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High-level independent evaluation of ILO's development cooperation strategy, 2020-25

Evaluation period: 2018-24

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LINKS TO SOME KEY THEMES AND TOPICS

As the evaluation was very broad in scope and responds to the evaluation questions in some detail, the following links, to some key themes and topics, are provided to help navigation:

Development cooperation and the ILO's identity

DC and "two ILOs"

Services to constituents

Constituent ownership of DC

Constituent capacity development and DC

South-South and Triangular cooperation

Efficiency and effectiveness of ILO systems supporting development cooperation

Project appraisal

Staff views on DC efficiency

DC recruitment issues

DC staff mobility and talent management

DC procurement issues

DC financial management issues

DC "no cost extensions"

Partnerships and funding

Funding partners' views of the ILO

Engaging with the Private Sector

Mobilizing DC resources based on ILO funding needs

Expanding unearmarked and lightly earmarked funding



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACCEL	Accelerating Action for the Elimination of Child Labour in Supply Chains in Africa			
ACT/EMP	Bureau for Workers' Activities			
ACTRAV	Bureau for Workers' Activities			
AfDB	African Development Bank			
ADB	Asian Development Bank			
AP	Action Programme			
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations			
BAPA The Buenos Aires Plan of Action on South-South Cooperation				
BIU	Business Innovation Unit			
BMZ	Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany			
BPR	Business Process Review			
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa			
CAPSA	Strengthening Capacity of Governments to Address Child labour, Forced Labour and Violations of Acceptable Conditions of Work in Sub-Saharan Africa			
CCA	Common Country Assessment			
CINTERFOR	Inter-American Centre for Knowledge Development in Vocational Training			
CISS	Corporate Institutional Services Staff			
со	Country Office			
СРО	Country Programme Outcome			
CSR Corporate Social Responsibility				
СТА	General Federation of Iraqi Trade Unions			
DAC	Chief Technical Advisor			
DC	Development Cooperation			
DBLA	Development Bank of Latin America			
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme			
DWT	Decent Work Technical Support Team			
ECOSOC	United Nations Economic and Social Council			
EMPLOYMENT	Employment Policy Department			
ENTERPRISES	Enterprises Department			
EO	Internationally Recognized Government			
EPSU	Integrated Resource Information System			
ESSF	Corporate Social Responsibility			
EU	Employers' Organization			
EVAL	ILO Evaluation Office			
FUNDAMENTALS	Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Department			
GA	Development Cooperation			
GB	Development Bank of Latin America			

GIZ	Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions				
GOVERNANCE	Governance and Tripartism Department				
HLE	High-Level Evaluation				
НО	Headquarters				
HRD	Human Resources Department				
IATI International Aid Transparency Initiative					
IDB Islamic Development Bank					
IFI International Financial Institution					
IFC International Finance Corporation					
ILC	International Labour Conference				
ILO	International Labour Organization				
ILS	International Labour Standards				
IMF	International Monetary Fund				
IOE	International Organisation of Employers				
ISDB	Islamic Development Bank				
ITCILO	International Training Centre of the ILO (Turin)				
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation				
KPI Key Performance Indicator					
Key Performance United Nations Development Programme Indicator					
LABADMIN/OSH Labour Administration, Labour Inspection and Occupational Health and Safe					
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean				
LDC	Least Developed Country				
LORC	Local Oversight Review Committee				
M&E Monitoring & Evaluation					
MDG	Millenium Development Goal				
MGLSD	Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development (Uganda)				
MNE	Multinational Enterprise				
MOPAN	Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network				
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises				
MTR	Mid-term review of the ILO Development Cooperation Strategy				
NGO	Non-government organization				
NORAD	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation				
NORMES	International Labour Standards Department				
ОСТ	Outcome Coordination Teams				
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development				
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health				
P&B	Programme and Budget				

PARTNERSHIPS	Partnerships and Field Support Department		
PIR	Programme Implementation Report		
PPP	Public Private Partnership		
PROSPECTS	Partnership for Improving Prospects for Forcibly Displaced Persons and Host Communities		
PSI	Programme Support Income		
RB	Regular Budget		
RBM Results-based Management			
RBSA Regular Budget Supplementary Account			
RBTC Regular Budget Technical Cooperation			
ROAP	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific		
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal		
SFD	Structured Funding Dialogue		
SKILLS	Skills and Employability Branch (EMPLOYMENT)		
SME	Small and medium enterprise		
SPS	Social Protection System		
SSC	South-South Cooperation		
SSTC	South-South and Triangular Cooperation		
тс	Technical Cooperation		
тос	Theory of Change		
TOR	Terms of Reference		
UN	United Nations		
UNCT	United Nations Country Team		
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework		
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme		
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees		
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund		
UNRCO	United Nations Resident Coordinator Office		
UNSCDF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework		
VZF	Vision Zero Fund		
XBDC	Extra-Budgetary Development Cooperation		



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Executive Summary

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

ABOUT THE EVALUATION

This high-level evaluation covers the period January 2018 to June 2024 of the current ILO Development Cooperation strategy and implementation plan (which covers the period 2020–25) and briefly considers the events and discussions during the transitional period 2018-19 that contributed to their development. The adoption of the Development Cooperation Strategy in the 340th GB Session included a request to submit an implementation plan to accompany the ILO Development Cooperation Strategy 2020-25. This plan was discussed and adopted by the Governing Body at its 341st Session (March 2021). Additionally, a mid-term review of both the Strategy and its implementation plan was undertaken upon request of the Governing Body in 2023. This evaluation assesses what worked well and what did not in the Strategy and its accompanying plans, with the aim of supporting the Office and constituents in making informed decisions about future directions in development cooperation. The scope of the evaluation does not include the results or impact of the ILO's large development cooperation portfolio per se, but aims to address the value added by the strategy itself. The high-level evaluation was based on a document review, a meta-study of 206 project evaluations, over 260 stakeholder interviews, a global survey of constituents and two ILO staff surveys with a number of data challenges as outlined in paragraph 1. The team selected five country studies and four thematic case studies.²

FINDINGS

Relevance

KEY FINDING 1

The strategy lacks a clear vision for improvement and does not effectively outline desired impacts beyond activity completion. Its purpose and measures of success are unclear, and it lacks a theory of change.

KEY FINDING 2

The strategy broadly addresses findings from the 2015 ILO HLE of technical cooperation and the 2021 Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) assessment, but more attention is needed on some critical issues.

The Strategy lacks a clear purpose and success measures. Although the Implementation Plan detailed deliverables and responsibilities, these were sometimes quite broad and HQ-oriented. There was little direction set for staff in the field, where most DC occurs. Some parts of the strategy were de-emphasised in the Implementation Plan and vaguely worded, leaving them too open to interpretation rather than guiding an intentional process towards a specific and measurable objective. The strategic intent of many actions was not explicit. The Strategy cross-references other strategies and plans but the value it adds to these in terms of clear actions and deliverables is not always evident.

¹ Interviews were held with 117 women (44 per cent) and 145 men (55 per cent). The surveys were sent to 1,018 constituents in the three languages, with a response rate of 23.8 per cent. A general ILO staff survey was sent to 2,000 ILO staff members, with a 23.2 per cent response rate; and a curated survey for corporate institutional services staff was sent to 65 staff members, with a 23 per cent response rate.

² These country case studies were: Bangladesh, Jordan (remotely), Paraguay, Uganda and Uzbekistan. The thematic case studies were Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, Better Work, the Partnership for improving prospects for forcibly displaced persons and host communities (PROSPECTS), and the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITC–ILO), Turin.

Some issues raised in the 2015 ILO HLE and in the 2021 MOPAN assessment remain unresolved. Projects continue to struggle to deliver results on time, due in part to over-ambitious design and slow start-ups. Small scale projects with limited impact persist, and no consistent shift has been made to large scale longer-term programmes. Efficiency in some important areas remains poor and data on DC impact are still lacking. Poor project monitoring hinders timely action on individual poorly performing projects and the development of structural, accountability-based incentives for continual improvement. To address these issues, the Strategy needed sharper, more specific goals and clear action pathways toward intended results.

Coherence

KEY FINDING 3

The DC strategy broadly follows directions set by key ILC documents and other ILO plans, but the level of coherence is inconsistent. Its efforts to better align DC with constituent needs and to specific P&B outcomes lack detail and measures of success.

The Strategy covers the priorities set out in the 2018 ILC Resolution on DC but offers minimal practical guidance. Coherence is stronger in the areas of capacity development, transparency, and inclusive partnerships, but weaker in the areas of adopting a programmatic approach, coordination, and inclusion. It echoes the Resolution's call for improved constituent engagement but does not demonstrate a coherent and measurable approach to achieving this.

As P&B documents reference the need to direct DC resource mobilization to areas where funds are scarce, the Strategy is an important means of providing clarity on how this can be achieved. While the Strategy cross-references the P&B, it lacks detail on how it would mobilize resources to address gaps in DC coverage across the eight policy outcomes or on systematic initiatives towards this end.

The Strategy emphasises improving coherence between the ILO, the UN system and a range of other stakeholders. Actions set out in the Implementation Plan on this are more detailed.

Effectiveness

KEY FINDING 4

The mechanism to drive and implement the strategy was ineffective. Monitoring and reporting of the Strategy dropped off after the 2023 Mid-Term Review.

KEY FINDING 5

With Pillar3 1 - Services to Constituents, tools and guidelines were introduced to foster national ownership of DWCPs and to support South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC). DC often aligns with national priorities, but challenges persist in ensuring this. Gaps remain in using DC to promote social dialogue and tripartism and contribute to the organizational needs of constituents.

The Strategy refers to four "focus areas". For brevity, the evaluation uses "pillars".

KEY FINDING 6

With Pillar 2 - Partnerships for Policy Coherence, the ILO maintained its trajectory in promoting decent work through better policy action, but evidence of added value from the strategy's actions is unclear. The Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions has established its management structure, and volunteer "pathfinder" countries are formulating "road maps". The Global Coalition for Social Justice shows promise for improved coherence but is still in its early stages.

KEY FINDING 7

With Pillar 3 - Partnerships for Funding, the HLE found little evidence that the Strategy significantly contributed to the recent increase in DC funding, much of which relates to geopolitical events. Funding partners emphasized the need for the ILO to promote its unique blend of normative mandate, technical expertise and country-level activities more strongly for sustainable results.

KEY FINDING 8

Under Pillar 4 - Efficiency, Decent work results and Transparency, the ILO delivered most of the planned tools, guidelines, training initiatives, and communication products. It improved transparency in DC work and took steps to enhance social and environmental safeguards. However, progress was less evident in introducing systems to support continuous improvement in the way the ILO delivers and supports DC.

The strategy lacks an effective organizational arrangement for implementation. The Multilateral Partnership and Development Cooperation department (PARTNERSHIPS) is the custodian, but shares the responsibility with many other actors, leaving final accountability remaining unclear. A network of "focal points" is responsible for delivery and progress updates. Work on the strategy is expected to occur both with and without PARTNERSHIPS' involvement. Oversight and management of this process is loose. Reporting since the Mid-Term Review has been patchy.

Pillar 1 of the Strategy is built upon existing ILO strategies and plans covering capacity development, social dialogue and tripartism, and SSTC. It reinforced these as continuing priorities and launched many initiatives to improve services to its three constituent groups. SSTC emerged as a growing area of ILO support. There is evidence that increasing engagement of constituents in ILO DC planning and implementation, and in UN planning processes improves overall project performance. DC programming generally responded to national constituents' needs and agendas; however, gaps persisted, where differing funding partner interests took precedence.

Under Pillar 2, new agreements were made with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) on decent work and capacity development work in this area for constituents. ILO participated in several policy-focused, multi-stakeholder partnerships, tough often in areas where policy coherence was already strong. While ILO participated in joint programmes with several UN agencies, growth in this area is not evident, and stakeholders questioned the benefits versus increased procedural complexity.

The Global Accelerator is an example of coherence promoted by the DC Strategy, reflecting the "common agenda" advocated by the UN Secretary General. ILO has played a core role in developing its approach and 15 countries have volunteered as "pathfinders", with some starting to develop "roadmaps" for implementation. The new Global Coalition for Social Justice holds considerable promise for improved coherence.

Pillar 3 has been modestly effective. While the HLE found little evidence that the Strategy had directly led to changes in the type and volume of DC funding, it has emphasised the importance of DC in enacting its normative agenda. DC partners would not be drawn to ILO if not for its technical expertise and normative work. Tension remains within ILO between those emphasising the normative agenda and those promoting the immediate benefits of DC for ultimate beneficiaries.

External stakeholders value how the ILO's DC work combines its normative mandate with its specialist technical expertise. They cautioned that an overemphasis on DC growth could lead it to appear as "just another implementing body" with low comparative advantage, reducing its attraction as a partner as there are other bodies with higher implementing capacity – especially in countries where the ILO is not resident. The ILO is now also grappling with the issue of "organizational overstretch" and risks reputational damage if the quality of its DC deteriorates because of unconstrained growth.

In this important respect, the Strategy failed to provide a bold strategic vision for the ILO's role in development cooperation, resulting in unclear objectives and directions on where the ILO should be going. The Strategy's approach to funding partnerships and modalities lacks clear purpose, direction and boundaries. Any new DC Strategy would need to establish more explicit objectives and targets to drive the direction and scope of ILO's ambitions as implementer. Funding partners reported that they focus on ILO's unique position as a "specialized agency" rather than as a broad-spectrum implementer and view funding proposals in this light.

Pillar 4 included disparate activities, mainly offering tools and resources to enhance existing DC delivery. These activities comprised developing an online training platform and modules for DC staff by ITC-ILO, improving transparency to meet international standards, and advancing an environmental and social sustainability framework. However, no progress was reported in implementing a new DC costing model or in systemic efforts to boost efficiency.

More ambitious and potentially more effective actions under this Pillar were not pursued. Consistent with many internal and external reports, there is a need to improve the monitoring of ILO DC at both the project level and portfolio wide. Improved monitoring would enable action on underperforming projects, identify and correct system inefficiencies, and improve project impact.

Enhancements to the project appraisal system can also improve the quality, sustainability and impact of DC projects and ensure that the lessons of past projects are considered, that the focus of ILO DC work is clear, and that its strengths are maximised.

Efficiency

KEY FINDING 9

The strategy paid little attention to the overall efficiency of the ILO's delivery of development cooperation projects, despite ongoing concerns about this issue. Various internal and external reviews have highlighted problems with the speed and complexity of systems and procedures, and these concerns were further highlighted by the high-level evaluation.

While ILO processes and procedures are rigorously monitored from a compliance perspective and evaluations assess past performance and highlight lessons learned, the systems that support DC delivery need closer monitoring and continuous improvement. MOPAN assessments, ILO HLEs, project evaluations, meta-studies, synthesis reviews and internal and external audits have consistently highlighted efficiency problems. Staff involved in DC delivery and the technical units that support them, whether in HQ or in the field, are frustrated by the lack of responsiveness to their needs.

Time taken to recruit key DC staff remains a major "pain point", despite some improvements reported by the ILO Human Resource Department (HRD) and the introduction of an online toolkit. Efficiency of DC delivery could be enhanced through changes to staff mobility and contracting

arrangements and giving more attention to DC talent management and retention (e.g., through recruitment rosters and eligibility lists), but ILO rules need to be adjusted to enable this.

Procurement is being streamlined and digitalized, but further improvement is needed. Procurement oversight mechanisms in some regions add further delays. Work in fragile and crisis situations often exposes the ILO's weaknesses in these areas compared with more agile partner agencies.

Through pooling of staff resources and by creating economies of scale, a programmatic approach to DC delivery enhances efficiency – as historically the International Programme on the Elimination of Child Labour piloted, and as the HLE found with Better Work, PROSPECTS and in Bangladesh where a "cluster" approach has been adopted.

Impact and sustainability

KEY FINDING 10

The Strategy mainly reaffirms existing practices rather than providing innovative guidance for future priorities and approaches. Its development lacked transparency and engagement with DC practitioners, leading to low staff ownership. To ensure impact and sustainability, future efforts should emphasize "what success looks like".

ILO stakeholders saw the Strategy confirming what ILO was already doing rather than as guiding innovative approaches that would have a measurable impact on DC. Its development lacked transparency and broad stakeholder engagement, resulting in low staff ownership. There was a strong opinion that the ILO's DC instead needed more strategic guidance to enhance impact and to address longstanding problems in its management and delivery.

Future efforts should emphasize inter-connectivity of the four pillars, and improve monitoring and data collection, so that long-term progress towards impacts can be measured. In its current form, the Strategy fails to describe what success looks like.

CHART 1: OVERALL ASSESSMENT⁴

FIGURE 1 PRESENTS THE EVALUATION TEAM'S OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE ILO'S 2020-25 DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION STRATEGY, 2018-24.



^{4 6 =} Highly satisfactory; 5 = Satisfactory; 4 = Somewhat satisfactory; 3 = Somewhat unsatisfactory; 2 = Unsatisfactory; 1 = Highly unsatisfactory

CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

While the Strategy touches on many of the key issues and broadly aligns with the 2018 ILC Resolution on DC, it fails to clearly outline where we are, where we need to be, and this is how we will get there". Instead, it focuses on activities, which, while potentially valuable, could not be evaluated for their contribution to improved development cooperation. The ILO's DC strategy and Implementation Plan mirror a criticism often levelled at its individual DC projects i.e., they are activity-driven, lack Theories of Change, and are inadequately focused on measuring progress towards impacts. Lessons learned for the new strategy to consider include the following:

Need for a more focussed but ambitious DC Strategy: The existing strategy covers many strategic issues but largely focusses on "tweaking" what is already in place, rather than seeking to be more transformative and addressing entrenched systemic weaknesses. Stakeholders expressed a need for innovation, rather than a slightly upgraded version of "more of the same". See Recommendation 1.

Need for a strategy that provides clarity on the centrality of development cooperation: Many people consulted stressed how vital DC now is in deepening the delivery of the ILO's core role. Others, however, noted that some people in the ILO see DC as secondary to this role or even a distraction. The centrality of the ILO's approach to DC – built on tripartism, social dialogue, and normative action - needs to be unapologetically reinforced as a primary mechanism for the ILO to achieve its goals and to meet constituent needs. Messaging from senior management is needed to encourage two-way accountability between administrative and DC delivery units. See Recommendation 3.

Need for a strategy that emphasises the importance of balanced growth, diversification and focus on development cooperation work – "doing fewer things better": Funding partners seek clarity on the ILO's priorities, but it struggles to articulate these beyond the P&B, which covers the full gamut of the ILO's work. Saying that "everything we do is a priority" lets the ILO cast its net very widely when seeking DC funding, but it leads to resource mobilization gravitating more towards meeting the strategic priorities of funding partners. Being more intentional in setting DC priorities is needed so that the ILO can, as the 2018 ILC Resolution urged, "promote all the pillars of decent work in a balanced manner" as well as a "longer-term, programmatic and focused approach". See Recommendations 1 and 4.

Need for a strategy that enhances national ownership and constituent empowerment: While the HLE found some improvement in constituent involvement in DC, mechanisms to consolidate this trend are needed, including a more robust and transparent framework to ensure constituent satisfaction. See Recommendation 1.

Need for a strategy that strives towards continuous improvement of ILO systems and approach for developing, delivering, monitoring and supporting DC projects: There is no one part of the ILO that has a span of control that covers all the critical functions necessary for the effective and efficient delivery of DC. The mechanism used by the current strategy left nobody ultimately accountable. A new approach is needed, either through a dedicated DC monitoring function or through a system driven by senior management mechanisms that can achieve change (as was demonstrated in the COVID-19 pandemic). See Recommendations 2 and 3.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall Office response: The Office welcomes the high-level evaluation of the Development Cooperation Strategy and its recognition of the central role of development cooperation in delivering a wide range of services to ILO constituents and advancing the ILO mandate. The increase in voluntary funding and in the diversity of partnerships demonstrates the continued interest of partners in development cooperation activities and their trust in the ILO. While highlighting that this High-Level Evaluation is focused on the Development Cooperation Strategy itself and does not assess ILO's DC projects and activities, the Office is committed to address the evaluation findings and integrate the recommendations provided into the implementation of the current strategy and other related initiatives, as relevant. It is worth mentioning that the Office started in 2023 a process to review the implementation of ILO's development cooperation activities with the aim of identifying potential bottlenecks and areas of improvement.

Recommendation 1

Initiate consultations on the need, form and scope of a new ILO Development Cooperation Strategy for 2026-29, aiming for possible submission to the GB by late 2025 via a transparent process involving constituents, senior management, policy specialists, DC project practitioners, oversight functions and administrative and financial management specialists. This process should:

- ► Consider identifying and pursue opportunities for a more focused and strategic approach to resource mobilization, emphasizing links with the ILO's normative role and addressing resource gaps in key policy areas outlined in the Strategic Plan 2026-29, P&B Proposals for 2026-27 and Priority Action Programmes.
- ► Consider how best to ensure an ILO-wide commitment to improving the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of DC implementation, and to promote two-way accountability between administrative and DC delivery units.
- ► Consider ways to implement the 2018 ILC Resolution's principle of a more programmatic approach to DC, drawing lessons from successful larger-scale programs and considering mechanisms for enhanced integration and clustering of efforts.
- ➤ Consider how the new proposed architecture for the P&B 2026-27 (e.g., outcome 10 and enabling outcome A, output 45) might subsume the current "partnerships for policy coherence" pillar and allow future DC strategies to focus on resource mobilization and efficiency in delivering quality services to constituents.
- Consider how DC project appraisals can be strengthened to ensure quality design and better specify how inputs from ILO units will be actioned.
- Consider options for a more robust framework to ensure constituent involvement in crucial stages of DC development and implementation.
- ► Consider whether a "DC operations unit" responsible for monitoring and managing the DC portfolio is needed for a whole-of-ILO approach. This unit would identify and maximise DC linkages with the P&B and ILO norms and standards, and ensure that projects have optimal human resources and staff training.

⁵ Draft Programme and Budget (version August 2024 Outcome 10: Enhanced Policy coherence and amplified action for better social justice and Outcome A.4 Partnerships and Resource Mobilization for enhanced Social Justice.

▶ Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACTEMP) and Bureau

▶ ADG/Governance, Rights and Dialogue (GRD) and

for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV)

ADG/Jobs and Social Protection (JSP)

Office response: The Office welcomes the recommendation and its proposed actions. As has been the practice, an inclusive and transparent consultation process will begin in 2024 to develop a more focused and forward-looking strategy that considers the evaluation findings and responds to the needs of ILO constituents and the priorities of development partners in line with the strategic plan for 2026–29 and the related programmes and budgets 2026–27 and 2028–29.

Recommendation 2

Develop a new policy and mechanism for monitoring DC that promotes accountability, compares planned outcomes with results, allows flexibility to respond to changing needs, and makes visible not just what has been spent, but what projects have done and what they have achieved. This should:

- ▶ Provide **real-time monitoring and visibility of project performance** for agile DC portfolio management (as opposed to the endline or retrospective view currently provided by evaluation and audits) supported by effective IT platforms and appropriate training packages.
- ► Consider the feasibility of creating a **dedicated function responsible for DC monitoring as practiced in other peer UN agencies**.
- ► Gather data on **administrative bottlenecks affecting delivery** which can be used for continuous improvements of these systems.
- ▶ Enhance accountability and performance management of DC programme and project managers, identifying their capacity development needs, and improving the processes used for their selection.
- ▶ Progressively improve **evaluation and measurement of progress towards impact** on beneficiaries of DC activities enabled through improved monitoring.

Responsible Unit	Priority	Time implications	Resource implications
▶ DG▶ ADG/CS: PROGRAM▶ ADG ECR: PARTNERSHIPS	(H)	Immediate to medium term	High
with Financial Management (FINANCE), Information and Technology Management (INFOTEC)			

Office response: Despite the fact that this recommendation relates more to the implementation of DC projects, rather than to the Strategy itself, the Office agrees with the need to further develop policies and tools for monitoring development cooperation activities, enhance coordination and planning, and reinforce accountability for programmatic delivery. As earlier indicated, the Office started in 2023 an analysis of the administrative processes in the implementation of DC activities to identify areas of improvement. The Office will build upon the findings and recommendations in this evaluation and integrate them into its ongoing analysis. New or updated internal governance policies and procedures might be required to enable swift responses to performance issues of technical or operational nature in development cooperation, ensuring the programmatic fit of development cooperation with the priorities of ILO constituents as reflected in the programme and budget and in DWCPs or other national frameworks.

Recommendation 3

Either as part of the new DC strategy or under the plans of the relevant Corporate Services cluster in HQ and Regional Offices, identify and implement specific and measurable steps to improve the efficiency of support provided to DC practitioners working in the field.

This should:

- ▶ Promote **two-way accountability between delivery units and support services** (with relevant efficiency/timeline key performance indicators) and seek to bridge the "cultural divide" between the two.
- Explore **innovations in DC recruitment** such as appointment eligibility lists, DC talent management, and funding to bridge gaps in project phases.
- ► Clarify how **Programme Support Income** raised by DC projects can be better allocated to support projects without the time lags currently occurring.
- ▶ Review options to provide additional targeted **support to non-resident country** programmes at key points of the DWCP/Common Country Assessment/UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UNSDCF) cycles or to meet surges in demand.

