why not?

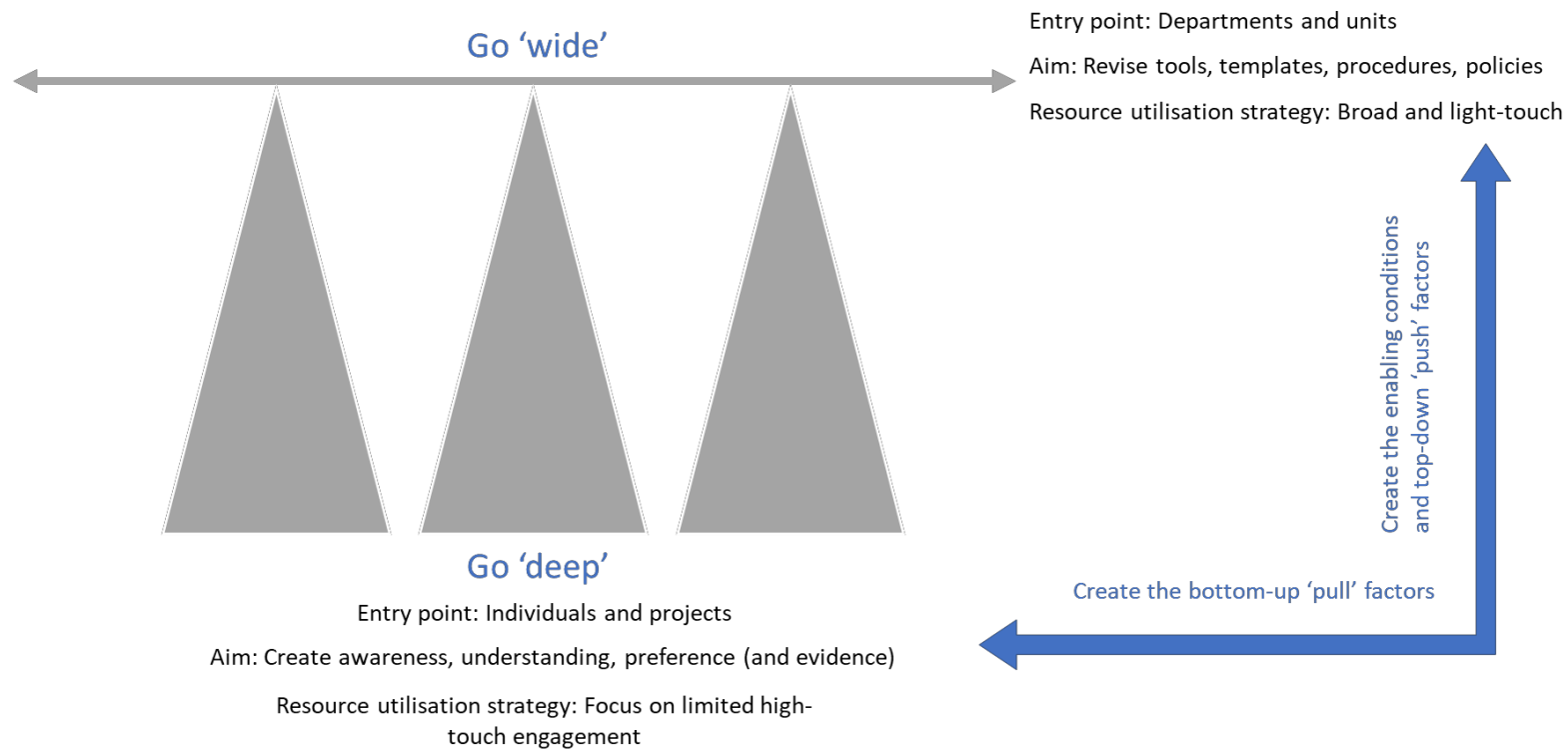
3. How likely are you/your organisation to use a market systems approach in the next two years?

Response scale: 4 point from very likely to definitely not

Why?

4. How can we improve our collaboration with you/your organization? (open-ended)

Annex 4: Strategic Framework for institutionalisation (draft)



Annex 5: The Lab influence mapping (draft)