Responsible Units	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
▶ ADG/CS: FINANCE, HRD, PROGRAM▶ ADG ECR: PARTNERSHIPS	(H)	Immediate to medium term	Low to Medium

Office response: As indicated under recommendation 2, the Office aims to strengthen accountability systems and, as far as possible, simplify and standardize functions and services across the operating environment, including the provision of technical support provided to DC staff. Further alignment of human resource policies, processes and contracts, improved induction and training, along with greater use of standardized information systems across all activities, will aim to improve efficiency and consistency. Focused risk analyses need to be strengthened at the onset of projects to ensure that the Office has the capacity and capability to deliver results within the negotiated timeframes.

Recommendation 4

Strengthen communication strategies tailored and adapted for different audiences covering the unique contributions of the ILO in Decent Work and on the humanitarian development nexus, emphasizing the major value added by its normative underpinning high-quality technical research and the tripartite approach. This should:

- Build on success stories.
- Address challenges and how to overcome them through the ILO approach.
- ▶ **Highlight the benefits** of longer-term investments to address decent work challenges by showcasing impacts achieved over time in specific countries or through a programmatic approach.
- ► Train ILO staff with resource mobilization responsibilities on communicating ILO's added value to potential funding partners.
- ▶ **Promote collaborative approaches** combining ILO comparative advantages with key strengths of other stakeholders.

Responsible Units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
 ADG/GRD: International Labour Standards Department (NORMES) ADG/JSP: Social Protection and Employment ADG/ECR: All technical units including Department of Communication and Public Information (DCOMM) 	(8)	Immediate to medium-term	Medium
▶ DWTs			

Office response: The Office will strengthen its communication strategies, products and staff skills by using communication technologies and tools to further emphasize the Organization's unique value added based on its normative and tripartite approach, and to enhance its reputation as a knowledge leader, effective development partner and dynamic collaborator in the multilateral system. Communication efforts will focus on the results achieved by DC projects and the broader impact and contribution of programmatic activities to the Decent Work Agenda. It will also continue to highlight the added value that the ILO's work brings to constituents and development partners.



Introduction

INTRODUCTION

CONTEXT

Building on previous strategies and following the direction set at the 2018 International Labour Conference on ILO development cooperation in support of the SDGs, the current ILO Development Cooperation (DC) Strategy (2020-25) is intended to guide the ILO's work in development cooperation. The strategy is broad in scope and responsibility for delivery is dispersed widely across the organization. The strategy has four "focus areas" or, as they have come to be called, "pillars":

- ▶ Pillar 1 "Services to constituents" how DC responds to the needs of constituents and Member States
- ▶ **Pillar 2** "Partnerships for policy coherence" how the organization uses DC to enhance policy, programme, and budgetary coherence as a means of promoting decent work and delivering the Programme and Budget (P&B)
- ▶ Pillar 3 "Partnerships for funding" efforts to mobilize and diversify funding resources to support the delivery of the P&B and
- ▶ **Pillar 4** "Efficiency, decent work results and transparency" improving organizational performance in terms of its results focus, efficiency, visibility and transparency.

The Strategy is intended to link closely with ILO strategic and operational plans, including the Strategic Plan for 2022–25, the P&B, the Gender Equality Action Plan, the UN Funding Compact and Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs). Within the P&B, implementation of the DC Strategy is included in its policy and enabling outcomes. A 2021 assessment of the ILO by the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) also made observations and recommendations related to the ILO's DC work⁶ which provide additional insights.

Following a request from the Governing Body (GB) for more detail on actions to be taken through the Strategy, an Implementation Plan was also developed. Implementation is intended to be an Office-wide effort, requiring cooperation and coordination across policy and administrative support units, and between the Field and Headquarters. PARTNERSHIPS (formerly PARDEV) monitors the Implementation Plan as its custodian.

Monitoring of progress towards the deliverables in the Implementation Plan involves a network of "focal points" in the Headquarters (HQ) and the field who are meant to record updates via a shared online document and to participate in online coordination meetings. Drawing on the data collected in this way, a mid-term report was prepared and presented to the GB in March 2023. Insights into progress are also provided through Programme Implementation Reports, DC project evaluations and meta-studies, internal and external audits.

The context of the strategy's implementation has been challenging, coinciding with a period of cascading global crises including the COVID-19 pandemic, wars, financial shocks, and increased food/energy insecurity. Shifts in funding partners' priorities caused by these crises have complicated the ILO's development cooperation efforts. The ILO has also undergone structural change following the appointment of a new Director General and senior staff.

THE EVALUATION – TYPE, CLIENTS, PURPOSE, AND SCOPE

Type

The ILO's High-Level Evaluations (HLEs) are governance-level evaluations that aim to generate insights into organizational performance within the context of the results-based management system. Findings from HLEs contribute to decision making on policies and strategies, and accountability. Following the OECD-DAC criteria, they provide insights into the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the ILO's strategy, programme approach, and interventions. They are also forward looking and are intended to support future decision making and planning.

Purpose

The Terms of Reference describe the purpose of the evaluation as follows:

- Provide an account to the Governing Body regarding the implementation and efficiency of the Strategy.
- ▶ Provide an opportunity to learn what works well and what does not work as well in the implementation of ILO's strategy for Development Cooperation.
- Explore efficiency gains related to external and internal coherence, including synergies with strategic partners.
- ▶ Reflect on and explore the implications of changes in the development cooperation landscape and their implications for the ILO, looking in particular at (i) delivering the 2030 Agenda, (ii) UN reform, and (iii) The COVID-19 pandemic, as well as more recent socio-political conflicts that have emerged since the mid-term review.
- ▶ Support the Office and the constituents in making informed decisions about the future directions of Development Cooperation and provide inputs that can feed into the preparation of the new DC Strategy

Scope

Based on the Terms of Reference and considering views shared by stakeholders in the Inception Phase the evaluation, the HLE:

- ► Focuses on the current strategy and actions taken since 2020, reviewing performance in the biennium prior to this mainly as contextual and as providing some baseline measures.
- ► Evaluates the Strategy as a means of guiding the ILO's DC work it does not seek directly to evaluate the ILO's DC projects and programmes.
- Explores the nature, purpose and place of DC in the ILO's current operations, how connected it is with the ILO's normative mandate, and its coherence with key ILO plans, strategies, and ILC resolutions and instruments.
- ▶ Uses a Theory of Change to examine the logic, objectives, and application of the strategy within the organization, considering if and how it has influenced the ILO's engagement with constituents and partners in development cooperation, its provision of administrative and technical support for this effort, and its capacity to demonstrate results.
- ▶ Evaluates key results achieved under each of the four pillars of the 2020-25 Strategy, identifying (a) factors that have helped or hindered delivery of services to constituents through DC; (b) whether and how synergies within the ILO and with UN and multilateral partners have been enhanced; (c) how funding for the delivery of the P&B has been mobilized and diversified; and (d) the effectiveness and efficiency of the organization's performance in delivering DC.

- ▶ Evaluates any mechanisms available and used to continuously improve organizational performance in the design, implementation and impact focus of ILO DC (e.g., applying lessons learned in DC project design, streamlining systems, identifying and sharing good practices et al.) and assess the extent to which previous recommendations on DC made in various evaluations and reviews have been implemented.
- Explores and contrasts the differing perspectives of these issues, including constituents (ILO Governing Body level as well as constituent representatives at country level), staff in the field and HQ across different departments and organization units, partners involved in initiatives aimed at improving coherence, and funding partners contributing to ILO's programme of work.

Clients

The principal client for the evaluation is the Governing Body, which is responsible for governance-level decisions on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation. Other key stakeholders include the Director-General and members of the Senior Management Team at Headquarters, the Evaluation Advisory Committee, composed of senior management overseeing follow-up to evaluations and the departments, regional and country offices involved in planning and implementing the four pillars of the strategy. It should also serve as a source of information for ILO funding partners, other partners, and policy makers.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

Approach

The evaluation followed the approach presented in EVAL's High-level Evaluation Protocol for Strategy and Policy Evaluation⁷. EVAL's guidance notes on adapting evaluation methods to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate and on integrating gender equality were also followed.

The evaluation applied a mix of methods and analysed both quantitative and qualitative data. Its approach was highly participatory, involving the ILO's tripartite constituents, and seeking inputs from a wide range of programme stakeholders, implementation partners, representatives of national governments, and institutions. It also included a reference group nominated by the key ADG of the key clusters working on development cooperation and composed of key ILO staff with expertise on the subject matter. In some case study field visits, DC project beneficiaries were also consulted, though given the nature of the HLE, this was not a major focus for data collection. Overall, more than 260 stakeholders interacted with the HLE team.

The evaluation addressed evaluation questions grouped under the OECD-DAC Evaluation Criteria (see below) and based on questions and issues outlined in the ToR, as well as those raised by stakeholders consulted during the inception phase. Exploration of ILO cross-cutting themes was also a focus.

Summary ratings (on a six-point scale) have been made against each of the six OECD-DAC evaluation criteria, based on a range of inputs and in consultation with the ILO Senior Evaluation Officer.

Methods

Five key evaluation methods were used: (a) document review (including analyses of quantitative and qualitative data relating to the ILO's DC portfolio); (b) interviews; (c) case studies; (d) surveys of staff and constituents; and (e) a meta-study of final independent project evaluations. In addition, a questionnaire was sent to a sample of lead custodians of the Strategy's implementation plan for their feedback on the monitoring and progress of the plan.

DOCUMENT REVIEW

The evaluation analysed relevant policy, strategy and evaluation documents, GB papers, and DC project and programme information and data. Several relevant documents, reports and tools were also reviewed that were shared by stakeholders during the inception phase, including analyses of DC related activities and documented processes produced and used in the field.

Performance, planning and financial data related to DC planning, approval, monitoring, and evaluation were also reviewed, including data drawn from ILO dashboards, and customised reports⁸. These informed an analysis of the alignment of DC activity with broader ILO strategic and operational plans including:

- ▶ the Strategic Plan.
- ▶ the Programme and Budget.
- a sample of DWCPs (including of case study countries see below).
- ▶ Outcome-Based Work Plans, frameworks, and strategies of ILO policy Departments.
- Strategies and plans related to constituent capacity building.
- DC portfolio financial data (including financial "delivery rates").
- Documents and plans related to the ILO's work promoting policy coherence through global partnerships/initiatives.

In terms of the strategy's focus on efficiency, impact and the transparency of decent work results, the evaluation reviewed current practices, tools and approaches developed as deliverables under the Strategy's Implementation Plan, and documented approaches to improving accountability, transparency and efficiency of DC (including some produced by the now defunct ILO Business Innovation Unit).

Relevant evaluation reports, internal and external audits, Programme Implementation Reports and meta-studies were also reviewed. These include the 2015 HLE of Technical Cooperation (including reviewing if and how its recommendations were implemented), other recent HLEs (including of field operations and structure, capacity development efforts, public-private partnerships, and the ILO's response to COVID-19).

A list of key documents reviewed is in the attached bibliography.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews were held with 263 stakeholders, including 117 identifying as women (44 per cent) and 145 identifying as male (55%) and 1 other. These included interviews with:

- ▶ ILO staff and senior management in Geneva
- ► High level representatives of employers and workers (i.e. IOE and ITUC)
- ▶ ILO staff and senior management in regional and country offices.
- International development cooperation partners/funding partners and other UN organisations collaborating with the ILO at both a strategic level and in specific DC projects and programmes.
- Country level constituents (governments, workers', and employers' organisations).
- In some locations, project beneficiaries.

Interviews were semi-structured based on an evaluation matrix and guided by tailored questions. For the case studies, additional data collection templates were developed that focus on the specific DC cooperation themes and issues to be explored in each. The results of all interviews were summarised in an internal team document for cross-referencing and broader analysis.

⁸ The HLE team encountered numerous inconsistencies between different data sets and tried to reconcile these as far as possible. Where consistency could not be achieved, the HLE specifies which sources have been used for its analysis

CASE STUDIES

The evaluation used a mix of thematic and country case studies, covering different modalities and organizational approaches to delivering the DC strategy (e.g., Flagship Programmes, partnership initiatives, and major multi-country projects) and illustrating the application of the strategy at a country level, highlighting successes and challenges in the implementation of its four pillars and identifying any gaps that a future strategy might fill. Following inception interviews by the evaluation team and based on a set of 9 criteria, Jordan, Bangladesh, Uganda, Paraguay and Uzbekistan were selected for the country case studies and the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions, Better Work, Prospects and ITC Turin were selected for the thematic case studies.⁹

SURVEYS

Three web-based surveys (in English, French and Spanish) were conducted: one for constituents and two for staff (one aimed at a large cohort of staff and one at corporate institutional services staff).

The constituent survey was sent to 1,018 constituents with 243 responding (23.8 per cent). Of these:

- ▶ 44 per cent were from government
- > 34 per cent were from workers' organizations
- ▶ 20 per cent were from employers' organizations
- ▶ 28 per cent were from the Asia and the Pacific region
- ▶ 27.2 per cent were from Latin America and the Caribbean
- ▶ 25.5 per cent were from Africa
- ▶ 14.4 per cent were from Europe and Central Asia
- ▶ 3.3 per cent were from The Arab States
- ▶ 1.6 per cent represented global or Inter-regional perspectives
- ▶ 41.6 per cent female, 54.3 per cent were male, and 4.1 per cent were other or preferred not to say

The broader staff survey was sent to 2,000 staff with 464 responding (23.2 per cent). Of these:

- ▶ 75 per cent were from field operations units (Country Offices 35.8 per cent, Project Offices 17.2 per cent, Decent Work Teams 12.3 per cent, and Regional Offices 9.7 per cent)
- ▶ 64.7 per cent were employed in roles that were funded through Extra-Budgetary Development Cooperation (XBDC) sources, 1.3 per cent through Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA), 1.5 per cent through Project Support Income (PSI), 3.5 per cent through "mixed" sources. The remaining 29 per cent were funded through Regular Budget (RB).
- ▶ 29.5 per cent were from Africa
- ▶ 24.1 per cent were from the Asia and the Pacific region
- ▶ 12.7 per cent were from Latin America and the Caribbean
- ▶ 9.9 per cent were from Europe and Central Asia
- ▶ 5 per cent were from The Arab States
- ▶ 18.8 per cent represented global or Inter-regional perspectives
- ▶ 49.6 per cent female, 47.8 per cent were male, 0.2 per cent were non-binary, and 2.4 per cent preferred not to say

The staff survey to corporate institutional services staff (CISS) was sent to 65 staff with 15 responding (23 per cent). Of these:

- ▶ All respondents worked in HQ Geneva
- ▶ 86.7 per cent were employed in roles that were funded through RB. The remaining 13.3 per cent were funded through PSI.
- ▶ 40 per cent covered Europe and Central Asia
- ▶ 60 per cent represented global or Inter-regional perspectives
- ▶ 33.3 per cent were female and 66.7 per cent were male.

META STUDY OF EVALUATION REPORTS

The meta-study evaluation synthesised findings from over 200 Decent Work performance appraisals of final independent project evaluations conducted between 2019 and 2023. The analysis focused on selected criteria from EVAL's Decent Work results and effectiveness meta-analysis, organised by specific Pillars and relevant areas of the DC Strategy, as identified by the HLE team¹⁰. Some caution was exercised in the interpretation of these results, as the criteria used did not cover all elements included in the four pillars of the DC strategy or included issues that were imperfectly aligned with the Strategy's focus.

A majority of evaluations focused on ILO's work in Asia and the Pacific (56 reports) and Africa (53 reports), followed by interregional interventions (34 reports), projects in LAC (27 reports), in the Arab States (21 reports) and in Europe (15 reports). 32 of the evaluations were from 2019, 35 from 2020, 39 from 2021, 56 from 2022 and 44 from 2023.

Methodological limitations and constraints

Comprehensive reports on the implementation of the Strategy beyond the Mid-Term Review were not available. The main tool for collecting data was infrequently updated and only a limited number of the focal points responsible for this had made contributions. While "dedicated meetings involving HQ and staff in the regions" were said to have been convened to review progress, the HLE team was unable to obtain minutes of or notes from these meetings. The HLE examined in more detail what has been reported under each Pillar, along with other relevant actions that have been reported elsewhere or brought to our attention, but the lack of detail on some limits our analysis of their effectiveness and impact.

The original selection of case studies was revised following discussions with an ILO regional office who did not wish the selected country to be part of the case study countries. An alternate case study was selected following these discussions. The team contacted various stakeholders considered key informants and despite numerous efforts by the evaluation team and EVAL, some did not reply to numerous requests for interviews or declined to be interviewed. In numerous cases, documents requested by EVAL on behalf of the evaluation team were not made available by ILO departments in violation of IGDS 75 on access to data for oversight units or were institutionally lost due to change in staff (retirements, dismantling of unit).

¹⁰ Pillar 1: Link between objectives and P&B, link between objectives and DWCP/CPOs, Constituent Support, Capacity-building, knowledge development

Pillar 2: Strategic relationships, linkages to SDG targets and cooperation with UN, Policy influence

Pillar 3: Resource leveraging

Pillar 4: Validity of design/approach, RBM approach and goal orientation, Monitoring and reporting, Visibility and accessibility of knowledge and information.

Efficiency: Internal Processes (Implementation management, ILO support to project, Internal ILO coordination), Cost efficiency, Adequacy of resources

Accountability Standards: Gender responsiveness, Disability inclusion, Environmental sustainability

 $ILO's\ comparative\ advantage:\ Tripartism\ and\ Social\ Dialogue;\ Normative\ work\ and\ ILS$



Background – Development Cooperation in the ILO

BACKGROUND – DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN THE ILO

HISTORY

In different ways, Development Cooperation has been a part of the ILO's work since its inception, though the form of this cooperation has evolved over time. At a country level, the ILO's early cooperation took the form of "technical assistance" where ILO experts undertook advisory missions to countries seeking support for the application of labour standards. After World War II, the UN's plan for "Technical Cooperation for Economic Development" greatly expanded the scope and size of support provided to developing countries and sought to build "a co-operative enterprise in which all nations work together through the United Nations and the specialized agencies". The ILO played a prominent role in this new plan, setting out a broad technical cooperation proposal to lead work in fifteen fields related to employment¹².

In the 1960s, driven by increasing availability of financial support from the United Nations Development Fund, the World Bank, and a growing number of bilateral development assistance programmes, technical cooperation continued its rapid growth. The ILO increasingly positioned itself to implement various employment-related projects as part of a growing global development network.

By the 1980s, technical cooperation had become the biggest item in the ILO's budget, with 90 per cent of funding for this work derived from sources outside the ILO (Aboughanem, 1985:1). This trend towards external, "voluntary" funding of ILO activities has continued, more recently under the banner "development cooperation", a term which reflects a shift of international development efforts towards a wider range of social, economic, and environmental goals, initially under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and now the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

THE ILO'S IDENTITY AS DC GREW - TWO ILOS?

As the ILO's technical/development cooperation activities grew and diversified, concerns began to be expressed by some staff and constituents about whether the organization might be straying too far from its normative role and its services to constituents. Some of these concerns underpin elements of the current ILO DC strategy, but their persistence over time suggests that the ILO has never completely resolved them. Some have suggested that, because of this, a "fault line" has been created in the organization manifesting itself through an undercurrent of tension between "two ILOs" – a DC-focused ILO and a normative ILO. This creates friction and instability and weakens cohesion. The differing employment conditions of staff employed under Regular Budget and DC budgets were seen as sometimes reinforcing this duality, with DC staff seen as having lower status in the organization¹³.

While there are legitimate questions that can be asked about the balance of the ILO's work and the extent to which the funding priorities of its partners can take precedence over the ILO's own priorities, there is no question that DC work is vital to the achievement of its results.

¹¹ United Nations, Technical Assistance for Economic Development – Plan for an Expanded Cooperative Programme through the United Nations and the Specialized Agencies, Lake Success, New York, May 1949.

^{12 (1)} Economic development policies related to labour income and employment; (2) employment training and migration; (3) Industrial relations, including machinery for the settlement of industrial disputes; (4) Wages policy; (5) Industrial safety; (6) Occupational health; (7) Enforcement of labour legislation including labour inspection; (8) Employment problems of women and young workers; (9) Development of labour statistics; (10) Social security; (11) Co-operation and handicrafts; (12) Employment, wages and conditions of work in agriculture; (13) Maritime problems; (14) Technical advice in connexion with specific industries; (15) Labour and social problems of the indigenous populations of Latin America.

¹³ This situation has been addressed by a 2022 Global survey of ILO staff organized by the Staff Union in the framework of the Year of TC Staff.

To illustrate this, the HLE conducted an analysis of the contributions of RBTC, XBDC, RBSA¹⁴ and staff hours to the results achieved as reported in the Programme Implementation Report during the period under evaluation. Three large data sets were connected to conduct the analysis – details of the methodology and more detailed findings are included in Annex F.

A summary of findings is set out in Box 1. The key lesson from this analysis is that even the very small amount of DC funding that is derived from the regular budget (RBTC funds) can make an outsized contribution to the achievement of the ILO's results, especially if applied over time and in combination with other funds.

Box 1: Contribution of RBTC, XBDC & RBSA staff hours to results –
 Summary of findings

To what extent does development cooperation contribute to achieving ILO's results, as per the strategic framework?

- ▶ RBTC expenditure is the main contributor to explain the variance in the number of results achieved in each biennium 17.5% in 2018-19, 26.8% in 2020-21, and 33.5% in 2022-23). Although XBTC and RBSA, alone, have significant contributions to the number of results achieved, RBTC showed an outstanding effect, alone and in combination with other sources of funding. A similar effect is found in relation to staff hours alone and in combination with RBTC.
- ▶ The contributions of staff hours to the number of results achieved show different patterns between the 2020-21 and the 2022-23 biennium, with more hours tending toward less results during the COVID-19 pandemic in larger projects and more hours tending toward more results in larger projects afterwards. This pattern is valid for RBTC and RBSA expenditure in each biennium. This may indicate that repurposing larger projects (e.g., more activities, more partnerships to handle, etc.) required more effort from ILO staff to keep delivery rates high.
- ▶ At the outcome level, there are differences in how different sources of funding and staff hours explain the variance in the number of results achieved. XBTC explained 40% of the variance in the number of results achieved under Outcome 6 Gender and equal treatment (2020-21 and 2022-23 biennia), RBTC explained 79% under Outcome 7 Promoting workplace compliance through labour inspection (2018-19 biennium) and staff hours explained 67% under the theme of social protection (the three biennia together). No significant results were found for the other outcomes.
- ▶ At the regional level, RBTC expenditure is the most important contributor to explain the variance in the number of results achieved across the three biennia for Africa (35%), the Americas (53%) and Asia and the Pacific (64%). No significant results were found for the other regions and the global projects.



Other concerns relating to the ILO's identity and its relationship with DC have been well documented over the years in reports, evaluations and GB resolutions and discussions. Some may represent the unavoidable realities of DC work – issues that can only ever be "managed" but never fully resolved. Others, however, seem to be matters that have been acknowledged and could be addressed with clearer policy directions or procedural reform or structural change.

The HLE interviewed staff with long histories in the ILO who expressed cynicism or dismay at the ILO's failure to address some of these concerns in a meaningful and effective way. These issues are certainly not easy to resolve but lack of progress seems to be at least partly due to a lack of organisational resolve. Strategies are developed that focus on modest enhancements to established processes, but transformative change remains elusive.

¹⁴ RBTC – Regular Budget Technical Cooperation; XBDC – Extra-Budgetary Development Cooperation; RBSA – Regular Budget Supplementary Account.

To illustrate the seemingly perennial nature of some of these concerns, we list examples below drawn from past evaluations, reviews and reports¹⁵ spanning four decades. We have grouped these under the four pillars of the current strategy. Their persistence reinforces the view that there has been a lack of will – or maybe ideas – to find solutions:

Pillar 1 - ILO DC being "donor-led" with insufficient involvement of constituents.

2015

"Too often, constituents ... have the impression that projects are identified and formulated by ILO in consultation with the donors and government and that they are left with no option but to accept them."

2014

"Some key areas of [constituent] nonsatisfaction revolve around... Supply-driven or top down approach... (i.e. TC is "imposed" by donors... [and] implemented without real involvement of government and the social partners)."

1999

"The ILO needs to draw the tripartite constituents into all aspects of technical cooperation."

1985

"The ILO... does not always have as much say as one might wish in programming its operational activities and in determining how they should be carried out."

Pillar 1 - Improving the alignment of DC projects with ILO priorities

2014

"[There is a] lack of an overall mechanism in place to assess the strategic fit of projects funded through voluntary funding to the priorities of the Organization, at the global and country levels"

2006

"The objective here is to increase the share of multilateral funding allocated to the ILO by donor agencies, particularly in relation to segments of the Decent Work Agenda that have received little attention so far."

1999

"In general, resources should be concentrated on more focused programmes".

1985

"More systematic regard for standards in technical cooperation activities is largely dependent upon the way they are covered in the project documents... This problem must be examined as quickly as possible."

Pillar 2 - Achieving policy coherence with partners while maintaining a focus on standards and constituent needs

2015

"The work of the ILO is effective within its own boundaries but appears to lack the traction to ensure fundamental change, particularly where stakeholders with larger funding capabilities are involved."

2006

"With the whole range of United Nations agencies vying for attention to their particular sectoral or thematic concerns, there is also the risk that the ILO's objectives will not receive sufficient attention or will be dissipated or subsumed."

1999

"Partnerships must be built on a realistic perception of both the common objectives and the specific interests of the partners... so that the ILO can uphold the values and concerns of its own constituents more effectively in a wider arena."

1985

"ILO's standards play virtually no role in the financing decisions taken by the World Bank, except in ensuring that the project objectives do not leave the door open to discriminatory employment practices."

Pillar 3 - Challenges with mobilizing funds for DC

2015

"None of the DWCPs reviewed were costed and anchored in budgets or financial portfolios. As a result, they are rather theoretical documents based on ambitious expectations of funding."

2006

"The ILO's potential for mobilizing funds from international financial institutions and the private sector has been insufficiently realized."

1999

"Relationships should be intensified to ensure the mutual appreciation of the role played by technical cooperation and the promotion of the Declaration in the development programmes of IFIs."

1985

"Agencies are ill-informed about the ILO's objectives and generally maintain a benevolent neutrality when the ILO urges that certain legislative provisions be taken into account in preparing for or carrying out operations."

¹⁵ Sources: High Level Independent Evaluation of Technical Cooperation, 2015; Internal Field Operations and Structure and Technical Cooperation Review, 2014; ILC 2006, Report VI; ILC Resolutions and Conclusions on Technical Cooperation, 1999; André Aboughanem, Study of the Role of International Labour Standards in ILO Technical Cooperation, 1985.

Pillar 4 - Efficiency, transparency and measuring results

2015

"Several donors reported negative experiences with the efficiency of ILO TC projects, often requiring (usually no-cost) extensions. These were mostly associated with personnel issues, either in terms of long delays in start-up."

2015

"Delays encountered were lengthy, and donors interviewed regarded them as evidence of ILO's lack of commitment to principles of good project management."

2006

"Constituents and donors have always seen the delivery rate... as an important indicator of the efficiency with which the Office manages its programmes... The delivery rate averages between 60 and 70 per cent each year."

1985

"Total expenditure on technical cooperation is probably not the best indicator of the impact of such activities vis-à-vis the ILO's objectives."

NEW CHALLENGES FOR THE ILO AND ITS DC WORK

While these concerns remain and the ILO continues to struggle with its identity, its operating environment and the challenges it faces are constantly changing. **UN reform** challenges the ILO and its constituents to work within UN frameworks, aligning DWCPs and DC projects and programmes with broader development plans and strategies, while still championing social dialogue and tripartism with institutions not used to operating according to these principles. This requires capacity development of constituents and staff.

Aligning ILO DC work with the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs), poses similar challenges and there is an expectation that, as the 2030 deadline for the SDGs approaches, that development agencies will move away from specific DC projects and programmes and towards a more holistic approach, blending public, private, domestic and international sources. This requires targeted action around agreed priorities, which can be a challenge for a decentralized organization where resource mobilization is largely devolved to the field. It also requires a stronger orientation towards measuring the impact of the ILO's DC work in advancing the SDGs – a weakness that has been highlighted in past evaluations and external reviews.

On top of these challenges, the ILO must now regularly deal with compounding **global crises** which create uncertainty, increase risks, and demand agility and speed in the ILO's planning and delivery of its DC work. The ILO may have surprised itself with how well it did these things in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, but wars, financial shocks, crises with refugees and internally displaced people, and natural disasters demand continuing agility – much more now that the ILO is so invested in DC implementation than perhaps it would have been as a purely normative and standards-setting organization.

All these challenges form the backdrop to the ILO's current DC Strategy.



Evaluation criteria – findings

EVALUATION CRITERIA – FINDINGS

RELEVANCE

The strategy is broad in scope and highlights important strategic and operational issues for the ILO's work in DC but lacks a clear vision for improvement and does not effectively outline desired impacts beyond activity completion. Its purpose and measures of success are unclear, and it lacks a Theory of Change.

The Strategy is said to have been catalysed by 2018 Governing Body (GB) discussions, and to have faced significant drafting challenges, culminating in a last-minute withdrawal of a first draft intended for GB review. Based on HLE interviews with ILO staff, the team understand that the version finally approved was not the result of an extensive consultation process with staff in the field.

The Strategy covers numerous strategic and operational issues pertinent to ILO's DC work. Some of the longstanding concerns over the ILO's approach to DC delivery (see **SECTION 3**) are broadly addressed across the four pillars, but the Strategy lacks a clear purpose and success measures. Noting a lack of detail in the Strategy, the GB requested that an Implementation Plan be developed – a request that was noted by some we interviewed as being unusual. The Implementation Plan provided more detail, setting out deliverables and assigning responsibilities, but these were sometimes quite broad and were highly HQ-oriented. There was little direction set for field staff other than what would be presumably included in the "updated guidance tools" that are listed as deliverables.

In the Implementation Plan, 31 deliverables were mapped against the strategy and its actions, but it is unclear how these were determined and prioritised. Some parts of the strategy are deemphasised or omitted in the Implementation Plan (see **EFFECTIVENESS** for examples). Many are worded in a way that suggests they have been designed so that examples of actions can be later identified and retro-actively fitted for reporting, rather than to guide an intentional process that would meet a need, solve a problem, or advance towards a specific and measurable objective. The actions themselves may be worthwhile, but they are piecemeal, and their strategic intent is not explicit. As such, their evaluability is limited.

The strategy cross-references other strategies and plans but the value it adds to these in terms of clear actions and deliverables is not always apparent. Criticisms from the interviews highlight the strategy's vagueness and generality, and its focus on activities rather than results – for example:



The strategy basically lets staff do whatever they want - there's always something in it they can use to justify what they're doing. There's way too much generalisation. It needs to be much sharper.



The strategy is very shallow and weak. It's not really a strategy at all-more a list of 'guiding principles'.

In the surveys, staff and constituents reported a reasonably good familiarity with the Strategy, with 36.87% of the broader staff group, 50 % of CISS and 37.9% of constituents either agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement that "I am well-informed of the ILO DC Strategy and what it means for my work". Another 33.5% of staff, 25 % of CISS and 31.53% of constituents saying they "somewhat agree". However, in the HLE's field visits there was limited awareness or concern about the Strategy's existence and relevance. Regional Office staff in programming units were more aware, but they generally did not see it as addressing what matters or as guiding their actions in a meaningful way. Many respondents within and outside of ILO, when presented with an outline of key points of the Strategy, found it more useful as a description of some of the key considerations of their current work than as a driver of future activities. As a staff survey respondent put it:

Overall, the DC strategy is more a reflection of what the Office already does rather than a strategy that influences what the Office should be doing. A few innovative actions have been integrated though, e.g. the pilot on structured funding dialogues, as well as the ILO business case for funding partnerships.

The strategy was seen as needing sharper, more specific goals and clear pathways through action to intended results. Effective dissemination and understanding of the strategy among staff and constituents with clearer direction on how it should influence their work would enhance its relevance and promote action, especially in the field. We found little or no evidence that the strategy was seen as a strong influence on how DC was being developed and delivered in the field with the overall impression being that it was a high-level conceptual document that offered little practical guidance. As we were told:



Like many ILO strategic documents, it is a high-level document, but with no clear indication of how it is meant to work on the ground. It doesn't say what success looks like and how it is to be implemented at the coalface.

¹⁶ Awareness was higher among institutional/corporate services staff: 50% agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement and another 25% somewhat agreeing.

Development partners consulted at a country level were largely unaware of the Strategy, but when presented with its pillars, agreed that strengthened ILO performance in these areas would be beneficial. However, they generally have not noticed changes in ILO's strategic and operational approach and remain primarily concerned with the ILO's capacity to meet the DC project deliverables and targets they have funded. In some parts of the strategy, such as Pillar 2, some partners questioned the ability of the ILO to really influence behaviour of other UN agencies and other development partners to significantly change their focus and to align it with the ILO's vision – though its influence was seen as greater in some countries, such as Bangladesh, where the ILO has a large DC portfolio and commands more attention as a result. But in general, funding partners and other development institutions have their own priorities and are constrained by their own mandates and objectives.

A Theory of Change?

The DC Strategy does not appear to have been built on an explicit Theory of Change and its documentation does not incorporate such an approach. The HLE team has therefore constructed a purely evaluation-oriented Theory of Change¹⁷, derived from the formally adopted DC Strategy documents. This theory is presented in **Figure 22** under **IMPACT** as a tool supporting the evaluation of the design, implementation, and results of the Strategy.

Creating a more complete Theory of Change at the design stage and using it to monitor progress in a chain of results may have enhanced the relevance of the strategy and grounded it in outcomes and impact, rather than activities. This would outline intended long-term progress towards eventual impact objectives (in this case, in the way the ILO manages and delivers DC to ensure it advances organisational goals and is impactful).

To evaluate progress towards such impacts, data need to be gathered and assessed. In this respect, the primary available reporting framework is provided by the ILO P&B, though it currently fails to present a comprehensive narrative of progress. Even if it did, it operates through a biennial approach, which is not in itself suitable for assessing long term progress. Some longer-term narrative of progress is needed but the HLE's review of documents and databases, as well as extensive stakeholder discussions, suggest that ILO does not routinely gather and assess sufficient high-quality data on processes and results to effectively monitor or evaluate long term effects of its DC strategy or indeed of its DC work, whether at country, regional or global level.

In summary, staff and stakeholders largely acknowledge the relevance of having a well-defined, actionable, and widely understood DC Strategy that can enhance the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of ILO's development cooperation efforts and which can promote the unique values and capabilities that the ILO brings to this work. However, the relevance of the current strategy is limited:

- ▶ Positively, even stakeholders with little or no prior awareness of the Strategy agree that it describes important challenges, which ILO needs to address.
- ▶ It lacks a clear Theory of Change and a vision for improvement. It does not outline desired impacts beyond activity completion. Its measures of success are unclear.
- ► The Strategy does not seem to have been built on widespread and transparent consultation, either inside or outside of ILO.
- ▶ Its purpose is unclear, and its actions are piecemeal rather than strategic. Its audience appears to have been the Governing Body and its relevance in influencing different parts of the ILO especially those delivering DC is currently low. The strategy cross-references the P&B and other plans and strategies, but it cannot be said that the DC Strategy itself adds much value to these, other than its coverage of DC resource mobilization.

¹⁷ Note that many additional elements could be added to the ToC, such as assumptions (which need to be true for progress to be generated), impact drivers (specific factors which can promote or accelerate progress) and timelines (although these are always hypothetical, they are useful to emphasise that the attainment of impacts, even at country level, should be seen as a "long haul").

- ▶ Although the Strategy has an Implementation Plan and deliverables, these are not widely known and the distribution of responsibilities to drive and monitor activities appears vague, lacking in ownership and weakly promoted across the organization, its constituents and partners.
- ▶ The Strategy seeks to add some tools and refocus some areas of work but in other important respects is perceived as a "business as usual" document that fails to address challenges that need to be overcome for ILO's DC work to achieve its intentions.



The DC strategy broadly addresses findings from the previous 2015 high-level evaluation (HLE) of technical cooperation and the 2021 MOPAN assessment, but more attention is needed on some important issues.

Relevance of current strategy to findings of the previous 2015 HLE on technical cooperation

The previous 2015 HLE of the ILO's development/technical cooperation work18 had a somewhat different focus and terms of reference but raised issues and made recommendations that were intended to influence subsequent ILO strategic thinking on DC. It included important findings relevant to the evaluation of the current Strategy. An initial comparison of the current situation with that of 2015 suggests the following:

ON RELEVANCE THE PREVIOUS HLE NOTED THAT...

"The Technical Cooperation Strategy 2010–2015 appears to be largely an action plan for the **implementation of ILO's reforms**¹⁹ **as they pertain to TC**, focusing on internal institutional objectives. It is **weak in terms of explicit development-oriented objectives**, reducing its value added and relevance as a framework for the implementation of ILO TC during the period in question".

▶ **Current strategy and situation:** While Pillar 4 of the current Strategy maintains this strong focus on internal objectives, Pillar 1 adds emphasis to the provision of services to constituents, building constituent capacity and promoting South-South and triangular cooperation. Pillars 2 and 3 emphasise work with external partners. It remains largely silent on explicit development-oriented objectives, largely because it positions itself as an enabling strategy for the P&B and DWCPs, instruments which focus on the specifics of the ILO's policy work.

On Coherence

"The majority of ILO projects reviewed were of less than three years' duration due to the structure of extra-budgetary funding. This limited design coherence, since it is understood that: (a) projects cannot deliver their intended results within the available time; and (b) the achievement of outcomes and impacts largely occurs after the projects' closure. Despite these challenges, the evaluation noted that, in response to donor requirements, programming documents continue to try to define the results of these short-duration projects in terms of national impact".

¹⁸ ILO/EVAL, Independent high-level evaluation of ILO's technical cooperation strategy, 2010–2015.

¹⁹ That is, reforms following the ILO Field Operations & Structure and Technical Cooperation Review, 2014.

▶ Current strategy and situation: The DC HLE's interviews and its review of evidence found in project evaluations suggest that these deficiencies have not been effectively addressed, and that there continue to be problems with projects being approved with over-ambitious goals, which are exacerbated by slow commencement (see EFFICIENCY). A DC strategy could address unrealistic goals in the ILO's approach to resource mobilization and project appraisals. The complicating efficiency challenge of slow start-up is so long-standing and significant that it might require an operational strategy of its own focusing on administrative and HR processes, rather than being placed in a broader DC Strategy.

On Effectiveness

"Among constituents, there is widespread satisfaction with the effectiveness of ILO TC activities. They generally deliver their intended outputs at the expected professional level, reinforcing and complementing work on international labour standards (ILS). However, this perception is tempered by the fact that interventions are often too small to have a national impact, resulting in the need for other stakeholders to implement the changes at scale. However, it is often beyond the limited capacity of ILO country teams to influence larger donors or development banks, particularly where there is no country office".

▶ Current strategy and situation: The staff and constituent surveys suggest continuing high levels of overall satisfaction with the effectiveness of ILO DC. Internal and external stakeholders contacted by the DC HLE broadly confirmed that the limitations on scale remain except for a few large-scale global programmes, (e.g., Better Work). The strategy does not set out a position on small projects and whether they should receive special scrutiny in the appraisal process. Pillars 2 and 3 hint at the benefits of cultivating longer-term partnerships including with IFIs which may be better placed to finance longer interventions built on ILO groundwork. While this aspiration is not new, there is hope that initiatives like the Global Acceleration and the Global Coalition might lead to some progress.

On Efficiency

"Several donors reported negative experiences with the efficiency of ILO TC, particularly at start-up, often resulting in **project extensions**. These were mostly associated with **delays in recruitment or procurement**. Some ILO TC project personnel, in countries lacking a country representative, were strongly critical of the difficulties they face because of their lack of authority over recruitment, procurement and financial management".

▶ Current strategy and situation: These longstanding challenges remain, as has been confirmed to the HLE DC team by numerous internal and external stakeholders and strongly reinforced in the staff survey (see EFFICIENCY). Pillar 4 of the strategy makes broad references on the need to improve the quality of DC design, implementation and evaluation, but few concrete steps addressing known efficiency issues are included in the Implementation Plan (see EFFECTIVENESS). As mentioned above, there may be a need for a separate operational strategy on these, backed by a clear commitment from senior management to find ways to fix bottlenecks that have been reported for many years.

On Sustainability

"ILO TC projects were often found to target **sustainability through follow-on phases** of the same activity, sometimes by scaling them up. This is largely because of the funding requirements of many donors, under which project durations are too short to deliver sustainable results, making a second phase essential".

► **Current strategy and situation:** This finding is linked to the finding under effectiveness on the small-scale nature of many ILO DC initiatives. See above.

On Impact

"The evaluation, therefore, concludes that there are currently **insufficient data to enable the impact of ILO TC to be evaluated**".

▶ Current strategy and situation: The evaluation of the long-term impacts of ILO DC work for both systems and individual beneficiaries remains a weakness. The Strategy referred to the need for better data, including impact evaluations, but the Implementation Plan does not advance this. The issue needs to be addressed at multiple levels, including through the monitoring and evaluation approaches built into individual projects and through the ability of the ILO's results-based management system to look beyond a horizon of two-years and present a longer-term narrative of progress towards true impact.

Building on its evaluation findings, the HLE TC provided recommendations, which are attached to this document as **Annex C. Table 1** below relates the DAC criteria covered in the TC Evaluation and the DC Evaluation to the Theory of Change and Pillars of the DC Strategy.

TABLE 1: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TC 2015 HLE FINDINGS ON DAC CRITERIA, THEORY OF CHANGE AND STRATEGY PILLARS FOR DC STRATEGY 2020-2025

EVALUATION CRITERION	LEVEL IN THEORY OF CHANGE (SEE ABOVE)	MAIN PILLAR IN 2020 – 2025 DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION STRATEGY
Relevance	From outcomes to impacts	1,2,3
Coherence	From outcomes to impacts	1
Effectiveness	From outcomes to impacts	1,3
Efficiency	Inputs to outputs	4
Sustainability	Outcomes to Intermediate States	1
Impact	Impact	1,4

Relevance of current strategy to findings of the 2020 MOPAN assessment

The 2020 MOPAN²⁰ assessment, provided a detailed overview of the quality of ILO's work in DC and identified areas for improvement (see **Table 2**). It emphasised the need to **improve internal systems and performance**, with five of its seven recommendations in this area. It saw work with beneficiaries as largely positive, highlighting one specific need, **accountability**, for improvement. It did not see partnerships as a major area of weakness, although it emphasised the need to **scale up interventions via multi-donor participation** to get more results. Here the emphasis seemed to be on finance rather than on coherence.

²⁰ Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN), MOPAN Assessment Report: ILO 2020 Assessment Cycle, 2021.

TABLE 2: MOPAN AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT V DC STRATEGY COVERAGE BY PILLAR 2021 REPORT

	AREA FOR IMPROVEMENT	DC STRATEGY PILLAR
1	The ILO has yet to prioritise the "green recovery" or serving the world of work by addressing the climate crisis.	?
2	The organisation could increase its impact through large-scale interventions with multi-donor participation and attain more sustainable results.	3
3	The ILO needs to improve intervention design and monitoring practices through the consistent use of baselines and theory of change, take more timely action on underperformance, and streamline business processes that directly affect its projects and programmes.	4
4	Strengthening field capacity with technical expertise remains a challenge, but the ILO can achieve this by building on remote solutions developed during the COVID-19 pandemic .	4
5	Accelerating actions to establish a fully-fledged system to prevent and respond to SEA is essential in the context of increasing interventions targeting disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.	4
6	The ILO lacks clear and robust standards and procedures for accountability to end beneficiaries , an area that is gaining in importance with increased staff interaction with vulnerable workers.	1,4
7	The ILO has focused on developing an innovation culture and investing in innovation across the organisation but would benefit from a more systemic approach in this regard.	4

The DC Strategy is relevant to and coheres with the MOPAN assessment on many of these issues, especially through Pillar 4, but the Implementation Plan is light on detail in some important respects. These are discussed in more depth in **EFFECTIVENESS**.

Comparing the most recent MOPAN assessment with the previous 2015 assessment shows some apparent progress and reinforces the relevance of the current strategy's work in two partnership-related areas previously mentioned as needing improvement – "coherence and coordination of partnerships" (relevant to Pillar 2) and "additional funding sources, including private sector funding" (Pillar 3).

The absence of the former issue (Pillar 2) in the most recent assessment as an area for improvement suggests that progress has already been made, leaving the need to scale up funding as the major remaining challenge around partnerships. This suggests that inclusion of partnership issues as two of the four strategic pillars may be over-stated and that the relevance of the emphasis on coherence and coordination among partners had already declined by the time the 2020 – 2025 DC Strategy was adopted. Despite this, HLE stakeholder discussions and documents confirm that coherence remains a serious challenge.

▶ Box 2: What staff and constituents said about the strategy's relevance.

- "The strategy basically lets staff do whatever they want there's always something in it they can use to justify what they're doing. There's way too much generalisation. It needs to be much sharper."
- "This is not a 'natural strategy' in terms of the way the ILO works."
- ▶ "It seems to be for the GB nobody else looks at it. It is the P&B that drives action including DC."
- "The strategy is very shallow and weak. It's not really a strategy at all more a list of 'guiding principles'."
- "Is the Strategy really fit for purpose?"
- "Overall, the DC strategy is more a reflection of what the Office already does rather than a strategy that influences what the Office should be doing. A few innovative actions have been integrated though, e.g., the pilot on structured funding dialogues, as well as the ILO business case for funding partnerships." (Staff survey)
- "While I have some understanding of the ILO's Development Cooperation strategy, I often find it difficult to see how it applies directly to my daily tasks." (Staff survey)
- "Perhaps it has value to report to the GB (?) but I don't really see the point of it otherwise." (Staff survey)
- "For me it is the key document guiding my work [resource mobilization], although I do feel that a more 'regional chapter should be adapted to involve the region in partnerships and resource mobilization." (Staff survey)
- "The strategy has influenced my work, since one of the main lines is to coordinate ILO cooperation within the Ministry of Labor." (Constituent survey)
- "The strategy was not discussed at tripartite level, and we are not aware of what it is." (Constituent survey)



COHERENCE

The design of the DC strategy broadly follows directions set by key ILC documents and other ILO plans, but the level of coherence is inconsistent. The strategy's efforts to better align DC with constituent needs and to specific P&B outcomes lack detail and measures of success.

COHERENCE OF DESIGN WITH THE 2018 ILC RESOLUTION ON DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION

The 2018 ILC Resolution on Development Cooperation is a key policy document for the ILO and was intended to enhance and to refocus its DC work, especially in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. At a conceptual level, the pillars of the DC Strategy echo many of the key concerns covered in the Resolution including how best to support constituents in a changing DC context to achieve decent work outcomes and the SDGs (through Pillar 1); how to support policy coherence and to mainstream decent work in national development plans and UNDAFs (Pillar 2); how to ensure the right mix of funding partnerships and modalities to adequately fund ILO DC (Pillar 3); and how to better present the ILO's unique added value to address decent work gaps at the national level (Pillar 4).

At this conceptual level, the Strategy's pillars also cover eleven of the twelve "Priority Areas" set out in the Resolution (See **Table 3**). The main gap concerns the importance of a "programmatic approach". Its absence reflects this HLE's assessment of the importance of having a Theory of Change as a foundation for the Strategy, one that would establish impact objectives and the change pathways for the ILO's DC delivery approach (i.e., what exactly does it want to change about how it develops and implements DC projects?)

TABLE 3: ALIGNMENT OF DC STRATEGY PILLARS WITH 2018 ILC RESOLUTION PRIORITIES

PRIORITY AREA IDENTIFIED BY ILC	DC PILLARS ALIGNMENT
Country Ownership and Relevance	1
ILO's Strategic Objectives:	1,2
Coordinated Strategy	2
Enhanced ILO Role	1,2
Private Sector Role	2
Inclusion	4
Programmatic Approach	-
Capacity Development	8
Transparency and Shared Responsibility	1,4
Inclusive Partnerships	2,3
Development Financing	3
South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC):	2,4

However, coherence between the Resolution and the actions and deliverables set out in the Strategy's Implementation Plan is inconsistent. Some elements of the Resolution only vaguely address or offer minimal guidance on how to apply its key principle and priorities. Key strengths and weaknesses in coherence relative to these principles are:

Stronger coherence:

- ▶ Capacity Development: The Resolution highlights the importance of strengthening the capacities of the ILO, its constituents, and national stakeholders in implementing the Decent Work Agenda. This area is probably the most coherently addressed of all in the DC Strategy document, covering organizational and institutional capacity building, advancing the ILO existing strategy for this work and South-South cooperation. The Implementation Plan includes measures to address the needs of constituents and DC staff and the central role of ITCILO was reinforced.
- ▶ Transparency and shared responsibility: Transparency is often mentioned in the Strategy though with few specific measures described. These were clearer in the Implementation Plan, emphasising transparency initiatives to meet international standards.
- ▶ **Inclusive Partnerships:** The Strategy has substantial coverage of partnerships, with a reasonable degree of coherence with the Resolution. Some of the content is specific and actionable.

Weaker coherence:

- ▶ **Programmatic approach:** This related to adopting a long-term, programmatic approach for sustainable results. Although the Strategy implies that a programmatic approach could be valuable, there are no specific actions in line with this priority in either the Strategy or the Implementation Plan.
- ▶ **Country/constituent ownership and relevance:** This priority reinforced the need to tailor DC to the needs of regions and countries through social dialogue and for the active involvement of social partners. The Strategy echoes this need but does not demonstrate a coherent and measurable approach to improvements.

Coordinated Strategy: While the concept of coordinated strategy within the ILO and with its external stakeholders is often implied, this remains at a generic level and presents no practical advice or direction.

▶ **Inclusion:** Although inclusion is specifically mentioned, there is no explicit strategic approach to promote performance or results in this area.

Coherence of design with the 2019 Centenary Declaration

The 2019 *ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work* is one of the defining documents for the Organization's approaches in normative and development fields. The nature of the Declaration is such that it makes any meaningful assessment of the coherence between it and the DC Strategy impractical. This is because the Declaration presents itself primarily as an aspirational document, pointing towards an idealized vision of the future of work. Paragraph 1D provides a concise example of the difficulty in assessing its coherence with the Strategy:



"The ILO must carry forward into its second century with unrelenting vigour its constitutional mandate for social justice by further developing its human-centred approach to the future of work, which puts workers' rights and the needs, aspirations and rights of all people at the heart of economic, social and environmental policies".

The global ambitions of the Declaration are to some extent specified through 30 proposed areas, towards which the ILO should focus its efforts, with little indication of prioritization, possible change pathways or approaches to results monitoring. Given the generic and aspirational nature of the Declaration, it would be difficult for the DC Strategy to propose any approaches, which could not be associated with its intentions. Put simply, some level of coherence is guaranteed by the near universal coverage of the numerous clauses and sub-clauses of the Declaration.

Coherence with the "One ILO" approach

The promotion of a "One ILO" approach has been a policy priority for some time and responds to historical concerns that the ILO has internal divisions and "silos" that inhibit its optimal performance. Although some advances have been noted in recent years, it remains a priority that has been reinforced by the new DG. It is primarily about making the best use of ILO human and financial resources to provide solutions to the challenges confronting tripartite constituents.²¹

Although the DC Strategy document has a substantial focus on external collaboration and partnerships, the need for stronger cohesion within ILO is not substantively addressed as a theme, though it does point out that "For development cooperation to be effective and the objectives of the focus areas to be achieved, the ILO must work cohesively" (Para. 48). One ILO has a similarly low profile within the Implementation Plan, though its implementation approach – using a mechanism which devolved monitoring and reporting of delivery to focal points in HQ departments and Regional Offices who convened multi-disciplinary teams – was in itself an attempt to work in a more collaborative and devolved way. This mechanism seemed to lose momentum after the Mid-Term Review, providing some lessons for future strategy implementation.

Although still in their early stages of planning and implementation, the four new Priority Action Programmes introduced through the 2024-25 P&B "have been designed to foster integrated cross-Office action and collaborative working modalities across departments at headquarters and in field offices"²². The role of DC in advancing the work of the Priority Action Programmes will need to be explored in any future strategy.

Coherence with the P&B

All levels and units of the Organization endeavour to align their work with the requirements of the P&B and, in the field, report results against Country Programme Outcomes (CPOs) that align with one or more of the P&B's outcomes. Representatives of PARTNERSHIPS stressed that in the Strategy's design, there was a conscious decision to cast the strategy as an enabler of the P&B rather than as something separate. This was one reason put forward as to why the Strategy and Implementation Plan were short on detail. As PARTNERSHIPS told the HLE:

²¹ ILO. Transition Discussion: Delivering as One ILO. Accessed 18 June 2024.

²² ILO. <u>Director-General's Announcement (IGDS 660 (version 1))</u>, Accessed 18 June 2024



"One of the reasons why it was hard to create a detailed plan with deliverables was that we see DC as a means of action for the P&B. It's why the plan included cross-references. We don't see DC as separate from ILO 'core business' - they are interlinked."

While coherence is notionally demonstrated by incorporating cross references, the downside of this approach is that it makes it more difficult to assess the value added by the strategy to the P&B and how well its design supports the achievement of its 8 policy outcomes. Broadly, the Strategy fits under P&B "enabling outcome" 3 – "effective, efficient and results-oriented and transparent management". The Strategy aims to improve the quality of DC in terms of its results focus, efficiency, visibility, transparency and results-based management. But how was it designed to do this exactly?

An example: If one asks if the Strategy seeks to advance "gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all" (Outcome 5), the answer is "yes, see the P&B and the Programme Implementation Report". But how has the Strategy improved the way DC has contributed to this result? This seems an important thing to know, regardless of whether DC is inextricably linked to "core business"? Maybe there is potential for DC to greatly enhance Outcome 5 results if certain specific practices are adopted in DC project design, appraisal, or implementation. It may be impractical to set out in the Strategy the details of how DC is intended to contribute to each P&B outcome, but the value added by DC to these outcomes is currently opaque.

As P&B documents have referenced the need to direct DC resource mobilization efforts particularly to areas where funds are scarce, this makes the Strategy an important means of providing clarity on this dimension of the ILO's work. While the Strategy cross-references the P&B to demonstrate coherence, it lacks detail on how it would mobilize resources to address gaps in DC coverage across the eight policy outcomes.

Coherence with UN development system and other stakeholders

The Strategy places considerable emphasis on improving policy coherence between ILO, the UN Development System and a range of other stakeholders. For example, it covered:

- ▶ Engaging with IFIs to influence policy and financing decisions (Para 19c)
- Supporting constituent engagement in the development of integrated national financing frameworks (Para 26)
- ▶ Engaging constituents in UN Common Country Assessments and UN Cooperation Frameworks and integrating priorities in DWCPs (Para 30)
- ▶ Policy dialogues promoting ILO normative, tripartite and social dialogue mandate within the UN country teams and with IFIs and multi-bilateral partners (Para 31)
- ▶ Promoting International Labour Standards and social dialogue through UN country teams and through the SDG Fund, and in international forums such as the UN Inter-Agency Task Force on Financing for Development (Para 32)
- ► Engaging with the private sector for policy coherence (Para 34) and seek increased funding (Para 40d)
- Convening multi-stakeholder partnerships to promote awareness and drive policy coherence (Para 33)

Coherence of actions in the Implementation Plan to advance work in these areas are also more detailed and comprehensive. These will be outlined below under EFFECTIVENESS.

EFFECTIVENESS

The effectiveness of the DC strategy was hampered by the lack of an organizational structure or coordination mechanism to drive, implement and monitor it. Monitoring and reporting of the Strategy dropped off after the 2023 Mid-Term Review.

The strategy lacked an effective and sustained approach to managing its implementation across the organization. PARTNERSHIPS is the custodian of the Strategy, but it is not its responsibility alone. Rather, there is a large network of "focal points" across HQ and the regions that are nominally responsible for various actions and deliverables and for contributing updates on progress on a spreadsheet kept on an ILO Teams Channel. Work on the strategy is expected to occur both with and without PARTNERSHIPS' involvement, including through interactions between focal points or through actions taken independently in specific departments. Current oversight and management of this process appear to be quite loose.

The HLE team learned that the level of monitoring and reporting for the strategy was substantially ramped up to gather information for the mid-term review that was presented to the GB in March 2023, but the level of monitoring has fallen away significantly since then. The main tool for collecting data is an excel spreadsheet where designated focal points in HQ and the regions can add updates, listing activities that they interpret as fitting the deliverables, however loose the connection might be. The most recent update of this spreadsheet²³ was reviewed by the HLE team and it was apparent that only a limited number of focal points had made contributions.

Given the latitude available to report against the Strategy's quite broad deliverables, it seems unlikely that the report has captured a complete picture of what has been done in the areas that ILO sees as being linked to the strategy. Below we cover what has been reported under each Pillar, along with other relevant actions that have been reported elsewhere or brought to our attention, but the lack of detail on some limits our analysis of their effectiveness.

The HLE team was also told that PARTNERSHIPS convenes "dedicated meetings involving HQ and staff in the regions" to review progress, but the frequency of these is now sporadic at best and participation may be low (e.g., a representative indicated that she was the only person who attended a recent meeting). The HLE team was unable to obtain minutes or notes of these meetings.

It should be stressed that PARTNERSHIPS has been placed in something of an invidious position in the stewardship of the DC Strategy. While it plays an important role in resource mobilization and supporting DC project development, its span of control in DC does not extend beyond these functions. As we will see below, it has worked closely and effectively with other HQ units and ITCILO to drive some important initiatives that will enhance the ILO's DC work, but, as one informant told us "This is not a 'natural strategy' in terms of the way the ILO works". As much as the organization may have made progress in working as "One ILO", the silos have not disappeared and it is extremely difficult to instigate and sustain changes that span different units and offices, especially when the strategy itself is seen as being too vague or, in the eyes of some, irrelevant. As one informant said:



"It was difficult to expect PARDEV to be fully responsible, but 'someone' should have had a stronger coordination role. This was lacking. The plan was just the Excel sheet. People fell out. It was loose and unmanaged."

The new Priority Action Programmes were introduced partly in recognition of the fact that operational silos persist in the ILO and an improved enabling environment is needed to support the effective coordination and integration of policies and activities across different areas of work and to ensure the provision of consistent integrated support to constituents. An important lesson from the current Strategy is the need for a similar enabling framework to enable coordination and continuous improvement of DC systems and procedures.



Effectiveness of Actions under Pillar 1 - Services to Constituents:

Tools and guidelines were introduced to foster national ownership of

DWCPs and to support South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC).

DC frequently aligns with national priorities, but challenges remain
in ensuring this. Gaps persist in harnessing DC to promote social
dialogue and tripartism and contribute to the organizational needs of
constituents.

Background

The strategy states that services to ILO's tripartite constituents in its Member States are both an objective and a cross-cutting foundation. Actions under Pillar 1 aim to improve the responsiveness of development cooperation to Member States' decent work needs, determined based on social dialogue, ensuring country ownership, relevance, focus, sustainability and impact.

The strategy describes five areas intended to improve service delivery to constituents through development cooperation:

- ▶ Improve integration of Development Cooperation into the programme and budget.
- ► Focus services on organizational and institutional capacity development, implementing the ILO-wide strategy for institutional capacity development.
- ▶ Provide data and evidence-based services and examples of what works.
- ▶ Offer services to constituents on the financing for decent work.
- ▶ Promote South-South and triangular cooperation.

The Implementation Plan²⁴ reframed these under four Actions and ten Deliverables. The actions do not align clearly with the strategy narrative, somewhat complicating the assessment of progress towards this focus area.²⁵

Notably the strategy element, "improve integration of DC more effectively into the programme and budget", is not operationalised in actions and deliverables in the implementation plan; the emphasis is rather placed on *strengthening constituents' ownership of DWCPs, DC programmes and projects*. The extent of integration of development cooperation with the Programme and Budget is discussed earlier in this report in the section addressing **COHERENCE**. Another omission in the Implementation Plan is the *provision of data and evidence-based services to constituents*. Neither the Mid-Term Review nor the focal point reporting commented on this area, but the Programme

 $^{24\}quad ILO.\ Development\ Cooperation\ Strategy\ 2020-25:\ Implementation\ Plan\ (GB.341/POL/4).$

²⁵ The challenge for monitoring the results of the strategy implementation is that the spreadsheet reporting by the leads and focal points is uneven and is not consolidated in a cumulative fashion. Meanwhile, the mid-term review (MTR) does not refer to the specific deliverables of the Action Plan.

Implementation Report 2022-2023 discusses progress in the provision of ILO's knowledge services, especially in response to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A summary of the links between the strategy, the Implementation Plan and the reported actions is included in **Annex E**, based on the Mid-Term Review, focal point progress reports and the HLE surveys and informant interviews. Results are set out below under key themes.

STRENGTHENING CONSTITUENTS' OWNERSHIP OF DC

The HLE identified the following actions:

- ▶ Increased upfront support for designing project proposals, accompanied by a helpdesk and a collaborative design platform was introduced by PARDEV to enable ILO staff to better consult across the Office, including with workers' and employers' specialists.
- Constituents' participation in the governance of development cooperation is being supported via tripartite steering committees for DWCPs, and as of September 2022, 52 of 55 active DWCPs had established a tripartite steering committee. The number of countries without DWCPs is not included in the reporting, but the HLE noted that only a few countries in the Americas have DWCPs. The reason for this may be due to challenges obtaining tripartite buy-in for the DWCP process, or a lack of ILO human resources in-country. Where there is no DWCP, the ILO may plan its work according to national plans on labour issues, as staff in Uganda noted regarding the time that elapsed between DWCPs, as well as donor and UN planning processes.
- As part of the ILO Plan of Action on Social Dialogue and Tripartism for 2019-2023, the Office set up an internal advisory group to develop a user-friendly tool kit for mainstreaming social dialogue in DWCPs and projects. However, the HLE did not learn from key informants in the case study countries the extent to which the tool kit is being used. The Mid-Term Review notes that some DC projects focus on promoting and enhancing constituents' capacity for social dialogue, while others take a more mainstreamed approach, using social dialogue as a means of action.
- ▶ ACTRAV and ACT/EMP made efforts to create tools and guidelines to promote social partners' engagement. These include an internal note on DC Project Appraisal for Field Specialists (2020-2021) and an update of the DWCP Guide for Trade Unions released in 2023. In October 2021, as part of the ITCILO DC Learning Journey on project design, ACTRAV and ACT/EMP developed a joint podcast on consultation of the social partners in development cooperation project design.
- ▶ The Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (ROAP), through its Regional Programming Unit and with ITCILO support, developed a training course "Advancing Decent Work through Tripartite Engagement" for constituents and staff. To be delivered in 2024, this course is intended to produce a roadmap for constituents' tripartite engagement in all stages of the DWCP process and includes a guide for consultants and ILO staff to facilitate DWCP development and review.
- ▶ In Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) programme managers have been active in **enhancing approaches to engage** the constituents, and a training workshop is planned on results-based management for Paraguayan constituents, following the recent signing of Paraguay's Decent Work Plan.
- ► The 2022-2023 Programme Implementation Report highlights the role of the ITCILO in supporting tripartite engagement and social dialogue.²⁶

The cases studies also highlighted some country-level efforts to engage the constituents in developing DWCPs and projects:

For **Uganda**, the Dar es Salaam CO programme officers reported giving more attention to this objective and constituents reinforced this. As one labour ministry representative said:



"We were involved in the development of the DWCP III from the word go, and throughout the consultation reviews. This is our document."

The workers and employers' representatives highlighted their direct engagement in ILO projects, including PROSPECTS, and the child labour and forced labour projects, ACCCEL and CAPSA.²⁷

- ▶ In Bangladesh, constituents also reported a high-level of engagement. As the country approaches graduation from Least Developed Country (LDC) status, constituents see significant challenges ahead and the need to "future proof the country". Challenges covered by the DWCP include upgrading and diversifying the skills base to enhance production and productivity and adapting to technological change in manufacturing. Social Protection initiatives, including a new Employment Injury Scheme, implementing labour law amendments, fair and safe migration policies, and compliance with due diligence requirements all require attention
- ▶ **Uzbekistan's** first DWCP (2014-20) focused on institutional development as they were initially non-existent. This has continued under the current DWCP along with support for the ratification of key Conventions and the development of national legal frameworks. Some criticisms were levelled against the ILO in relation to project activities regarding insufficient engagement and transparency and recruitment of project staff.
- ▶ In Paraguay, the country has operated without a DWCP for some time, though in March 2024 a new framework agreement has been signed and is hoped to be a springboard for a new DWCP. For the time being, constituents engage in DC via a consensus process based on social dialogue which ensures that capacity building is incorporated into all projects and that projects are based on constituent needs.
- ▶ In Jordan, although a DWCP was drafted in 2022, it has not been signed and workers' representatives are unhappy that it has been put on hold. Similarly, the UNSDCF has not been signed. Jordan is currently without an ILO Country Coordinator, and this may have contributed to this. There was a view that the ILO DC programme has grown too big in Jordan and is not sticking to a coherent DWCP approach.

The HLE interviews also highlighted that **other national counterparts are sometimes more central** to development cooperation projects than the ILO's core constituents. In the case of PROSPECTS, ILO's largest DC project, senior managers observed that while every effort is made to bring all the core constituents on board, in some countries work with forcibly displaced persons and their host communities is not the natural sphere of labour ministries. In **Uganda**, for example, the project engages closely with the Office of the Prime Minister, which is the government focal point for refugee and host community issues, as well as with the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development (MGLSD) and the social partners. In many countries, ILO engagement with ministries of finance and planning is mandatory, while ministries of education and health are often the counterparts for projects related to skills and occupational safety and health work.

²⁷ PROSPECTS: Partnership for Improving Prospects for Forcibly Displaced Persons and Host Communities; ACCEL: Accelerating Action for the Elimination of Child Labour in Supply Chains in Africa; CAPSA: Capacity Strengthening of Governments to Address Child Labour, Forced Labour and Violations of Acceptable Conditions of Work in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Regarding alignment between DC work and constituent priorities, the **Bangladesh** case study and **Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific** interviews revealed that constituents' priorities do not always align with the ILO's mandate and policies, and gaining tripartite consensus is often complex and time consuming. The HLE constituent survey respondents highlighted that disparity between the positions of the tripartite partners sometimes delayed action toward national priorities. Nevertheless, the ILO's tripartite mandate and normative authority remains its unique comparative advantage. On the extent of ILO's promotion of tripartism and social dialogue through development cooperation, a senior ITUC informant stressed that **ILO's tripartite structure should** be more vigorously elevated in ILO communications with potential DC partners and in project design.



"Once a policy is agreed by the tripartite partners it has a very strong foundation".

The **HLE's meta-analysis of final evaluation reports** in the period found variable results regarding constituent engagement, with nearly 60 per cent of cases positively responding to national needs and involving constituents in the planning, design and implementation of interventions, but 40 per cent were only partly successful, revealing an area of weakness. There were instances where key-government and decision-making bodies were unwilling to promote progress towards project objectives, even when those objectives were seen as relevant.

From the **HLE surveys, constituents** were moderately positive regarding the relevance of ILO DC in their country, opportunities for involvement with the design phase and with ILO's adherence to tripartite processes:

- ▶ 49% believe ILO DC is largely aligned or completely aligned with the priorities and needs of their country, while 13% believe it is misaligned to a lesser or greater extent. (See Figure 2)
- Constituents' comments were generally positive regarding alignment of DC with their priorities, for example:



"I am sure all ILO development cooperation strategy will be very completely aligned with our country priorities such as what we have in our next DWCP".

"Toutes les interventions sont en alignées dans le respect des documents stratégiques du pays" (Translated by EVAL : "All interventions are aligned with the country's strategic documents".)

- ▶ While 57% of constituents answered that ILO's DC work was relevant or highly relevant in their country, a substantial 34% find the work only somewhat relevant or not relevant. Some countries were critical of the ILO's failure to source DC funds for national priorities. (See Figure 1)
- ▶ Regarding overall effectiveness of DC during the period, only 50% rated delivery as effective or highly effective. Countries highlighted in their comments some specific problems they faced, including the effect of the pandemic and lack of participatory planning.

- ▶ 50% of constituents believe that the ILO has promoted tripartism and social dialogue by involving the constituents in country-level UN planning, though a substantial proportion found such promotion lacking. (See Figure 3)
- > 73% of constituents were satisfied at varying levels with opportunities for inputs in project design, while 26% were dissatisfied to varying degrees with such opportunities. (See Figure 4)

To sum up, various actions were taken in the period to develop processes for deeper tripartite ownership and involvement, contributing to the ILO's foundational mandate of serving national needs. The effectiveness of the tools and guidelines produced could not yet be evaluated. The views of constituents suggest that ongoing action is needed to strengthen the constituents' engagement and ownership throughout development cooperation planning and project cycles.

FIGURE 1: RELEVANCE OF ILO DC - STAFF AND CONSTITUENT SURVEYS

How would you rate the relevance of ILO's development cooperation work in your country?

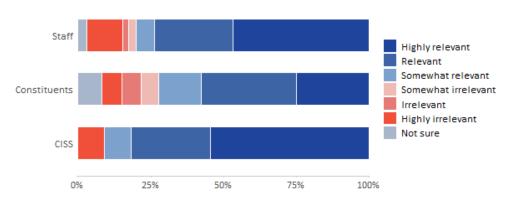


FIGURE 2: ALIGNMENT OF DC WITH PRIORITIES AND DWCP - STAFF AND CONSTITUENT SURVEYS

In general, how well aligned are ILO development cooperation projects with the priorities and needs of your country/region/policy area, including those set out in Decent Work Country Programmes (where such exists)?

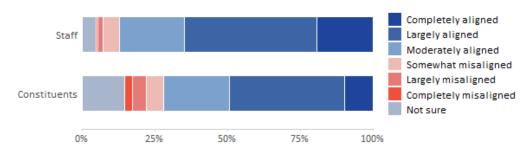


FIGURE 3: PROMOTION OF SOCIAL DIALOGUE IN COUNTRY LEVEL UN PLANNING AND PARTNERSHIPS – STAFF AND CONSTITUENT SURVEY

To what extent has the ILO promoted tripartism and social dialogue by involving constituents in country-level UN planning and partnerships?

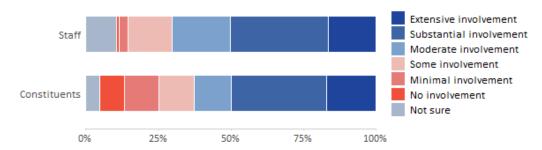
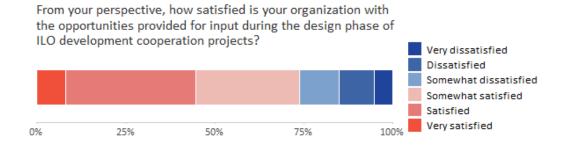


FIGURE 4: INVOLVEMENT OF CONSTITUENTS IN DC DESIGN - CONSTITUENT SURVEY



INTEGRATING DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION WITH THE PROGRAMME AND BUDGET

The strategy emphasises the integration of DWCPs, programmes and projects with the P&B given that DWCPs are intended to be anchored in national priorities, while the P&B reflects global priorities for a biennium. Project proposal design templates are required to state their alignment with the P&B and therefore all projects align in some way with one or more outcomes. However, the contribution of DC voluntary funding is not evenly distributed. This issue is discussed in more detail under Pillar 3.

Observing a disconnect between Development Cooperation and the P&B, the PROSPECTS project HQ managers also observed that there is no clear place to capture PROSPECTS' results in the P&B. Rather, this relatively new and expanding area of ILO's work, is spread across nearly every outcome in the P&B reporting. ²⁸ The staff recommended that a specific output should be allocated for work with forcibly displaced persons and host communities.

²⁸ Outcome 7 has 3 outputs relating to migration, but no specific outcome on support to forcibly displaced persons and refugees.

RESPONDING TO TRIPARTITE CONSTITUENTS' NEEDS FOR ORGANIZATIONAL & INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

The strategy aims to support the implementation of the **ILO-Wide Strategy for Institutional Capacity Development**, launched at the Governing Body meeting of March 2019.²⁹ This strategy emphasizes action at three levels - individual, organizational and the enabling environment level and the HLE makes the following findings on actions linked to the DC Strategy:

Guidance tools

The Mid-Term Review had little to say about progress in developing tools and guidance on the design of capacity building interventions. PARTNERSHIPS cited the **DC Learning Journey** on design, including a podcast on capacity development, as well as the Development Cooperation Internal Governance Manual.³⁰ The Governance Manual mostly describes broad approaches and does not introduce specific tools for the design of capacity development interventions.

More tangible evidence on guidance tool development is cited by ACTRAV and ACT/EMP in the focal point reporting. For example, ACTRAV developed a guidance note on the involvement of trade unions in the design and implementation of DC projects, launched on the ACTRAV website in late 2023. ACTRAV also developed a training module on the design and formulation of DC projects for trade unions in collaboration with ITCILO, completed in 2023.

ACT/EMP reported that it conducts **country-level needs assessments** on a biennial basis, followed by development of workplans. ACT/EMP also noted that the field specialists work with the country offices to develop country programme outcomes, considered to be suitable for the next programming cycle, and that their field staff make sure that DC projects mainstream and integrate capacity development needs of employers and workers.

The Office's **knowledge and learning services** also contribute to national constituent capacity. As stated in the 2022-2023 PIR, these services contributed to constituent capacity to address emerging challenges in the world of work, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. The extent to which DC projects served the development of knowledge to support policy dialogue and key decisions received a high rating in the HLE's meta-analysis of final project evaluations, with three-quarters of cases performing successfully, including 21 per cent with *Highly Successful* performance.

The HLE interviews and case studies provide a nuanced picture of the state of capacity building efforts across HQ and the field. The HLE found many examples of satisfaction of the social partners and governments regarding capacity building efforts. In **Uganda** the social partner and the government representatives expressed strong satisfaction with the capacity building support of the ILO through development cooperation, citing the opportunity they had received to undertake training at ITC Turin on international labour standards, and on responding to the comments of the Committee of Experts regarding child labour. In **Bangladesh**, development cooperation activities have supported capacity building, including through the Better Work Programme, the RMG Sector Programme and support for a Trade Union Learning Resource Centre. In case study countries with smaller DC portfolios such as **Uzbekistan** and **Paraguay**, capacity building through DC is focused on a narrower range of policy areas, especially social protection.

²⁹ ILO. <u>ILO-wide strategy for institutional capacity development</u> (GB.335/INS/9), 2019.

³⁰ ILO. Internal Governance Manual.

While the ILO cannot directly support membership campaigns of the social partners, the Office aims to support their organizational capacity. Few DC projects directly support organizational capacity for social dialogue, except for some efforts supported by funding partners such as the US, EU and Japan, among others. However, regarding workers' organizational capacity, numerous DC projects and programmes during the period addressed the need for organizing workers in the informal sector, for example in agriculture under the Vision Zero Fund, in domestic work, as well as among platform workers.

At the same time, the relative lack of ILO support to building organizational strength of employers' and workers' organisations was an area of dissatisfaction highlighted in HLE interviews and the HLE constituent survey. For example, an ACTRAV HQ officer expressed that much of the DC work in Central Asia and Eastern Europe is irrelevant to the needs of the workers' organizations, given that their membership base was rocked by the COVID-19 crisis and by the war in Ukraine. Their view was that the trade unions are overstretched by their DC responsibilities in **Uzbekistan** and that the projects are not relevant to trade union organizational needs in the region, especially in these times of crisis.

The evidence from the HLE Constituents' Survey suggests that the constituents are mostly satisfied with the ILO's capacity building services, but not overwhelmingly so:

- ▶ 44% agree or strongly agree that the capacity development efforts of DC projects are driven by the constituents, but a substantial proportion (25%) only 'somewhat agree'.
- ▶ 50% agree or strongly agree that the DC projects respond to the institutional development needs of constituents, while approximately 50% disagree or only somewhat agree.
- ► For both the above statements, government representatives strongly agreed or agreed to a higher extent than workers' organizations and employers' organizations (see Figure 5 and Figure 6).

FIGURE 5: CONSTITUENT OWNERSHIP OF ILO DC PROJECTS - CONSTITUENT SURVEY

The capacity development efforts of ILO development cooperation projects are usually owned and driven by the constituents

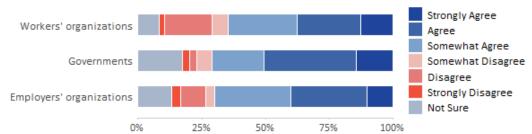
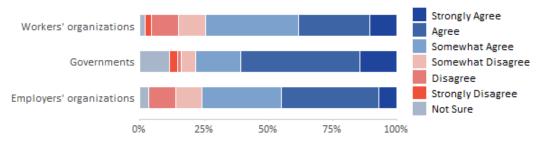


FIGURE 6: RESPONSIVENESS TO INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS - CONSTITUENT SURVEY

ILO development cooperation projects and programmes respond to the identified institutional development needs of constituents



Updated ILO evaluation methodologies

EVAL published a new **Guidance Note on Evaluation of Capacity Development** in ILO Programmes and Projects, to complement the ILO Policy Guidelines for Results-Based Evaluation. The ILO-wide strategy for institutional capacity development (2019) emphasizes that "capacity development is one of the core means of action to achieve decent work and further social justice." EVAL's guidance note aims to equip evaluators with knowledge and recommendations for evaluating capacity development in the ILO's work. While primarily intended for evaluators, the guidance note is also beneficial for programmes and project designers, constituents and partners that are involved kin capacity development. In parallel, a complementary companion to the guidance note is under development to support practical implementation of the evaluation of capacity development (to be completed in 2024).

ENGAGING CONSTITUENTS IN UN PROGRAMMING

Various support tools have been developed to integrate the Decent Work Agenda in UN processes. Resources and training include the **Trade Union Reference Manual** on UN Sustainable Development Cooperation and the Decent Work Agenda held in 2022; a trade union **e-learning course on the UNSCDF** and the Decent Work Agenda, in collaboration with the ITCILO; **a joint UN package on human rights training**, including international labour standards, and the ILO contribution to the **UN Inter-Agency Common Learning Package** on human rights based approach, gender equality and leaving no one behind.

ACTRAV reported various other tools and capacity building over the period included **technical support and capacity building activities on UNSDCFs** delivered to trade unions in 20 countries in the five ILO regions, development of a booklet on **lessons learned and emerging good practices of trade unions'** engagement in UNSDCFs, and **development and delivery of workers academies on SDGs in 2024**. One global academy and five (5) regional workers' academies on SDGs are being implemented by ACTRAV ITCILO in 2024.

Evidence from the field studies on constituents' engagement in UN processes is mixed. In **Uganda** for example, UN representative interviews suggest that ILO brings constituents' perspectives to the table, though they do not participate in UNCT meetings directly. In **Bangladesh**, workers' representatives indicated that there was "some, but not much" engagement with UN processes including briefings on SDGs, UN guidelines, as well as information on issues like due diligence requirements, climate change, and business and human rights. As one representative said:



"All these things are coming and are important, but in Bangladesh we're still fighting for the basics like job security, OSH and social protection."

As reported in the MTR, regional ILO initiatives aimed to **increase the awareness of UN resident coordinators and UN country teams** regarding social partners' engagement in Common Country Analysis and United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSCDF) processes. UN resident coordinators and UN country teams have a new **self-assessment tool** to improve the integration of human rights, including international labour standards and ILO supervisory body comments in Common Country Assessments (CCAs) and UNSCDFs. The ILO also supports the preparation of **normative stocktaking reports** setting out the relevance of standards and supervisory body comments for national development priorities. The focal point reporting adds examples from each of the regions in which Regional Offices have organised dialogues with

Country Office directors and RCs on ILO's normative work and tripartism. For example, in RO Europe, organized a dialogue with the help of NORMES, ACTRAV and ACT/EMP in 2021, while RO for the Americas is developing a "catalogue" to provide orientation to RCs on how to include decent work principles in their daily work.

In the May 2024 update, ROAP notes that ILO has used the DWCP as one of the tools to strengthen awareness of the UNRCO and peer agencies in the UNCT on the ILO's comparative advantage and DW agenda. ILO in the Americas notes that ILO has played an active role in a Peer Support Group, co-leading the route-map for the CCA in Paraguay and numerous other collaborations to promote the decent work agenda and tripartism among UN efforts.

The HLE country case studies suggest that Resident Coordinators and other UN partners are increasingly aware of the ILO's comparative advantage. In **Uganda**, the UNRCO commented on the ILO's strong efforts to involve constituents. In **Bangladesh**, a representative of the UNRCO highlighted the Office's "very good experience" working with the ILO, saying that "Decent Work is a cross-cutting concern" and that the ILO's expertise in labour rights, skills, formalisation, and migration issues are indispensable.

Regarding technical assistance in relevant policy areas, the focal point reporting highlights several examples of actions in Asia and the Pacific and in the LAC region. These include **briefings for Employers and Workers organizations** from 11 Pacific Island countries, to help them to contribute effectively during the UNSDCF development process. CO Hanoi has organized a series of consultations to **engage the constituents in the UN One Strategic Plan** implementation for 2022-2026, and promotion of social partners' engagement in the UN system reform and the UNSCDF.

The LAC region has been active in supporting events in 2023 and 2024 to **engage trade unions in the SDG Acceleration Decade**, including preparation for the 2024 ECLAC Forum on Sustainable Development.

SUPPORTING CONSTITUENTS TO ENGAGE IN SOUTH-SOUTH AND TRIANGULAR COOPERATION

ILO demonstrated its ongoing commitment to supporting constituents to engage in **South-South and South-South Triangular Cooperation** during the evaluation period, following the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Strategy 2012-2017 adopted by the Governing Body in March 2012. At the March 2018 meeting of the ILC, the Office presented the achievements of the 2012-2017 strategy and requested the Governing Body to accelerate SSTC in the new Development Cooperation strategy.

The DC Strategy for 2020-2025 elevates this commitment, stating that as a follow-up to the Second High-Level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (BAPA+40)³¹ the ILO intended to step up normative and social dialogue as a foundation of SSC. The strategy implementation plan sets out tangible deliverables toward increasing South-South and Triangular Cooperation, all of which have been met according to the focal point reporting. The period under evaluation has seen an acceleration of ILO's support to South-South and South-South Triangular Cooperation, under the guidance of Emerging and Special Partnerships Unit (EPSU). In March 2019, ILO was an active contributor to the Buenos Aires Plan of Action+40 Conference.³²

³¹ United Nations General Assembly. Buenos Aires outcome document of the second high level United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation (A/RES/73/291), 2019.

³² The Buenos Aires Plan of Action on South-South Cooperation was established at a conference of global south governments in 1979.

The ESPU provides guidance and tools to the Office on promoting SSC and SSTC, including the management of the South-South Meeting Point on SSC, and advocates ILO principles in collaboration with the UN Office of South-South Cooperation. The ILO's South-South Meeting Point dedicated to interaction and exchange on SSTC, launched in 2016 with the support of PARDEV and ILO Turin in the context of the first ILO academy on South-South and Triangular Cooperation, continues to be an active virtual space.³³

New ILO partnerships to promote the SSC BAPA+40 principles are cited in the strategy reporting. In 2022-2023 biennium, the ILO launched over **70 South-South and Triangular Cooperation projects covering over 80 countries** and additional global activities. These initiatives were mainly funded by the BRICS countries, especially Brazil and China, as well as Regular Budget support to development cooperation (RBTC) targeting constituents' capacity development. During the COVID-19 crisis the projects were adapted in format and content and included innovative virtual components. These included a project with All-China Federation of Trade Unions to enhance the institutional capacities of trade unions in Asia and The Pacific, with representatives from 25 countries in the context of challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, a renewed partnership with G7 was re-launched during the Global South-South Development Expo.

Through the HLE case studies and annual evaluation reports the HLE learned of several examples of south-south initiatives within XBDC funded projects. Among these, the US-funded "Strengthening Capacity of Governments to Address Child labour, Forced Labour and Violations of Acceptable Conditions of Work in Sub-Saharan Africa (CAPSA), which supports the East African Community Secretariat to address these issues through assistance towards a regional social protection policy. Also in the East African region, the ACCEL project has facilitated exchange visits between the constituents of Rwanda, Kenya and Uganda to study efforts to eliminate child labour in the coffee and tea supply chains.

Looking forward, in the 2024-2025 biennium, 14 projects are being initiated in ILO HQ and the regions. These cover the four Action Programmes and gender equity. In the Americas, CINTERFOR initiated work on the care economy and peer learning in 2024, and the Regional Initiative for the Americas is engaging in SSTC. In Asia and the Pacific, two initiatives are planned, including an interregional Technical Forum for Arab States and the Pacific for experience sharing and also improving labour market statistics to reflect climate change impact on labour market outcomes.

In Africa, preparation is underway for two new initiatives, including South-South cooperation between Rwanda, Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau and Cabo Verde, to facilitate transition from the informal to the formal economy through extension of social protection to informal economy workers, in coordination with the Action Programme on Formalisation. The second proposal covers SSTC between Madagascar, Kenya and France to promote decent work in the horticulture value chain. ITCILO initiatives address current global challenges impacting in the world of work including establishing the "Future of Work" South-South and Triangular University Network and South-South collaboration on climate change, Human Mobility and Just transitions.

Several new approaches, methodologies and tools for constituents and staff were developed for better results and sustainability of South-South Cooperation. These include a DC Learning Journey on SSTC for ILO staff made available. ILO/CINTERFOR developed a series of "Innovative Collaboration Projects" intended to engage vocational training institutions across the region, under a co-financing project, and advanced a Regional Observatory on Vocational Training. In 2024, the ESPU supported the Action Programmes to integrate SSCTC through new tools and helped launch the ILS Normative Approaches - Peer Learning Space.

³³ The "South-South Meeting Point" is an interactive virtual space where people from different countries can meet, engage, exchange and cooperate within the approach of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) towards the advancement of the ILO agenda and the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals. In 2018, the ILO Governing Body paper on South-South and triangular cooperation and decent work (GB.332/POL/4) mentions the South-South Meeting Point as an implementation component of ILO SSTC strategy 2012-17 and defines it as a knowledge management tool which provides access to a wealth of knowledge and resources related to SSTC and decent work.

Reporting on the strategy suggests that the **Deliverable 1.4.3 target of 20 SSC capacity development initiatives with and for ILO constituents in cooperation with ILO-ITC** was exceeded.³⁴ Following the UN Office for South-South Cooperation inter-agency mechanism recommendations (2021) and the follow-up to the UN BAPA+40 UN Conference on SSC, a publication on global and regional good practices on SSTC was launched by the ILO in 2022.³⁵ This publication documents good practices in SSTC from all regions, that demonstrate results and sustainability.

During the period the ILO was active in contributing to integration of ILO tripartite partners' experience into the UN inter-agency mechanism for policy orientation (Deliverable 1.4.4). This included active involvement in developing the UN "South-South Galaxy",36 support to preparation of guidelines on SSTC for national contexts, and supporting the SG Report on SSTC 2024, the Guidance on SSTC for resident coordinators as well as training sessions and methodologies.

RELEVANT FINDINGS FROM THE ILO EVAL DECENT WORK RESULTS META-STUDY OF EVALUATIONS

To provide an insight into the overall effectiveness of Pillar 1 of the Strategy, the HLE reviewed the findings of an annual EVAL meta-study of over 200 Decent Work performance appraisals of final independent project evaluations conducted between 2019 and 202337. Key findings were:

- ► Overall, there was good alignment of project objectives with P&B Outcomes, Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) priorities and CPOs, with over three-quarters of reports addressing these criteria obtaining successful and very successful ratings.
- Results were more variable with regards to constituent support, with nearly 60 per cent of cases positively responding to national needs and successfully involving constituents in the planning, design and implementation of interventions. Nevertheless, partly successful performance was noted in 40 per cent of cases, revealing an area of relative weakness. Interventions with poor performance failed to involve different constituent groups in the project cycle, with certain groups being completely excluded from the process. There were instances where key governmental and decision-making bodies were uninterested or unwilling to make progress towards project objectives or to be involved in projects, even when project objectives were seen as relevant. In several cases, there was limited interest and demand overall for the project, with projects being pushed by donors, or countries requesting ILO assistance due to donor requirements.
- ▶ Capacity-building was an area of strong performance (83 % successful), revealing the ILO's ability to successfully centre services on organizational and institutional capacity development. Similarly, the development of knowledge to support policy dialogue and key decisions obtained good ratings, with three quarters of cases performing successfully, including 21 per cent with Highly Successful performance, reflecting ILO's effectiveness in providing data and evidence-based services and examples of what works. (Figure 7 below sets out the results linked to Pillar 1.)

³⁴ Note - The focal point reporting presents the same information under both deliverables 1.4.1 and 1.4.3.

³⁵ ILO. Global and Regional Good Practices in SSTC: Promoting South-South and Triangular Cooperation, 2022.

³⁶ The South-South Galaxy is a UN knowledge brokering and sharing platform.

³⁷ Criteria used for the analysis of Pillar 1 were: Link between objectives and P&B; Link between objectives and DWCP/CPOs; Constituent Support; Capacity-building; and Knowledge development.

FIGURE 7: EVALUATION META-STUDY - PERFORMANCE AGAINST CRITERIA LINKED WITH PILLAR 1



Overall effectiveness of actions taken under Pillar 1

- ▶ Pillar 1 of the strategy is built upon several existing ILO strategies and plans, including the ILO-Wide Strategy for Institutional Capacity Development, 2019; the ILO Plan of Action on Social Dialogue and Tripartism 2019-2023; and the South-South and Triangular Cooperation Strategy 2012-2017. In this sense the strategy has focused attention of the Office and action on these continuing areas of concern and priority.
- ▶ During the period ILO, both centrally and across the regions, launched many initiatives to improve services to its three constituent groups. Among the action areas, South-South and Triangular Cooperation emerged as a growing area of ILO support, highly relevant in the face of global social justice and climate change challenges. The evidence points to the increasing engagement of the constituents in ILO DC planning and implementation, and in their participation in UN planning processes.
- Overall, DC programming responded well to national constituents' agendas. Nevertheless, shortfalls continue in the extent to which it achieves an optimal balance between national constituents' priorities and funding partner interests.
- ▶ These gaps arise from the predominance of centralised programming, insufficient attention to social partners' organizational needs to engage in social dialogue, and uneven commitments to DWCPs and projects among workers, employers and governments.





EFFECTIVENESS OF ACTIONS UNDER PILLAR 2 – PARTNERSHIPS FOR POLICY COHERENCE:

In the period of the DC strategy, the ILO maintained its existing trajectory in promoting decent work through better coordination of policy action though evidence of the value added by the strategy's actions is not yet clear. The Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection and for Just Transitions and the Global Coalition for Social Justice hold promise for improved coherence. While the Global Coalition for Social Justice is in its infancy, the Global Accelerator has already made progress in terms of establishing and consolidating its management, administrative and reporting structures, and partnership approaches. Preparations, such as "roadmaps," have also commenced for the participation of volunteer "pathfinder" countries, while results at this level are anticipated at a later stage.

The objective of Pillar 2 is to promote decent work through coordinated policy actions, supported by sufficient capacities and financing. The Strategy points out that this involves both policy, programmatic, and budgetary coherence within the ILO and, externally, collaboration between the ILO and its constituents, the UN development system, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), enterprises, development partners, and other government ministries. The Strategy highlights the opportunities offered by SDG 8 to engage with various actors to advance decent work objectives through DC as well as the challenges in securing the necessary public, private, domestic and international financial flows to do this.

The Strategy sets out five areas under this pillar:

- Support National Priority-Setting on Decent Work
- ► Facilitate Policy Coherence Among Development Partners
- ▶ Leverage Financing Through Policy Coherence
- ▶ Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Policy Coherence
- ▶ Engaging with the Private Sector for Policy Coherence.

The Implementation Plan reframes these under four key actions and eight deliverables. The first two areas of the Strategy had no direct corresponding actions or deliverables in the Implementation Plan, though elements were included in the Pillar's key actions and under other Pillars. A summary of the links between the strategy, the Implementation Plan and the reported actions is included in **Annex D.**

LEVERAGING FINANCING THROUGH POLICY COHERENCE

Increasing collaboration with IFIs: The Mid-Term Review reported new collaboration with International Monetary Fund (IMF) on social protection, with the African Development Bank (AfDB) on including a "jobs marker" for investments, and agreements with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on the promotion of social protection and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. There was also collaboration with Development Bank of Latin America on skills systems and an MOU with Islamic Development Bank to facilitate cooperation across a range of ILO programme areas.

Capacity development of constituents to engage in financing initiatives: Reported actions included research into new financing strategies that would include constituents' perspectives, expanded ITCILO training on financing for decent work, and recent additional training and webinars. The HLE was unable to determine the reach and results of these initiatives. Constituent survey results suggest that some progress has been made.

For national governments, the reports made available to the HLE provided no details of specific activities, though the work of the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions is relevant. The Global Accelerator initiative is promising for advancing integrated policy solutions and the financing agenda in collaboration with constituents, the UN, the World Bank, other IFIs, and multi-bilateral partners. Case Study 3 provides an overview of the features and progress of the Global Accelerator to date and progress in two of the HLE's case study countries is discussed in Case Study 1 – Paraguay and Case Study 2 - Uzbekistan.³⁸ The GA is widely presented as an important initiative, illustrating the ILO's leadership role on decent jobs and social protection within the UN system and beyond. It provides one of the main avenues to implementing the Jobs and Social Protection transition. Under the GA, the ILO has been able to enhance collaboration with other UN agencies, the World Bank and IFIs, which allows the ILO to further mainstream International Labour Standards beyond its current sphere of operations and influence. Funding commitments coming from global resource mobilization efforts are currently significantly below the necessary amounts set out in the GA's implementation strategy. Since the bulk of the financing needed to implement integrated approaches at country level is expected to be mobilized domestically, results are likely to be influenced by the varying financing capabilities among pathfinder countries³⁹. Funding commitments remain below the amounts mentioned during preparation for launching the initiative. Given these limitations, it is too early to conclude that the GA will contribute to major development results within the ILO's sphere of operations and influence.

The HLE was not given any reports on the third deliverable in this area, which related to developing an "approach and tools" to support constituents to assess opportunities and risks when considering innovative finance mechanisms.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER PARTNERSHIPS FOR POLICY COHERENCE

Reported results included engagement by ILO and its constituents in various partnerships covering different policy areas and decent work themes as well as with ASEAN and the African Union. Many of these partnerships were established groups already focused on advancing policy in areas of interest to the ILO⁴⁰ and so can be considered as partnerships where policy coherence was already strong. These partnerships were reported to have created new tools and launched new initiatives in social protection, climate action, and child labour. From a regional perspective, initiatives were reported in the Americas promoting inter-agency cooperation and South-South & Triangular Cooperation (producing survey tools and e-learning materials) and in Africa supporting constituent capacity to integrate DWCPs into regional frameworks (through ICTILO training).

It might be expected that improved policy coherence would lead to an increase in the number of **joint or multiple implementation partnerships**. Some evidence in this area is provided by the number of new proposals passing through the ILO project appraisal system. Trends on this aspect have been reported in a PARTNERSHIPS analysis⁴¹ covering initiatives up to 2023.

³⁸ Case studies are available upon request.

³⁹ According to the first Progress Report of the GA, ILO is selected to be a lead agency in 13 out of the 15 proposals, which have been submitted for the 1st funding round, and 7 out of the 12 proposals which have been submitted through the M-GA track, which includes the participation of the World Bank.

⁴⁰ For example, the Global Partnership for Universal Social Protection to Achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (USP2030), the Social Protection Inter-Agency Cooperation Board, Alliance 8.7, and the Climate Action for Jobs Initiative

⁴¹ Appraisals in 2023. Figures, trends and findings on design and appraisal of ILO development cooperation project proposals. PARTNERSHIPS/Development Cooperation and Management Support Unit. February 2024.

The ILO continued to develop joint programmes with other UN agencies, maintaining stability in 2023 with 43 proposals, similar to the 44 in 2022. Over half of these proposals were approved, leading to 23 active programmes, distributed as follows:

Asia and the Pacific: 6 programmes

Americas and Global: 5 programmes each

► Africa: 4 programmes

► Europe and Central Asia: 2 programmes

Arab States: 1 programme

Stability of UN Joint Programmes: Pending funding decisions affect the remaining half of the proposals. Notable partnerships include 20 proposals with the United Nations Development Programme, and others with the World Food Programme and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, focusing on improving livelihoods and employment opportunities. Since the DC Strategy places considerable emphasis on UN partnerships, the lack of an increase in this area suggests low effectiveness. However, some ILO stakeholders with recent experience of UN Joint Programmes reported that the additional funding access and policy coherence they provide are often outweighed by their high transaction costs, leading to a reluctance to participate in new initiatives. This may have compromised the increase in this area intended by the Strategy.

Looking forward, a recent UN Joint Funding Round on Decent Jobs and Social Protection launched under the Global Accelerator has the potential to grow such partnerships⁴² and highlights the role the Global Accelerator can play in facilitating ILO involvement in joint programming.

Decrease in Multi-Partner Programming: There has been a trending decline in the number of proposals funded by multiple partners since 2021:

2021: 11 proposals

2022: 8 proposals

▶ 2023: 5 proposals.



Since multi-partner programmes are advocated in the DC Strategy, again in this specific area it appears to have been ineffective.

While the DC Strategy advocates **joint and multi-partner programmes** as important to confirm and expand ILO's role in global development cooperation, some stakeholders who have participated in such endeavours reported negative experiences to the HLE team. In some cases of either modality, it appeared that the gain in coherence was outweighed by the subdivision of available funds, with ILO often receiving a share, which did not reflect the effort and resources its teams had contributed to the programming process. Multi-partner programmes have acquired a reputation as being challenging in terms of resolving incompatible procedures and reporting systems across partner agencies. The PROSPECTS case study⁴³, presents a more optimistic perspective about the potential of ILO's participation in multilateral partnerships in the humanitarian-development nexus, as presented in **Box 3** below.

⁴² The ILO has been assigned as lead agency in 13 of the 15 proposals submitted in the first round and 7 out of the 12 proposals through the "M-GA" between the UN and the World Bank.

⁴³ Full case study available upon request.

Box 3: Lessons from PROSPECTS on Multilateral Partnerships

PROSPECTS (*Partnerships for Improving Prospects for Forcibly Displaced Persons and Host communities*), an initiative supported by the Netherlands government, provides a model of ILO collaboration with multilateral partners.⁴⁴ PROSPECTS partners are the ILO, UNICEF, UNHCR, the World Bank and the International Finance Corporation (IFC). The project works in Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda. With a funding amount of approximately US\$270 million over an exploratory phase (2018-2019) and two phases of programme implementation (2019 – 2027), it is ILO's largest DC project.

PROSPECTS embodies the shift from a predominantly short-term humanitarian response to the needs of FDPs and host communities, to a longer-term social and economic development responses. The initiative is intended to catalyze new approaches, demonstrating models that can be taken to scale, and bring the comparative strengths of humanitarian and development actors together in the spirit of the *New Way of Working*, promoted at the World Humanitarian Summit, of 2016.⁴⁵

The case study found that UN agency partnerships have been gaining strength. Examples of ILO and UNICEF collaborations include partnership to implement job clubs in Jordan, better employment pathways for young people in Iraq, linking life skills training and management opportunities in the Employment Intensive Investment Programme, and in Uganda, jointly developing the *Integrated Upshift Programme*, blending ILO's SIYB package with UNICEF's soft skills training for young entrepreneurs. Collaboration with UNHCR includes facilitation of ILO's access to Ugandan refugee settlements and to the UNHCR database to help inform the interventions: and ILO imparts decent work, skills and livelihoods expertise in the programmes for displaced people and host communities.

Partner agency representatives in Uganda highlighted the positive learning and adjustment process involved, as well as the different implementation modalities to be overcome, including the perception that ILO's projectized approach does not lend itself well to a long-term partnership approach.

The engagement of the WB and the IFC has not yet met expectations, stemming from the very different scales and levels at which they work. In a recent positive development, however, ILO and the WB have agreed to focus on opportunities to work together in Uganda, Kenya and Jordan. The management team observed that it is crucial to build collaboration with these institutions at both central and field level.

PROSPECTS is strengthening ILO's place among global actors in addressing the needs of Forcibly Displaced Persons, enabling its capacity to advocate for decent work and international labour standards among the key actors. The key lessons emerging are the value of ILO pursuing collaborative action in this sphere, and the length of time required to nurture such partnerships.



⁴⁴ ILO's involvement in support of forcibly displaced persons and their host communities is grounded in ILO Recommendation No. 205, concerning Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience, and ILO Guiding Principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market of 2016.

⁴⁵ United Nations: https://www.un.org/jsc/content/new-way-working

The **Global Coalition for Social Justice** has potential to approach multi-stakeholder partnerships in a different way. Led by the DG and developed in consultation with ILO constituents, the Coalition was endorsed by the GB in November 2023. It aims to bring together governments, employers' and workers' organizations, international institutions, enterprises, non-governmental organizations, and academic institutions to generate political commitments, investments and concrete actions that support social justice. The Coalition is still in its infancy, only having its inaugural forum on 13 June 2024, and innovative partnership implementation arrangements may be needed to maximise the potential of the initiative and build on the good will it creates. As one senior ILO manager explained:



"The approach is about improving connections and not doing things separately. Once connected, it allows us to explore what else we can do together – including mobilizing resources together."

ENGAGING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR FOR POLICY COHERENCE:

Whereas the Strategy specifically focused on the private sector, the Implementation Plan's actions and deliverables were broader and sought to increase collaboration with both the private sector and "other non-State actors" (such as NGOs or universities) in pursuit of the ILO's decent work objectives. Reported actions were however focused on the private sector. The HLE's field visits revealed many examples of involvement with NGOs (e.g., close collaboration with BRACS in Bangladesh) and their exclusion might reflect the limited reach of the Strategy's monitoring arrangements.

References were made in the reports to cooperation in the **textile and food supply chains** in Africa and Asia and growth in membership of the ILO Global Business & Disability Network. Europe reported work with the chocolate manufacturer, **Ferrero**, to address decent work deficits in hazelnut production. In Africa, work was done with **ENI** to address OSH issues in agribusinesses linked to biofuels, and in Latin America with **Nestlé** to advance youth employment and skills. These have the potential effect of advancing decent work objectives through these business-led initiatives.

The HLE learned from interviews that **Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) were continuing to present some challenges** to the ILO. Sometimes, concerns over past or present violations of labour standards lead to proposals being rejected, though as one representative of PARTNERSHIPS pointed out, this can sometimes create a dilemma: "Do you block the company because of historical non-compliance, or do you use the partnership to engage with it to promote greater compliance?"

Others said that the ILO lacks expertise in engaging with the private sector and understanding its way of thinking: "We need to acknowledge that we don't know everything". Workers' representatives expressed strong reservations about companies sometimes using such partnerships as a means of "social or green washing". They wanted to see a clearer framework in place to advance PPPs in the future, perhaps involving a commitment to the principles of the MNE Declaration or at least a dialogue, facilitated by the ILO, with the appropriate union.

There are also some historical concerns about the effectiveness of some PPPs. The 2018 HLE of PPPs found that "While PPPs generally delivered intended outputs to a high standard, effectiveness is often measured in terms of results in such areas as immediate partner or beneficiary satisfaction, rather than broader impact at the national or sectoral level." PARTNERSHIPS said that recommendations from this HLE had been advanced, but progress with PPPs remained frustratingly slow.

The HLE conducted interviews with two current ILO PPPs. **Box 4** highlights some key observations made about their experience in working with the ILO, including their perceptions of strengths and challenges as well as their views on what the ILO should consider in its future work with private sectors partners.

Box 4: Observations made by ILO Partners in PPPs

Strengths of working wit	h the ILO
Unique Role:	Ability to convene global players and provide neutral assessments.
Broad Reach:	Extensive connections with Government Ministries and stakeholders.
Neutrality:	A neutral entity that can bring together diverse players.
Policy Influencer:	Policy-level discussions and diagnostics of industry challenges.
Comprehensive Approach:	Inclusive and collaborative, leveraging ILO's policy and cooperation strengths. Works closely with multiple stakeholders.
Challenges of working wi	ith the ILO
Implementation Speed:	Can be slow to start but performs well once initiated.
Communication:	Needs to be more vocal about its supply chain efforts.
Sustainability:	Private partners aim for long-term sustainability, hoping to eventually step back.
Future Focus:	Private partners state they need better understanding of the real economic role and impact of child labour, to help ensure farmers make a living income.
Response to Change:	Slow to adapt to changing situations. Needs to be more agile.
Complexity:	Difficulty navigating ILO's vast structure.
Future considerations	
Improve Speed:	Streamline contract processes and adapt more quickly to changing situations on the ground.
Enhance Communication:	Be more vocal about achievements and ongoing efforts, especially in supply chains, to attract more stakeholders.
Focus on Sustainability:	Develop models that allow for long-term sustainability, enabling corporate partners to eventually reduce direct involvement.
Leverage Unique Position:	Utilize ILO's extensive reach and neutrality to bring together diverse stakeholders for comprehensive solutions.
Adapt to Emerging Issues:	Address the growing impact of artificial intelligence and other technological advancements on the labour market.
Simplify Navigation:	Provide clear guidance for partners to navigate ILO's complex structure effectively.
Informal Collaboration:	Foster informal idea exchanges and pilot new initiatives alongside formal processes to encourage innovation with PPPs.

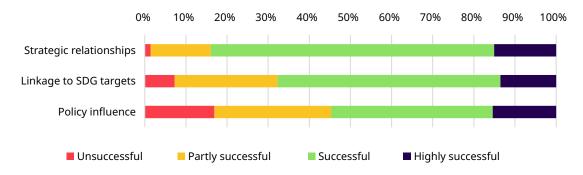


RELEVANT FINDINGS FROM THE DECENT WORK RESULTS META-STUDY OF EVALUATIONS

To provide an insight into the overall effectiveness of Pillar 2 of the Strategy, the HLE reviewed the findings of a meta-study of over 200 Decent Work performance appraisals of final independent project evaluations conducted between 2019 and 2023⁴⁶. Key findings were:

- ▶ ILO interventions effectively built and leveraged **key relationships** with constituent groups and organizations such as the UN, donors, and other relevant institutions or entities, with over 80 per cent of successful ratings. In 15 per cent of cases, these relationships were anchored in stable, long-term, mutually beneficial collaborations. In some cases, while partnerships and collaborations were implemented, some relations were precarious, leading to lower ratings.
- In two-thirds of cases, there was evidence of complementarities and coordination between ILO projects and other initiatives linked under a common UN system of work, and project objectives were linked to SDG targets at strategic and operational levels. Projects with partly successful performance often faced challenges in coordination with other agencies, or missed opportunities to create synergies, leading to duplication of efforts.
- ▶ Results were variable, but positive overall, regarding the extent to which ILO projects supported stakeholders to influence and engage in policy work, with over half of cases having performed well, including 15 per cent with highly successful ratings. Successful projects engaged with policymakers at all levels, combining advocacy-oriented activities and policy work with targeted capacity-building initiatives, using a multi-dimensional approach. Poor performance was due to various reasons, including lack of interest from policymakers, limited involvement of key stakeholders, political insecurity, weak institutional capacity, and inefficient labour markets; in some instances, there were elements in action plans that could have led to policy influence, yet these were not implemented/completed. (Figure 8 below sets out the results linked to Pillar 2.)

FIGURE 8: EVALUATION META-STUDY - PERFORMANCE AGAINST CRITERIA LINKED WITH PILLAR 2



RELEVANT FINDINGS FROM THE STAFF AND CONSTITUENT SURVEYS

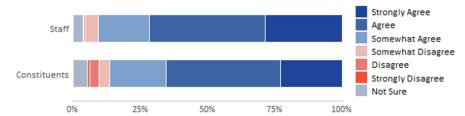
The HLE surveyed staff and constituents and asked them to indicate the extent of their agreement with a number of statements related to the ILO's efforts to promote policy coherence through partnerships. Key findings were:

▶ The survey results indicate that a majority of staff and constituents believe the ILO effectively leverages its participation in global, regional, and national partnerships and networks to advance the promotion of decent work and to capitalize on its comparative advantage. 72 per cent of staff and 65.5 per cent of constituents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "The ILO effectively promotes decent work and the ILO's comparative advantage in global partnerships and networks at global, regional and country level." Another 18.9 per cent of staff and 20.9 per cent of constituents somewhat agreed with this statement (see **Figure 9**).

⁴⁶ Criteria used for the analysis of Pillar 2 were: Strategic relationships, linkages to SDG targets and cooperation with UN, Policy influence.

FIGURE 9: STAFF AND CONSTITUENTS SURVEY: PARTNERSHIPS FOR POLICY COHERENCE

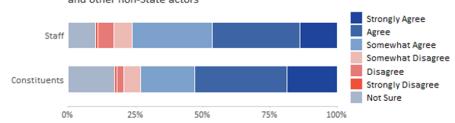
The ILO effectively promotes Decent Work and its comparative advantage in global partnerships, alliances and networks at global, regional and country level



▶ To a lesser extent, staff and constituents also thought the ILO has Increased collaboration with private sector and other non-State actors. 46.5 per cent of staff and 53.1 per cent of constituents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "The ILO has increased its collaboration with the private sector and other non-State actors." Another 30 per cent of staff and 20 per cent of constituents somewhat agreed (see **Figure 10**).

FIGURE 10: STAFF AND CONSTITUENTS SURVEY: PARTNERSHIPS FOR POLICY COHERENCE

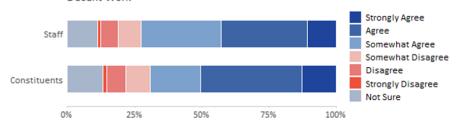
The ILO has increased its collaboration with the private sector and other non-State actors



▶ Fewer staff and constituents believed that that the ILO had developed constituents' capacity to engaged in financial initiatives promoting decent work. 42.9 per cent of staff and 50.3 per cent of constituents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "The ILO has developed constituents' capacities and fostered their engagement with development actors within financing initiatives/frameworks that promote Decent Work." Another 29.6 per cent of staff and 18.9 per cent of constituents somewhat agreed with this statement (see **Figure 11**).

FIGURE 11: STAFF AND CONSTITUENTS SURVEY: PARTNERSHIPS FOR POLICY COHERENCE

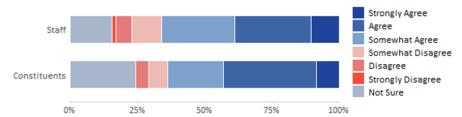
The ILO has developed constituents' capacities and fostered their engagement with development actors within financing initiatives/frameworks that promote Decent Work



▶ Fewer staff and constituents also thought the ILO has Increased collaboration with IFIs. 39 per cent of staff and 43 per cent of constituents either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "The ILO has increased its collaboration with international financial institutions (e.g., the World Bank, regional development banks) to enhance policy coherence and finance DW outcomes at country level". Another 27.2 per cent of staff and 20.8 per cent of constituents somewhat agreed with this statement (see Figure 12).

FIGURE 12: STAFF AND CONSTITUENTS SURVEY: PARTNERSHIPS FOR POLICY COHERENCE

The ILO has increased its collaboration with international financial institutions (e.g., the World Bank, regional development banks) to enhance policy coherence and finance Decent Work outcomes at country level



▶ Overall effectiveness of actions taken under Pillar 2

The partnership coherence issues addressed under Pillar 2 are not new either to international development or to the ILO. A broad range of partnership initiatives were already underway or completed before adoption of the DC Strategy and a fully elaborated Partnership and Coherence Strategy, developed in 2017, was in place and covering much the same ground in the early stages of the DC Strategy ⁴⁷.

▶ The Global Accelerator is a high-profile example of strategic and funding coherence promoted by the DC Strategy. However, this has so far focussed on establishing the necessary institutional systems, partnerships and financing so that country-level implementation activities have been mainly at the level of planning and development of roadmaps in pathfinder countries. In terms of effectiveness, there is therefore nothing to report at this stage. The Global Coalition for Social Justice, which also holds promise for improved coherence and results, is still in its start-up phase.

Although the approvals volume increased during the course of the DC Strategy, the HLE has found little evidence that the DC Strategy has strongly contributed to the recent increase in approvals volume or type of DC funding much of which relates the effects of geo-political events. Factors contributing to this situation include:

- ▶ Efforts to strengthen UN and broader partnerships have already been underway for some years, with mixed effectiveness.
- The DC Strategy pillars on partnerships cover much the same ground as that of the 2017
 Partnership and Policy Coherence Strategy



At country level, ILO teams are aware of the costs and benefits of partnerships within their specific operating context and assess the global approaches advocated in institutional strategies within this practical perspective.

⁴⁷ The 331st Session of the ILO Governing Body the Partnership and Policy Coherence Strategy was endorsed promoting decent work through partnerships and policy coherence, with a special focus on promoting inclusive growth and decent work at the country level with international and regional economic financial institutions.

EFFECTIVENESS OF ACTIONS UNDER PILLAR 3 – PARTNERSHIPS FOR FUNDING

the HLE found little evidence that the Strategy has strongly contributed to the recent increase in the volume or type of DC funding approvals, much of which relates to the effects of geo-political events. Funding partners emphasized the importance of ILO more strongly promoting its unique blend of normative mandate, technical expertise and country-level DC activities and how this can contribute to sustainable results. Many ILO internal stakeholders, constituents and funding and implementing partners emphasized that ILO currently "undersells" its achievements through an inadequate communication stream, which leaves it at a disadvantage compared with other implementers and agencies that are competing for limited funds.

The ILO's DC Strategy aligns with the broader UN Funding Compact, which underscores the importance of predictable and adequate funding to support neutral and independent action. The Funding Compact suggests indicators for voluntary funding, including unearmarked, predictable, multi-annual, and joint UN funding. This approach encourages the ILO to collaborate closely with other UN bodies in joint programs. The ILO also seeks to diversify its funding sources to achieve desired results across all outcomes.

Under the objective of Pillar 3 in the Strategy document states that "The Office will seek to deepen, expand and diversify its funding partnerships and to secure longer-term, more predictable funding, including through lightly earmarked and unearmarked voluntary contributions" The document adds that: "The expected results of the programme and budget policy outcomes will be taken as a starting point to assess the needs for funding and partnerships".

The Strategy sets out nine areas to be addressed under this pillar:

- ▶ Mobilize adequate resources for the ILO's programme of work.
- ▶ Align earmarked contributions to ILO outcomes.
- ▶ Encourage unearmarked contributions.
- Expand funding partners and sources.
- Strengthen domestic funding partnerships.
- ▶ Sustain existing bilateral partnerships and develop new ones.
- Increase private sector contributions.
- ▶ Build on relationships with IFIs and other development finance institutions.
- Strengthen participation in UN funding.

The Implementation Plan reframes these under three key actions, each of which has two deliverables. These deliverables can be approximately matched with the original nine areas to be addressed. A summary of the links between the strategy, the Implementation Plan and the reported actions is included in Annex D.

Two observations are relevant at this stage. Firstly, there is a significant overlap between Pillars 2 and 3, as partnerships for policy coherence often also focus on later funding. Secondly, Actions 2 and 3 of Pillar 3 overlap as well: one emphasizes funding modalities, while the other focuses on partnerships. Therefore, it is appropriate for the same evidence to be relevant to different actions.

MOBILIZING RESOURCES BASED ON ILO FUNDING NEEDS

Structured funding dialogues

As set out in the UN Funding Compact⁴⁹ endorsed in 2019 by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), **structured funding dialogues (SFDs)** are conducted within the framework of UN system-wide funding and collaboration. They are "resource mobilization instruments intended to address the risks of vulnerability in the funding of UN development programmes" that "explore options on how to incentivize Member States and development partners to finance adequate and predictable core and non-core funding on a multi-year basis"⁵⁰. The concept is new to the ILO, and two pilot SFDs were conducted to support identified ILO policy outcomes/decent work themes – Skills and Lifelong Learning (Outcome 5) and Social Protection (Outcome 8). PARTNERSHIPS (then PARDEV) conducted the SFDs in cooperation with SOCPRO, SKILLS and the now defunct Business Innovation Unit.

In a document prepared by PARTNERSHIPS⁵¹, SFDs were presented as a departure from the ILO's usual resource mobilization approach in several ways:

- ▶ ILO presents "an offer and an ask" based on a partnership and funding needs analysis considering results to be achieved based on ILO's capacity do deliver.
- ▶ ILO SFDs bring partners together at the same time, around the same table on the same theme, in addition to the ILO's regular practice of bilateral policy dialogues with development partners.
- ► SFDs clearly **present a menu of funding options and partnership modalities** that will enable a win-win for the funding partners as well as for the ILO.
- ▶ SFDs create opportunity for coherent approach from the ILO in its engagement with its partners, and from partners to engage with the ILO.

Held in early 2022, the pilots combined high-level sessions presenting the ILO business case and the funding gaps; knowledge sharing sessions; and smaller group roundtables. They involved senior ILO staff, funding partners including some who are currently supporting ILO DC projects and programmes, and representatives of ITUC and IOE. Sessions were well attended with about 150 online participants for each event. As the pilots were delivered during the COVID-19 pandemic, most events were online. PARTNERSHIPS learnt lessons from the pilots in terms of their strategic approach, management, and engagement and follow up of partners.

In terms of effectiveness, the HLE was presented with evidence of some early SFD success in mobilizing additional resources or in changing existing funding modalities (e.g., towards unearmarked or lightly earmarked funds). These included:

Under SFD SOCPRO, donors moved from earmarked to pooled and parallel funding as follows:

- ▶ Belgium joined a pooled funding arrangement and agreed to streamline the reporting requirements for an earmarked project.
- Luxembourg joined a pooled funding arrangement.
- ▶ Ireland was funding an earmarked project but moved to parallel funding for the 2023-25 phase of the project.
- ► GIZ had earlier planned to provide earmarked funding but agreed to a parallel funding arrangement.
- ▶ Under SFD SKILLS:

⁴⁹ United Nations Sustainable Development Group, Funding Compact for the UN's Support to the Sustainable Development Goals,

⁵⁰ PARDEV, ILO Structured Funding Dialogues – Initial lessons from the pilot experiences, September 2022, p1

⁵¹ Ibid., p4.

- ▶ In the context of the preparation for the SFD, Flanders joined the pooled funding arrangement for Global programme on Skills and Lifelong Learning and made a statement of support during the event
- After the SFD, two other partners, GIZ and ISDB contributed to GPSL3 programme through parallel funding.
- Norway will join the pooled funding with Flanders for the new phase of contribution starting 2025

Thematic campaigns

The Mid Term Review did not provide specific details regarding achievements related to this deliverable. It only mentioned that: "The Office has implemented a forward-looking partnership and funding approach, taking the expected results for each policy outcome and the corresponding needs as a starting point".

A recently commenced programme⁵², "This Way to Social Justice: ILO's global campaign to promote action against inequalities in the world of work" can be seen as contributing towards this deliverable though no direct links with resource mobilization were identified. This communication campaign aims to accelerate efforts to reduce inequalities in the world of work and promote social justice on a global scale. It "spotlights crucial policy areas where coordinated efforts can pave the way towards fairer, safer, greener, and more sustainable societies for all"⁵³.

The ILO has also used the **ILO Voices platform**, "ILO in action" videos, and impact stories to run a sustained communication campaign. This campaign aims to raise awareness of its development cooperation programs, highlight current partnerships, and show potential partners the ILO's credibility and value for money. These efforts have been aligned with major policy outcomes, themes, international days, events, and global news concerning work issues and are intended to continue as a contribution to resource mobilisation. Their effectiveness in this respect could not be evaluated.

The **#CoffeePeople campaign** can also be viewed as being in line with this deliverable. A DC intervention undertaken as part of the EU-funded Vision Zero Fund (VZF), this innovative campaign aimed to address occupational safety and health (OSH) challenges within the global coffee supply chain. It communicated at multiple levels – with coffee growers, workers, consumers and government – and was also reported to have led to resource mobilization from governments and new Public Private Partnerships. The initiative is described in more detail in **Case Study 6** on ITCILO.⁵⁴

EXPANDING UNEARMARKED AND LIGHTLY EARMARKED FUNDING

Voluntary contributions can be made as unearmarked core support (RBSA), lightly earmarked and often pooled funding for thematic or P&B or geographic priorities, or earmarked funding for specific projects. Unearmarked contributions provide the Office with greater agility and flexibility to allocate resources for high-impact interventions. They have traditionally represented a small share of the ILO's overall DC funding, and the strategy sought to promote and expand this funding modality.

In the period of the evaluation, RBSA contributions were made by 9 funding partners, with Belgium and the Netherlands contributing the most, followed by Denmark, Norway and Sweden. France started contributing to RBSA in 2020.

Reported on ILO website October 2023.

⁵³ These included decent job creation, universal social protection, education and lifelong learning, protection of workers' rights, gender equality and non-discrimination, fair globalization, and just transition to greener economies.

⁵⁴ Case Study available upon request.

The actions taken specifically to promote unearmarked and lightly earmarked in the period were not well reported, though the Structured Funding Dialogues described above included sessions on the features and benefits of different funding modalities. The ILO's Flagship Programmes were said to be particularly supportive of the further promotion and see it as reducing overall transaction costs. Interviews with staff in PARTNERSHIPS revealed that one more country was on the verge of joining the RBSA group, the first from outside Europe. More recently, Spain has joined the RBSA group.

Over the period of the DC Strategy, the total value of unearmarked and lightly earmarked funding remained relatively constant (2020: USD 23.8 million; 2021: USD 18.2 million; 2022: USD 23.4 million) before declining in 2023 (USD 12.3 million). **Figure 13** sets out the results combining total "unearmarked and lightly earmarked" with total "earmarked and tightly earmarked", based on project start year.

Funding classified as unearmarked and lightly earmarked varied over the evaluation period in both in dollar amounts and as a proportion of total funding. In 2020, the highest contribution of USD 23.8 million constituted 6.5% of the total funding allocated to DC. By 2022, this figure decreased slightly to USD 23.4 million but represented a higher proportion (8.2%) of total DC funding for that year. In 2023, contributions in this category decreased to USD 12.3 million, or 3.3% of the total contributions. This was USD 4 million lower than the average contribution over the evaluation period.⁵⁵ Refer to **Table 4** and **Table 5** for more detailed information.

TABLE 4: CONTRIBUTIONS TO ILO CORE VOLUNTARY FUNDING (RBSA), BY FUNDING PARTNER (USD THOUSANDS)

FUNDING PARTNER	2018-19	2020-21	2022-23	TOTAL
Belgium	6,850	6,976	3,006	16,832
Denmark	2,840	7,880	3,504	14,224
France	-	588	249	837
Germany	1,722	1,161	1,052	3,935
Italy	455	478	426	1,359
Luxembourg	2,539	3,035	2,175	7,749
Netherlands	5,855	5,862	4,362	16,079
Norway	3,616	3,395	3,855	10,866
Sweden	3,473	5,032	1,585	10,090
Grand total	27,350	34,407	20,214	81,971

Source: ILO (2023) Core Voluntary Funding (RBSA) for ILO Development Cooperation⁵⁶

⁵⁵ The contributions are recorded as the total contribution by project start year.

⁵⁶ Data as at 15 June 2023.

TABLE 5: DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDING PER AWARD EARMARKING BY PROJECT START YEAR (USD THOUSANDS)

AWARD EARMARKING	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
1- Unearmarked	11,048	8,584	16,708	10,701	3,461	10,646	15,524
2 - Lightly Earmarked	665	366	7,052	7,551	19,936	1,654	100
3 - Earmarked	6,892	15,226	16,233	5,526	67,566	81,478	28,326
4 - Tightly Earmarked	307,757	389,978	323,554	275,078	193,888	274,780	50,791
Not specified		3,785					
Grand Total	326,362	417,939	363,547	298,857	284,851	368,557	94,741

Source: ILO DC Dashboard57

Stakeholders described some of the challenges of securing more lightly earmarked or unearmarked funds. Some funding partners are subject to closer parliamentary scrutiny to justify contributions (e.g., Ireland, Germany, UK) and the more open-ended support of RBSA might not get through this. Pooling funds can face similar barriers. Some comments from the interviews included:



"It's hard to ask for lightly earmarked funds when the ILO struggles to report the results of its work."

"Unearmarked or lightly earmarked is a good idea but we can't find donors interested. We can't see much support from PARTNERSHIPS to expand this in the area of Social Protection. A lot of effort is needed to convince donors of the benefits."

"We have so little lightly earmarked. Why? Other UN agencies get more."

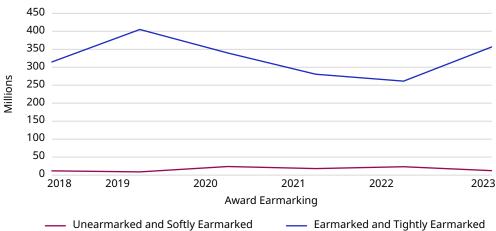
⁵⁷ Accessed 12 June 2024. Data was cleaned to exclude JPO contributions. Only projects starting in the period 2018 - 2024 are included. The table depicts the full contributions made recorded by project start year, and hence do not correspond to the yearly budgets/allocations, or the year of approval.



"We don't seem to have the expertise to push these. We need to engage with donors to create a common vision."

"Donors of RBSA want recognition, but they can't say how to spend the funds and there is no formal reporting. Some had concerns last year when we used RBSA to support the Priority Action Programmes which funded ILO staff in HQ, not activities."





In terms of the P&B outcomes focus of DC resources raised in the period of the DC Strategy, an analysis of budget and expenditure by funding type (RB, XBDC, and RBSA) shows no significant change. **Outcome 1** (Strong tripartite constituents and influential and inclusive social dialogue), **Outcome 2** (International labour standards and authoritative and effective supervision), and **Outcome 6** (Gender equality and equal treatment for all in the world of work) had a relatively small share of DC funding, with around 70 per cent of expenditure on these Outcomes coming from RB. In contrast, the other five Outcomes were much more reliant on DC funding. If resource mobilization efforts under the DC Strategy were intended to change the balance of DC funding to address a broader range of constituent needs, it has not been effective. **Table 6** provides more detail with Outcomes aligned more with normative role highlighted.

TABLE 6: BUDGET AND EXPENDITURE BY P&B POLICY OUTCOME AND FUNDING TYPE (RB, XBDC AND RBSA) - 2020-21 & 2022-23 (IN USD MILLIONS)

			2022-23	% OF TOTAL	2020-21	% OF TOTAL	% CHANGE
		TOTAL Expenditure	\$162.00		\$147.40		
Outcome 1	Strong tripartite constituents and influential and inclusive	RB Expenditure	\$110.60	68.3%	\$101.10	68.6%	-0.3%
Juccome i	social dialogue	XBDC Expenditure	\$48.30	29.8%	\$42.20	28.6%	1.2%
		RBSA Expenditure	\$3.10	1.9%	\$4.10	2.8%	-0.9%
		TOTAL Expenditure	\$83.40		\$72.50		
	International labour standards	RB Expenditure	\$62.30	74.7%	\$50.70	69.9%	4.8%
Outcome 2	and authoritative and effective supervision	XBDC Expenditure	\$20.10	24.1%	\$18.60	25.7%	-1.6%
		RBSA Expenditure	\$1.00	1.2%	\$3.20	4.4%	-3.2%
	Economic, social and	TOTAL Expenditure	\$238.80		\$225.10		
	environmental transitions	RB Expenditure	\$75.80	31.7%	\$60.80	27.0%	4.7%
outcome 3	for full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent	XBDC Expenditure	\$158.20	66.2%	\$157.30	69.9%	-3.6%
	work for all	RBSA Expenditure	\$4.80	2.0%	\$7.00	3.1%	-1.1%
		TOTAL Expenditure	\$152.60		\$115.60		
	Sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and	RB Expenditure	\$45.40	29.8%	\$44.10	38.1%	-8.4%
DIITCOME 4 9	promoters of innovation and	XBDC Expenditure	\$104.10	68.2%	\$67.30	58.2%	10.0%
	decent work	RBSA Expenditure	\$3.10	2.0%	\$4.20	3.6%	-1.6%
		TOTAL Expenditure	\$126.80		\$116.80		
_	Skills and lifelong learning	RB Expenditure	\$39.10	30.8%	\$38.00	32.5%	-1.7%
Outcome 5	to facilitate access to and transitions in the labour market	XBDC Expenditure	\$86.70	68.4%	\$76.70	65.7%	2.7%
		RBSA Expenditure	\$1.00	0.8%	\$2.10	1.8%	-1.0%
		TOTAL Expenditure	\$62.20		\$57.20		
	Gender equality and equal	RB Expenditure	\$41.50	66.7%	\$40.10	70.1%	-3.4%
Outcome 6	opportunities and treatment for all in the world of work	XBDC Expenditure	\$17.90	28.8%	\$16.60	29.0%	-0.2%
		RBSA Expenditure	\$2.80	4.5%	\$0.50	0.9%	3.6%
()lifcome /		TOTAL Expenditure	\$360.50		\$280.60		
	Adequate and effective	RB Expenditure	\$102.60	28.5%	\$84.80	30.2%	-1.8%
	protection at work for all	XBDC Expenditure	\$255.70	70.9%	\$191.40	68.2%	2.7%
		RBSA Expenditure	\$2.20	0.6%	\$4.40	1.6%	-1.0%
		TOTAL Expenditure	\$107.70		\$89.50		
	Comprehensive and sustainable	RB Expenditure	\$43.90	40.8%	\$38.70	43.2%	-2.5%
Outcome 8	social protection for all	XBDC Expenditure	\$61.80	57.4%	\$49.20	55.0%	2.4%
		RBSA Expenditure	\$2.00	1.9%	\$1.60	1.8%	0.1%

Source: ILO Programme Implementation Reports, 2020-21 and 2022-23

DEVELOPING LARGE AND INTEGRATED PROGRAMMES TO ATTRACT FUNDING FROM MULTIPLE PARTNERS

Global Coalition for Social Justice: The Director-General's proposal for this coalition was discussed during the ILO's 346th and 347th sessions and was a key theme at the 2023 World of Work Summit, which emphasized "Social Justice for All.".

In November 2023, the ILO's Governing Body officially endorsed the establishment of the Global Coalition, agreeing on its purpose, structure, priorities, governance, and operation. The Coalition will include a diverse range of stakeholders such as UN agencies, international financial institutions, civil society, development partners, multinationals, private foundations, and academia. Additionally, the Governing Body formed a "Working Party on the New Social Contract for Our Common Agenda" to provide tripartite inputs for the 2025 World Social Summit, ensuring engagement at all levels.

Global Accelerator: The UN Secretary-General's initiative received strong political support during the UN General Assembly in September 2022, in G7 and G20 employment and development ministers' communiqués and leaders' communiqués, the final communiqué of Finance in Common Summits, and the Forum on Financing for Development outcome document, as well as the Council of the European Union's conclusions on a triple transition. It was selected as one of the 12 High Impact Initiatives to achieve the SDGs. It is a prime example of multilateral UN-system action to address social justice deficits at the country level that is geared towards generating innovative solutions and increase policy coherence. It was recognized by ILO Governing Body in November 2023 as one of the main initiatives under the ILO Global Coalition for Social Justice.

The UNSDG has identified "jobs and social protection" as one of the six transformative entry points - or key transitions - for action and investment to drive progress across the SDGs. In keeping with this approach, the recently launched **Funding Round on Decent Jobs and Universal Social Protection** (which is part of the Joint SDG Fund), aims to support the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions. The first funding round launched with an amount of USD 17.8 million, with continuous annual fundraising planned to support future rounds and additional funding needs. GA pathfinder countries are eligible to develop Joint Programme proposals. Early-stage pathfinder countries can apply for seed funding to develop their national GA roadmaps, and advanced-stage pathfinder countries can apply for catalytic funding to implement parts of their already developed national GA roadmaps. Funding availability will ultimately depend on the total funds raised and the quality of the proposals received.

Multi-donor Programmes: Recognising the challenges of the DC Strategy's emphasis on the need to pursue a broad range of partnerships, a specific guidance document⁵⁸ was produced and circulated. This covers such complex areas as:

- ▶ Pooled funds fully earmarked (e.g., RMG Bangladesh, LEED Sri Lanka). Lightly earmarked (e.g., Better Work pooled funds)
- ▶ Parallel funds e.g., Flagship Programme for Social Protection.
- Multi donor programmes design, appraisal, governance, internal management.

One example of these principles being implemented is the "Advancing Decent Work in Bangladesh" project, a new USD 24.7 million initiative under the "Team Europe" approach supported by the EU, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden and launched in June 2024. The project aims to support the implementation of the government's labour sector reform commitments. These reforms promote good governance, the safeguarding of fundamental principles and rights at work, and the development of sustainable and competitive enterprises. These elements support Bangladesh's transition from Least Developed Country (LDC) status in

⁵⁸ ILO, Multi-donor Programmes: Guidance note for ILO staff. Multilateral Partnerships and Development Cooperation - 09 March 2023

2026. Canada plans to join forces with the project through a complementary project. The project is administered through a single ILO project code to which donors make contributions.

Another example is **The 8.7 Accelerator Lab**: SDG 8.7 aims to end modern slavery, trafficking and child labour. Through a multi-donor programme/multi partner fund The 8.7 Accelerator Lab is an inclusive global partnership for which ILO provides the Secretariat. It seeks to intensify efforts against child labour and forced labour using a pooled funding mechanism. Running from January 2021 to December 2030, it is supported by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), Global Affairs Canada, Government of Netherlands and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) of Germany, with a total budget of USD 13,000,000. The programme operates in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Indonesia, and South Africa.

EXPANDING AND DIVERSIFYING VOLUNTARY FUNDING SOURCES AND PARTNERSHIPS

Total contributions to ILO development cooperation

During the HLE period, **1,482 DC projects commenced** with a total value of USD 2.15 billion ^{59.} Contributions were highest in 2019, followed by a progressive decline in 2020, 2021, and 2022, before increasing again in 2023. Current data on project commencements for 2024 are incomplete, but based on project approvals, 2024 is likely to be a record year. **Table 7** summarises total contributions (RBSA and XBDC) by year of project commencements.

TABLE 7: CONTRIBUTIONS (RBSA AND XBDC) PER PROJECT START YEAR (USD THOUSANDS)

START YEAR	TOTAL CONTRIBUTION
2018	326,362
2019	417,939
2020	363,547
2021	298,857
2022	284,851
2023	368,557
2024	94,741
Grand Total	2,154,854

Source: ILO Development Cooperation Dashboard. 2024 data are incomplete.

Notably, the approvals data during the time period differs from the project commencement data. Approvals data indicates an increase in approvals, corresponding to 20 per cent in 2022 and 54 per cent in 2023, as depicted in **Table 8.**

TABLE 8: APPROVALS BY YEAR (USD THOUSANDS)

YEAR	APPROVALS
2020	357,982
2021	319,024
2022	381,383
2023	552,099
Grand Total	1,610,488

 $Source: ILO, Voluntary\ Contributions\ for\ Development\ Cooperation\ Annual\ Report,\ 2023$

59 100 begins and begins of the period 2018 - 2024 are included. The table depicts the full contributions made recorded by project start year, and hence do not correspond to the yearly budgets/allocations, or the year of approval.

Four main sources—Netherlands, European Union, Germany, and the USA—accounted for 50% of the ILO's DC funding for projects starting in the period 2018 - 2024. An additional 23% of the funding was provided by the next six sources: Multi-donor, MPTF/UNDP, Sweden, RBSA, Colombia, and Japan. See **Table** for detailed data.

Data from PARTNERSHIPS on average funding approvals for the period 2020 to 2023 indicate that the European Commission contributed an average of USD 60.4 million per annum. This was followed by the USA with an average contribution of USD 51.7 million, the Netherlands with USD 50.4 million, and Germany with USD 40 million.⁶⁰.

TABLE 9: TOP 10 PARTNER CLASSIFICATIONS FOR PROJECTS STARTING 2018 – 2024 (RBSA AND XBDC) (USD THOUSANDS)

2018-2024		
PARTNER CLASSIFICATION	AMOUNT CONTRIBUTED	% OF TOTAL (RBSA AND XBDC)
Netherlands	317,318	14.7%
European Union	276,359	12.8%
Germany	248,696	11.5%
United States	227,710	10.6%
Multi Donor	120,646	5.6%
MPTF/UNDP	94,285	4.4%
Sweden	76,726	3.6%
Core voluntary funds (RBSA)	76,568	3.6%
Colombia	64,186	3.0%
Japan	56,407	2.6%
Total from Top 10	1,558,901	72.3%
Total from all partners	2,154,854	

Source: ILO Development Cooperation Dashboard⁶¹

Of the total funds, 64.3% were sourced from Multi-Bilateral Donors, while an additional 13.1% came from the European Commission and other Inter-Governmental Organizations). **Table 10** sets out total contributions (RBSA and XBDC) in the period 2018-2024 by funding source.

UN Funding: Funding from this source peaked in 2018 at USD 47.8 million with a similar result attained in 2020 of USD 43.7 million. By 2023 UN funding decreased to USD 17.6 million, the lowest in the period.

In terms of the actions taken under the DC Strategy, as with many other deliverables, reporting on this area in the Mid-Term Review was vague and largely aspirational, referring to continuing efforts to mobilize funds for the implementation of UNSDCFs, including funds directed towards the SDGs, migration, disability inclusion, the Global Accelerator and South-South cooperation⁶². Subsequent reports were similarly vague, though some progress in UN funding was achieved through the Global Accelerator.

⁶⁰ ILO, Voluntary Contributions for Development Cooperation Annual Report, 2023.

⁶¹ Accessed 12 June 2024. Data was cleaned to exclude JPO contributions. Only projects starting in the period 2018 - 2024 are included. The table depicts the full contributions made recorded by project start year, and hence do not correspond to the yearly budgets/allocations, or the year of approval.

⁶² ILO, Mid-term review of the ILO Development Cooperation Strategy (2020–25), 2023, Para 28.

Domestic Funding: The proportion of domestically funded DC projects (shown under the **Direct Trust Funds** category) significantly increased, rising from USD 8.1 million in 2018 to USD 73 million in 2023. This is mainly attributable to increased domestic development funding by the **Government of Colombia**. Some middle- and even high-income countries (e.g., Brazil, Qatar and Saudi Arabia) also contributed more under this funding category. This has created new possibilities for ILO to use DC to advance its normative agenda in these countries where the adoption and application of decent work principles and standards still face challenges.

Stakeholders raised some issues regarding this element of the ILO's DC work:

- ▶ There is a need to strategically approach domestic funds to **avoid over-concentration of scarce ILO expertise and resources** on a limited number of relatively rich countries, with the potential to reduce ILO's broader sustainable impacts in poorer countries.
- ▶ In Colombia, where Government has made a major financial commitment, there is a perceived danger that ILO might **slip into the role of consultant-implementer** to the Government, rather than continuing to act as a Specialized Agency of the UN, ensuring internationally agreed standards and practices.
- ▶ In some countries, there might be a **misalignment of values and perspectives** that need to be considered carefully. Similar concerns exist with countries that have a history of **labour rights violations**.
- Transitioning from donor funding to national development funding could be more actively promoted through DC.

TABLE 10: CONTRIBUTIONS (RBSA AND XBDC) PER FUNDING SOURCE BY PROJECT START YEAR (USD THOUSANDS)

FUNDING SOURCE	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Multi-Bilateral Partners	207,527	298,372	175,128	180,744	225,285	239,951	57,572
EC & Other Inter- Governmental Organizations	35,755	68,351	92,667	46,279	2,975	23,230	13,059
United Nations	47,802	26,888	43,728	20,503	31,543	17,624	6,973
Direct Trust Funds	8,133	6,494	10,789	23,112	15,255	42,081	1,098
Private / Non-State Actors	13,403	7,909	21,522	9,308	2,285	27,968	515
Core voluntary funds (RBSA)	11,048	8,584	16,708	10,701	3,356	10,646	15,524
International Financial Institutions	2,694	1,341	3,005	8,210	4,152	7,056	-
Grand Total	326,362	417,939	363,547	298,857	284,851	368,557	94,741

Source: ILO Development Cooperation Dashboard⁶³

Funding partnerships with Private and Non-State Actors: Funding contributed by **Private/Non-State Actors** varied over the period of the HLE, reaching its highest point for project commencements in 2023 at USD 28 million. This figure includes revenue from the Decent Work Flagship Programme. In this area, the ILO is focusing on opportunities for partnering with private and non-State actors in supply chains, investment, and trade and on follow-up on HLE recommendations for streamlining partnerships and due diligence processes. In terms of private sector engagement, it appears that the revised approach has not yet been effective in expanding and diversifying this DC funding source.

⁶³ Accessed 12 June 2024. Data was cleaned to exclude JPO contributions. Only projects starting in the period 2018 - 2024 are included. The table depicts the full contributions made recorded by project start year, and hence do not correspond to the yearly budgets/allocations, or the year of approval.

For new ILO projects starting between 2018 – 2024, 4 contributions were classified as Public Private Partnerships in the ILO's Development Cooperation Dashboard: 2 in 2018, 1 in 2019 and 1 in 2020. However, 94 projects starting in the period 2018-2024 received funding from Private/Non-state actors. 64 Many established PPPs have continued throughout the DC Strategy period and some Flagship Programmes, notably Better Work, can also be viewed as ILO-private sector partnerships. 65

There has been much discussion of Public Private Partnerships within ILO, particularly in the context of the HLE released in 2019⁶⁶. Management accepted some of the evaluation's recommendations and some progress has been reported and reviewed by EVAL. Management recently noted that:



"A strategic approach has been followed, prioritising engagements with companies on issues directly related to operations, and engagements that prioritise capacity development and exchange of knowledge. Engagements that are exclusively philanthropic have been de-prioritised. Most PPPs are with companies, deal with work-related issues and are closely linked to the P&B and strategic priorities". 67

Stakeholder perspectives on PPPs highlighted some continuing issues, notably:

- ▶ PPPs have been a source of frustration, with historical evaluations (including the HLE on PPPs) consistently highlighting challenges. Despite efforts to address these, many remain. There is an underlying dilemma as to whether to engage with some proposed private sector entities to encourage them towards greater compliance with international standards or to block such partnerships due to their historical non-compliance.
- ▶ Workers' organisations sometimes have strong reservations about PPPs, especially where there have been labour rights violations. There are concerns about "social or green washing," and a call for stronger commitments to Decent Work from private sector partners.

Funding partnerships with International Financial Institutions (IFIs): Funding for DC projects from IFIs also fluctuated over the period of the evaluation but exhibited an overall upward trend during the period covered by the current DC Strategy. However, they still represent a small proportion of total DC funding. For projects starting in 2023, multi-Bilateral donors contributed more than 30 times as much to ILO's DC work than IFIs.

Action taken under the Strategy to increase IFI funding was not clearly reported. The Mid-Term Review just reported that ILO was "building on experiences with IFIs" such as the AfDB and Islamic Development Bank in the areas of technical assistance and funding and was exploring growth areas for partnerships related to social safeguards and fundamental principles and rights at work.

⁶⁴ ILO Development Cooperation Dashboard, accessed 12 June 2024.

⁶⁵ ILO's IGDS 81 defines public-private partnership as "a voluntary and collaborative relationship between the ILO and one or more partners, including private and non-state actors, for the purpose of carrying out cooperative activities of mutual interest." This includes contributions from Foundations; Private Sector; NGOs; Social Partners; Academic, Training and Research Institutions; and Other non-state actors. Currently, ILO has 62 projects funded by the private sector and non-state partners: https://www.ilo.org/partnerships/private-sector-and-non-state-partners, accessed 18 July.

⁶⁶ ILO, Independent Evaluation of ILO's Public-Private Partnerships 2008–18, 2019

⁶⁷ Management follow-up to the independent high-level evaluation key recommendations. Independent Evaluation of ILO's Public-Private Partnerships 2008–18. May 2024.

No results or progress towards results were reported through the Strategy's monitoring systems – what was reported was vague and aspirational (e.g., "the strategy on how to engage with the BRICS bank is continued").

DEVELOPING FUNDING STRATEGIES AT COUNTRY LEVEL FOR DWCP & PRIORITIES IN UN COOPERATION FRAMEWORKS

Reporting on this area lacked specificity and evidence of results, referring in broad terms to "focusing on expected results for each policy outcome", "continued efforts for joint resource mobilization", and focusing on programmes related to "SDGs, migration, disability inclusion and other global issues".

Although stakeholders emphasized in discussions with the HLE team that ILO has made increased efforts to participate in country level resource mobilization as part of UNSDCF processes, the financial figures do not suggest any consistent progress in terms of actual funding received. As mentioned above, UN contributions show fluctuation rather than any coherent trend and the amount received by ILO in 2023 from such sources was only a little over a third of the corresponding figure in 2018.

Stakeholders, both within and outside the ILO, at HQ and country levels, raised the issue of continuing competition among UN Agencies as a major stumbling block to progress towards more coherent and focussed resource mobilization at country level. In this area, ILO standard setting, normative and supervisory mechanisms are seen as its major comparative advantage, providing legitimacy and a technical basis for its work. Its reputation for its comprehensive knowledge base is another key advantage.

However, there is fierce competition for resources with other UN agencies, which have stronger and more visible field presence, more proven implementation capacity for major development initiatives, more accessible accounting systems and lower apparent Programme Support Income (PSI) costs. All these factors strongly influence donor decisions and may make UN Resident Coordinator Offices cautious about promoting the role of ILO in planned development cooperation activities beyond the level of small pilots. Even where ILO implements successful pilot level interventions, it can be seen by national, UN and bilateral decision makers as lacking the necessary in-country presence and resources to continue to deliver on a larger scale.

FUNDING PARTNERS VIEWS OF THE ILO AS A DC PARTNER

The HLE conducted interviews with two current ILO PPPs. **Box 5** highlights some key observations made about their experience in working with the ILO, including their perceptions of strengths and challenges as well as their views on what the ILO should consider in its future work with private sectors partners.

▶ Box 5: Observations made by ILO Funding Partners

Data:	Provides robust global data, including on child labour, forced labour indicators, informing effective project design and evaluation.
Normative role and tripartism:	Unique strengths in setting international labour standards and fostering social dialogue.
International influence:	Has significantly shaped global efforts against child and forced labour, establishing essential rules, standards, and guidance.
Policy influence:	Normative and standard-setting areas of ILO work directly or indirectly with bilateral and multilateral partners and to reach global consensus and shape policy.
Challenges of working w	th the ILO
Operational issues:	Slow project startups, recruitment issues, and poor communication about delays.
Consensus-seeking approach:	Can also slow startup and delivery.
Variability between countries:	Inconsistent performance affects partnership potential.
Joint programmes:	Face higher costs and implementation issues.
Decentralized funds:	Aligning country activities with global priorities while facing implementation challenges.
Future considerations	
Focus on strengths:	Concentrate on research, capacity building, and normative roles while leveraging partnerships for stronger service delivery and minimizing direct competition. Avoid broad activity ranges and concentrate on areas where ILO has unique strengths and piloting new approaches.
Communicate results:	Highlight tangible outcomes and impacts and effectively communicate successes to better align with donor expectations and justify their support. Tell a performance story.
Country presence:	Strengthen local engagement and ensure clear communication with stakeholders.
Accelerate tripartite approach:	While effective once established, it can be slow, impacting responsiveness. How can this be speeded up?
Clarify ILO priorities:	Clearly outline ILO priorities, goals, and strategies to gain more support from donors.
Expedite funding:	Send brief project ideas to counterparts to facilitate future funding.
Leverage partnerships:	Collaborate more with other UN agencies and partners to enhance field capacity and service delivery.
Informal collaboration:	Foster informal idea exchanges and pilot new initiatives alongside formal processes to encourage innovation with PPPs.



ILO STAFF AND CONSTITUENT VIEWS ON RESOURCE MOBILIZATION

The HLE surveyed staff and constituents and asked them to indicate the extent of their agreement with a number of statements related to how the ILO mobilizes DC resourced. Key findings include:

- ▶ 46.2 per cent of staff and 50 per cent of constituents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: "The ILO mobilizes resources **based on defined funding needs** related to policy outcomes, major themes, or country/regional needs." Another 28 per cent of staff and 25 per cent of constituents somewhat agreed.
- ▶ 52.2 per cent of staff 52.1 per cent of constituents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: "The ILO mobilizes resources by **persuading funding partners to support its decent work priorities** and plans." Another 28.2 per cent of staff and 19 per cent of constituents somewhat agreed.
- ▶ 75.4 per cent of staff and 54.5 per cent of constituents either strongly agreed or agreed with the statement: "The ILO mobilizes resources **based on the available funding** opportunities offered by funding partners." Another 14.7 per cent of staff and 20.3 per cent of constituents somewhat agreed.

These statements can, of course, be simultaneously true in the eyes of those responding, but the results suggest that the opportunities offered by partners strongly influence the ILO's resource mobilization efforts. When asked to rank the factors the design of DC projects, the highest ranking was given to "funding partner's design requirements and priorities". Compared with ILO staff's responses, constituents thought the ILO was less opportunistic in its resource mobilization.

Finding enough common ground is the key – an issue that the DC appraisal process needs to carefully weigh. DC projects need to get this balance right – if they stray too far from ILO priorities then criticisms of DC "being a distraction" have more validity.

Comments made by staff and constituents in the surveys included:



"Most of the fund mobilization is donor driven - not to support ILO priorities."

"I strongly disagree that the ILO changes its focus or mandate just for it to mobilise resources."

"Funding has become more and more earmarked. donors have their agenda and if ILO wants money, it has to respond to that too and do its best to meet the needs of its policy outcomes."

"We are opportunistic [and] grab what is available."

"There is very little connection between HQ's strategy to mobilise resources with the field."

"In practice resource mobilization is done a lot by CTAs who have other tasks and not necessarily a broad understanding of the overall strategy / opportunities etc."



"The ILO should further focus resource mobilization based on defined funding need related to policy outcomes, major themes or national/ regional themes." (Constituent comment)

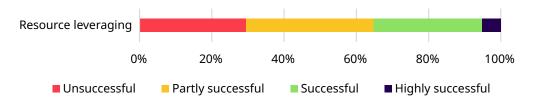
Many ILO stakeholders interviewed by the HLE team, wherever located in the organization, had reservations about the current DC Strategy. Some also offered recommendations, which they would like to be understood by senior ILO management. While not necessarily endorsed by the HLE, these included:

- ▶ Enhancing coordination and strategic planning: Strengthen the process to align resource mobilization on more clearly defined strategic priorities.
- ▶ Strengthen Engagement with Private Sector: Build capacity within the ILO to engage effectively with the private sector, understanding their language and operational frameworks. Establish clearer criteria for PPPs that include commitments to Decent Work and labour rights, potentially facilitated by the ILO.
- ▶ Improve Reporting, Marketing and Communication: Enhance the ability to report on the results and impact of ILO's work to attract lightly earmarked funds. Develop compelling narratives and success stories that highlight the ILO's achievements and comparative advantages to donors.
- Leverage Comparative Advantages: More forcefully position the ILO as a leader in areas where it has uncontested expertise, ensuring that these strengths are well communicated to donors.
- ▶ Explore and Expand Funding Models: Explore multi-donor funds and cost-sharing models to diversify the funding base and reduce dependency on a few major donors. Strategically approach national funds and emerging donors, ensuring alignment with ILO values and leveraging opportunities for sustainable impact.

RELEVANT FINDINGS FROM THE DECENT WORK RESULTS META-STUDY OF EVALUATIONS

The HLE's review of findings of a meta-study of over 200 Decent Work performance appraisals of final independent project evaluations conducted between 2019 and 2023 offered only limited insight into DC performance under Pillar 3. Only one criterion linked to Pillar 3 was relevant - Resource Leveraging - which assesses the size of the amount of government and donor resources (financial, or in-kind) leveraged from outside the ILO to boost individual project results. This element was covered to some extent in nearly three-quarter of evaluation reports but was not often quantified. In many cases, resource leveraging was not a component of results frameworks or one of the project objectives, so this rating should be interpreted with caution. Evidence from evaluation reports shows that just over one-third of interventions were able to raise additional external funds, the same proportion was able to leverage a small number of external resources, while just under one-third of interventions did not leverage external resources. Figure 14 sets out the results.

FIGURE 14: EVALUATION META-STUDY - PERFORMANCE AGAINST CRITERIA LINKED WITH PILLAR 3



Overall effectiveness of actions taken under Pillar 3

- ▶ The HLE found little evidence that the Strategy had directly led to changes in the type and volume of DC funding. Prior to the Strategy, ILO funding had already been shifting towards DC activities, resulting in a roughly even balance between Regular Budget and Development Cooperation funding. Despite the DC Strategy's focus on increasing funding in this area, it lacks a clear direction to guide the organization on overall funding priorities and the ideal balance between regular and development budgets.
- ▶ Given that ILO is a Specialized Agency and has a strong cadre of technical staff with a strong attachment to its normative work, the possibility of DC activities becoming the "core business" of the organization by virtue of a major funding increase in this area could signal a fundamental change, which many within or outside ILO would not welcome. It is for this reason that stakeholders have emphasized the need for a DC Strategy to be devised transparently and to provide a clear sense of direction for DC, one which strengthens the interconnectedness of DC with the ILO's mandate. Neither of these necessities are widely seen as characteristic of the current Strategy.
- ▶ Overall, Pillar 3 has been very modestly effective. It has usefully placed emphasis on the importance of development cooperation as the "practical arm" of normative work. As those engaged in DC like to emphasize, there is no point in signed Conventions and Agreements, if they do not generate positive actions at country level. On the other hand, development cooperation partners (including major donors) would not be drawn to ILO if not for its technical expertise and normative work. This dichotomy supports a continuing tension within ILO between those staff emphasising normative work and those promoting the "field-level" benefits of development cooperation.
- ▶ Outside of these two camps, many stakeholders see the critical issue for ILO as choosing the ideal balance between normative and development work and defining funding approaches to reach this. Similarly, external stakeholders, from donors to country partners emphasize that to them, ILO is a valued partner because of its combination of approaches. If the ILO approach is driven too much by a focus on DC growth for its own sake, it would become "just another implementing body" with low comparative advantage. It would be of much less interest as a partner, since there are many other bodies within and outside the UN system, which have proved themselves to have higher implementing capacity. To add to this, the ILO is already grappling with the issue of "organizational overstretch" (see EFFICIENCY) and risks serious reputational damage if the quality of its DC implementation deteriorates as a result.
- Overall, the DC Strategy is assessed to have limited effectiveness because it has not offered a bold strategic vision on where ILO should be going and what role DC will play in this. As part of this limitation, the Strategy's approach to funding partnerships and modalities lacks purpose and direction and can make only a limited contribution towards ILO's long-term objectives.

Overall effectiveness of actions taken under Pillar 3 (Cont'd.)

- ▶ A critical question concerning the Strategy, which is a concern within and outside ILO, is the absence of any identification of the limits of ILO's development cooperation ambitions. Two of the four strategy pillars are about partnerships. The distinction between partnerships for coherence and those for financing appears somewhat artificial ideally coherence would be a pre-requisite for funding partnerships. If this were not the case, funding could easily become too "donor driven." Stakeholders, including donors, sharing their experiences with the HLE team, consistently stated that ILO's normative and standard setting role is the essential foundation for partnerships. This is supported by the unparalleled quality and range of ILO's technical outputs. However, donors are also aware that, particularly in its many non-resident countries, ILO cannot claim the same level of implementation capacity as other bodies, whether UN agencies, international NGOs or country-based institutions. For this reason, funders often select other implementers to scale up or replicate innovations introduced and piloted by ILO. Some stakeholders see this as an acceptable role for ILO at country level, while others feel that other agencies "steal" ILO's expert approaches and obtain larger scale funding to implement them and enhance their own portfolios and reputation in country.
- ▶ As a result of initiatives implemented before the DC Strategy 2020 2025, the proportion of the ILO's overall budget that is committed to development cooperation is now around half. This DC strategy seems to be pushing strongly for more. But how much more? Would the nature of the ILO change if 75 per cent of its funding were for DC? This could be a long-term result of the Strategy's strong emphasis on growth of funding partnerships. Undoubtably, many engaged in ILO's normative, standards and technical work would see this as diminishing the uniqueness of its mandate. Bilateral donors contacted would also see this as a major transition, which might bring short to medium-term funding gains, but would reduce the attraction of ILO as a long-term partner, since this is based on its unique specialist expertise and mandate.
- Moving forward, any new DC Strategy needs to define the direction and scope of ILO's ambitions as a development cooperation implementer. Will it pursue a heightened role in this direction as an unlimited objective driven largely by the availability of donor funds? Or will it seek to define and facilitate a carefully designed and balanced approach to the Organization's work,
- Moving forward, any new DC Strategy needs to define the direction and scope of ILO's ambitions as a development cooperation implementer. Will it pursue a heightened role in this direction as an unlimited objective driven largely by the availability of donor funds? Or will it seek to define and facilitate a carefully designed and balanced approach to the Organization's work, building on its unique mandate and status as a "specialized agency" rather than as a broad-spectrum implementer?



EFFECTIVENESS OF ACTIONS UNDER PILLAR 4 – EFFICIENCY, DECENT WORK RESULTS AND TRANSPARENCY

The ILO has delivered most of the tools, guidelines, training initiatives, communication products that it set out in the Strategy's Implementation Plan and has made good progress in improving the transparency of its DC work and has taken steps towards improving social and environmental safeguards. Progress was less evident in introducing systems to support continuous improvement in the way the ILO delivers DC and provides administrative support.

Pillar 4 of the strategy aims to improve the quality of DC in terms of its **results focus**, **efficiency**, **visibility and transparency**. If the ILO is to maximise its influence on policy and win the trust and support of funding partners, it needs to demonstrate its decent work results and the longer-term impact of its work. To do this, it also needs to demonstrate it is efficient and offers value for money for funding partners, including by enhancing the transparency of its resource use in achieving results.

The strategy sets out five areas intended to enhance development impact, efficiency and transparency. The implementation plan reframes these under four "Actions" and eight "Deliverables". Some important elements of the strategy document were de-emphasised or omitted in the implementation plan – most notably, "enhancing the quality of the design" of programmes and projects. This was highlighted in the interviews as requiring attention through enhancements to the appraisal system and the more systematic involvement of constituents. Efficiency was also lightly treated under Pillar 4 – an issue that this HLE explores separately in the next section, EFFICIENCY. A summary of the links between the strategy, the Implementation Plan and the reported actions is included in Annex D.

RESULTS FOCUS - IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF DC

While the strategy grouped together elements directly related to improving the quality and results focus of DC – results-based management of DC; quality of design, implementation and evaluation; longer-term large-scale and integrated programmes; continuous monitoring and agility; and better use of data and impact evaluations – this focus was somewhat dispersed in the implementation plan. It bundled these together with elements of the strategy related to improving transparency and communications. Results were mainly reported against these latter elements (see *Improved Transparency* below). Issues related to the need for continuous monitoring are discussed later in this report's **EFFICIENCY** section.

Efforts to improve results-based management of DC projects and programmes focused on building staff capacity rather than enhancing systems and processes. These included new learning opportunities for DC staff that covered results-based management of projects, integrating International Labour Standards, project scoping and strategy, and developing Theories of Change. These were part of the "DC Learning Journeys" that are discussed later and in the case study of ITCILO.⁶⁸

A second action, the publication in 2021 of a new **DC Internal Governance Manual**⁶⁹, also aimed to improve the knowledge and capacities of staff involved in DC (both in HQ and in the field, Regular Budget and DC staff). It provided background and guidance on the DC Strategy as well as an overview of policies, rules and procedures. It updated and replaced an earlier version of the manual that had been in place since 2010. Much has changed in the ILO's DC working environment since then and so this was a much-needed resource. As a core document that staff involved in delivery would be expected to routinely consult, this was another important and effective initiative.

Both initiatives fell under a deliverable in the implementation plan that was about "updated approaches, guides and tools on results-based management". While welcome, more ambitious

⁶⁸ Case study is available upon request.

⁶⁹ ILO. Development Cooperation Internal Governance Manual (2021).

improvements that were intimated in the strategy, if not explicitly described, were not pursued. These include efforts to continuously monitor and improve DC through project appraisal and to monitor implementation across the DC portfolio. Some aspects of this are explored in more detail in the next section, **EFFICIENCY**, but they are central to understanding and improving the quality of the ILO's DC work more broadly.

Project Appraisals

Perspectives vary on how fit-for-purpose the current appraisal system is. Views from the field suggest a satisfaction with the current arrangements which are seen as being a relatively quick process, using a SharePoint system to upload proposals and to gather feedback from the field and HQ⁷⁰. Speed is an important factor for the field staff involved in DC project development – the HLE learned that they are often working with tight timeframes imposed by funding partners and risk missing opportunities if appraisal slows things down. Proposals are often presented with a great sense of urgency and, as one stakeholder bluntly put it: "If you stand between a colleague and a donor, you're going to get run over."

However, the perspective from some staff in HQ, including senior managers, was quite different. A broad consensus emerged from the interviews that the process needs "more teeth" to improve the quality of proposals in terms of:

- ▶ their alignment with higher level ILO strategies and goals
- ▶ their likelihood of success in achieving their objectives in the time allocated
- b how any changes brought about by the project can be sustained after it ends
- whether the ILO has the capacity, knowledge or experience to implement them; and
- if they have incorporated lessons learned from evaluations of similar past projects.

This perception is supported by the findings of many evaluation reports including meta-studies⁷¹. HQ colleagues expressed frustration that the comments they made on proposals on these and other matters during the appraisal process seem often to be ignored and projects approved regardless. One staff member responsible for an important enabling function in the organization said they had stopped providing input because the advice was so often ignored.

Of course, there are many high-quality project proposals that address all these things well and are rightly approved. The problem is that the mechanism to say "no" to more questionable projects is perceived to be weak. This is not a straightforward process, especially given the ILO's decentralised resource mobilization framework. Maintaining flexibility is important too – as one senior manager said, "Even if there are flaws in some projects, we need to be flexible. Trade-offs are necessary at times." Others suggested that a certain amount of hyperbole in framing project goals was necessary to attract funding. Over-systematising the process and setting rigid rules need also to be avoided as this can discourage innovation and, sometimes, prevent the ILO from getting a foothold in a country where it can do good work over the longer term. Whether to work or not in some fragile situations can be an especially difficult decision in this respect.

But other senior managers and staff were clearly of the view that the appraisal process was *too* flexible. Specific needs and circumstances need to be factored into decisions but, as one senior manager put it:



"The process should never end with a project approved that we feel quilty about."

⁷⁰ Evans-Klock and Tegmo-Reddy, *Project Implementation at the Frontline – a rapid assessment*, December 2021.

⁷¹ For example, Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: An ex-post meta-analysis of development cooperation evaluations, 2022: "Validity of design was the weakest area... Recurring issues included over-ambitious scope, weak strategies to achieve project objectives, and limited endorsement by stakeholders" (p.20).

A "sales mentality" is clearly an asset when mobilizing funds and judging by the ILO's strong recent record in "sales" achieved in the evaluation period, this mindset has contributed to this success. But given the nature of the ILO's work there was consensus among senior managers that the "sales mentality" needs to be tempered and that ILO needs to unashamedly say "no" when necessary. One senior manager said, "We sell values, principles and institutional development – not bicycles"; another, that "You can say 'no' when you are clear on why you can say 'yes'."

Sometimes there are efficiency issues to consider too. While some small projects can have a big impact or can plant the seed for something bigger, when there are concerns across the ILO of organisational overstretch, the transaction costs of some small projects may simply not justify the effort required to run them. As one staff member said: "Having these small 'cute' projects addressing niche or marginal issues may be good signalling of ILO values, but little comes from them." There have been numerous reports and recommendations urging the ILO to focus more on larger scale interventions and programmes, including the 2015 HLE of Technical Cooperation. The DC strategy itself mentions "longer-term, large-scale and integrated programmes" (though that is all it does – there is no clear action described).

Similarly, some projects lead the ILO into unchartered territory where it lacks the technical knowledge to properly support delivery. One example was given of a project which established a tomato paste factory – an area completely outside the ILO's technical expertise and administrative experience. The project was approved but (according to one informant) proved to be a disastrous mistake. Similar problems have been experienced in projects with cutting edge information technology components. Innovation is desirable in projects, but only if you know what you are doing.

The appraisal process may also put PARTNERSHIPS in a difficult position as it acts both as a facilitator in developing DC proposals (including through its highly valued project design helpdesk) and as their judge. The issue was not raised by PARTNERSHIPS itself as problem and there is a separation of responsibilities within the department, but it is not hard to imagine that, if a project is initiated in the field and PARTNERSHIPS is also advising on its design, there may be occasions where it becomes harder to say "no".

In summary, the actions taken so far under the DC Strategy are helpful in that they aim to develop the capacity of DC staff to develop quality proposals. But ultimately the appraisal system needs to be strengthened to ensure that all projects are of the highest quality, are within the ILO's technical and administrative capabilities, and optimally support and cohere with its broader strategic approach. One department gave the example of how the ILO's global policy framework in a key operational area was ignored by a project but was still approved: "The donor approached the ILO in the field and wheels were set in motion which we couldn't stop. Not even the policy specialists in the field had been consulted."

Improved transparency

Actions taken to improve transparency of the ILO's development cooperation work, and to better communicate the results of this work and its comparative advantage aligned with three deliverables in the Implementation Plan. The first of these related to having processes and systems in place that complied with OECD-DAC, IATI and UN standards. Steps were taken to ensure that ILO DC data were accessible on these organizations' data platforms. As a measure of effectiveness, the ILO score against IATI publishing statistics index has increased from 28 to 74 (out of 100) and is on a continuing improvement trajectory⁷². ILO is now ranked 9th among UN agencies and 48th overall (out of 1,573 organisations).

Second, there was a deliverable to develop and disseminate a "business case for investment in decent work". This was completed in early March 2024 with the publication of a webpage and document/prospectus, "Investing in decent work for social justice: Making the case for funding partnerships with the ILO"73. The result of a collaboration between PARTNERSHIPS and DCOMM, this resource presents a case for investment in the ILO's work, its links to the SDGs, its role in guiding labour market transformations, its unique tripartite structure and promotion of standards, and its network of partners. The evaluation team reviewed the resource and found it to be well-presented and thorough and captures well the unique offer the ILO makes to prospective partners. Given its recency, its effectiveness as a means of attracting new investment is not yet clear.

Thirdly, the strategy sought to increase transparency in the costing of ILO services. Whereas the Mid-Term Review reported in 2023 that "development of the **methodology for the costing of ILO services is on target**", the HLE was not presented with any updates on this deliverable.

This last aspect of DC transparency is one about which several concerns were expressed to the HLE team, especially as it related to the way the ILO incorporates **Programme Support Income** (PSI) in its budgets and the way it is allocated. From an external perspective, this was seen to be an issue in a competitive sense, as other UN agencies seemingly present a lower PSI rate than the ILO's 13%. Though they may present such overheads differently (e.g., embedding costs as budget line items) appearances matter and funding partners sometimes take such apparent differences at face value. The transparency activity on costing set out in the plan could go some way towards resolving this issue

From an internal perspective, the interviews suggested that improved transparency on the use of PSI income across the house was also an issue. In some interviews, DC staff were sometimes puzzled by or resentful of the PSI management and allocation process:



"Where does it go? Does the backstopping department get the money to provide technical support? If so, why do they ask us for more from project funds to do this?"

"The field generates 80% of PSI but 60% seems to go to HQ. There needs to be a fairer distribution or at least an outline of how projects will be supported."

"Under the NICRA⁷⁴ agreement [with the USA] we need to confront local representatives of the donor and say we have to take money from project delivery. It might be justifiable from a financial management perspective, but it's the projects and the technical departments who have to confront local donors."

⁷³ ILO, Investing in decent work for social justice: Making the case for funding partnerships with the ILO, https://webapps.ilo.org/business-case/ Accessed 13 June 2024.

⁷⁴ Negotiated Indirect Cost Agreement (NICRA) between the USA and the ILO effectively doubled the PSI rate to 26%.

LEARNING FROM EXPERIENCE AND IMPROVING SERVICE PROVISION AT COUNTRY LEVEL

The strategy also set out areas of work that related to evaluation and "improving service provision at the country level". The **evaluation** element promoted the consistent implementation of recommendations from evaluations and external reviews to improve results and performance reporting; monitoring and evaluation systems; project implementation; the coherence of partnerships; and the mainstreaming of gender and environmental sustainability. The service provision element related to the introduction of "integrated and agile delivery models" involving HQ, the field, and ITCILO. The Implementation Plan's deliverables in these areas included one on "concrete measures" being implemented from evaluation recommendations, one on enhancing staff capacity, and one on piloting new models.

The strategic use of the ILO's evaluation results to support decision making at various levels of the organization is an important element of continuous improvement and in fostering a learning culture. At a governance level, EVAL prepares as part of its Annual Evaluation Report to the GB, evidence of how strategic documents have used the results and lessons from evaluations⁷⁵ as well as initiatives led by regions and departments that have resulted from evaluations. Through its *i*-eval Discovery website, EVAL provides access to all planned and completed evaluation reports, their related recommendations, lessons learned, good practices, summaries and management responses.

A strong evaluation knowledge base therefore exists for continuous improvement of the ILO's DC work, but as discussed earlier, the project design and appraisal system does not always ensure that optimal use is made of this knowledge. EVAL staff reported that they use the appraisal system's SharePoint facility to flag potential problems or enhancements based on their experience with past projects, but they are often ignored. The MOPAN review made the same observation, pointing out that the ILO can identify lessons through evaluations, but does not always apply these lessons. The tools are all there but "the organisation could use these tools more systematically during intervention design".

One weakness in DC delivery systems that has consistently been highlighted in evaluation reports and which was reinforced in the HLE's interviews is monitoring - both at the project level and portfolio-wide. At the project level, EVAL's meta-analyses of DC evaluations consistently rate this as a weakness – for example, the 2022 report found that less than a third of the 56 projects it covered had good systems in place that could adequately assess progress related to achievement of activities and goals. At a systemic level, the MOPAN assessment described the ILO's **ability to identify and address poorly performing projects as weak** and that it lacked systems to act upon the performance data it collected: "responsibility for change is delegated to project managers, who have little incentive to initiate such change".

While the HLE found that no evidence of these DC systems issues being addressed, the actions taken to improve staff capacity showed more progress. In 2021, PARTNERSHIPS, HRD, and ITCILO collaborated to introduce a new training approach for DC staff through a series of "DC Learning Journeys", short sequences of online training including videos, podcasts and other learning materials. DC staff access to training has been a problem in the past, with training generally being restricted to Regular Budget staff. The scaling up of online delivery, especially since the pandemic, created the opportunity for cost effective innovations in developing capacity of DC staff.

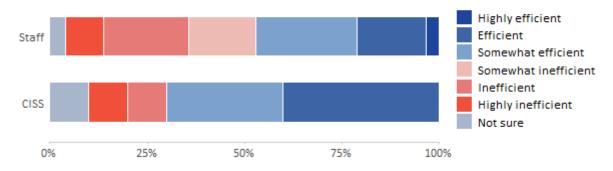
⁷⁵ For example, the 2022-23 Annual Evaluation Report indicated that 79 per cent of recommendations from independent evaluations were completed or partly completed by line managers, but the broader reach of these recommendations as a means of initiating continuous improvement in DC design, monitoring and implementation is not known.

This is clearly a worthwhile initiative that flowed directly from the DC Strategy and can now be expanded to address a wide range of DC staff developmental needs. HRD has centrally managed funds that it can use to support DC governance in this way. So far, measuring the effectiveness of these Learning Journeys is hampered by a lack of detail in the available participation and satisfaction data. ITCILO keeps quite comprehensive data on these things, but there is currently no standard report that differentiates between DC funded staff and Regular Budget staff. The latter can also access the DC Learning Journeys and apparently often do. The role ITCILO has played in supporting the DC Strategy is described in more detail in Case Study 6⁷⁶.

Despite this welcome innovation, the HLE's surveys showed that staff training support for DC was still perceived to be a significant weakness that affected the effectiveness and efficiency of projects. In the broader staff survey, 48.9 per cent of respondents ranked staff training support to be inefficient including 10 per cent rating in "highly inefficient", 21.7 per cent "inefficient", and 17.2 per cent "somewhat inefficient". Among the CISS, 20 % ranked staff training support as inefficient, including 10 per rating for "highly inefficient" and "inefficient" respectively. See **Figure 15.**

FIGURE 15: STAFF SURVEY QUESTION - "HOW WELL DOES STAFF TRAINING SUPPORT EFFICIENT AND TIMELY DELIVERY OF DC?"

How well does staff training support efficient and timely delivery of DC?



There was clearly an appetite for more staff training including in administrative functions which were seen to be adversely affecting the efficiency of projects. The HLE learned of some local training initiatives – such as one in Africa for CTAs, finance and administrative staff which received financial support from the PROSPECTS project – but such opportunities are not common. As the following comment from one staff survey respondent said:



"There is no support provided for the recruitment of DC staff, no training offered apart from the self-guided ones (insufficient) which explains the lack of knowledge about financial and procurement procedures. Huge problem with access to information (even if the info is available on the intranet, it's almost impossible to find it)."

Action in line with the Implementation Plan's deliverable on piloting new or enhancing existing delivery models was not well reported. There was no mention of anything in the Mid-Term Review and although one would expect that there have been many such initiatives over the period of the evaluation, the HLE found there were few reported – at least through the mechanism established to monitor the strategy's implementation.

⁷⁶ Case Study 6 – ITCILO is available upon request.

The Regional Office for Arab States has created a framework to pool resources and staff that had previously been working under 8 discrete DC projects into a single team of administrative and finance assistants and other support staff, but this is perhaps an example more of enhanced efficiency than service delivery. Bangladesh has an effective model in place to manage its large portfolio of projects, but this pre-dates the DC Strategy. The Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean reported innovations in DC project monitoring via the use of PowerBI software, and in investigating CRM software to enhance partnership monitoring and other innovative delivery models. These initiatives were perceived to offer improvements in effectiveness and efficiency in supporting DC. If they prove to be effective, perhaps these and other innovations will be shared and used elsewhere in DC delivery but the mechanisms in place to do this do not seem to be in place.

MEET ACCOUNTABILITY STANDARDS

In this area, the strategy aimed to reinforce due diligence in risk management, sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, and social and environmental safeguards. A deliverable in the Implementation Plan focused on developing and apply tools to support an ILO Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework (ESSF).

The Mid-Term Review reported that the ILO Environmental Sustainability Committee had developed and pilot-tested an environmental and social risk screening checklist⁷⁷ and a guidance note for staff on addressing these issues in project design. Materials for DC Learning Journeys were also created as well as guidelines covering these issues in DC projects that included employment-intensive investment elements. These were regarded as the first steps towards a broader ILO-wide ESSF, incorporating measure to address environmental and social sustainability, sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in all aspects of ILO work including DC.

RELEVANT FINDINGS FROM THE DECENT WORK RESULTS META-STUDY OF EVALUATIONS

To provide an insight into the overall effectiveness of Pillar 4 of the Strategy, the HLE reviewed the findings of a meta-study of over 200 Decent Work performance appraisals of final independent project evaluations conducted between 2019 and 2023⁷⁸. Key findings were:

- ▶ Validity of project design was an important area of weakness overall, with the majority of reports having mixed results. Only one-third of interventions had a sound technical approach and objectives endorsed by a majority of stakeholders, with well-defined strategies and services that linked to project objectives. Intervention designs were overambitious in terms of scope relative to the time and resources available for implementation. Moreover, limited involvement of different stakeholder groups in the planning stages often led to inadequate contextualisation of feasibility and weak risk assessments, leading to challenges in implementation.
- ▶ The most successful designs aimed to involve all relevant partners at all stages of the project cycle in a participatory approach, had a solid theory of change, coherent and realistic intervention logic and all element in the project framework linked to an overall strategic objective. Some intervention designs were based on functional reviews, previous ILO research and/or lessons learned and good practices from similar projects or previous phases. Limitations were found when there were inconsistencies in design, over-ambitious scopes, and timelines especially when resources were spread thin, erroneous assumptions, lack of contextual analysis and baseline mapping, little flexibility adaptation to changing contexts, and poor or non-existent risk assessments. There was evidence of project designs having disparate activities which did not fit into a comprehensive strategy, and some stakeholder groups had competing priorities, leading to design constraints. Lack of logical frameworks and theories of change also negatively affected validity of design.

⁷⁷ ILO Environmental and Social Risk Screening Checklist, Accessed 15 June 2024.

⁷⁸ Criteria used for the analysis of Pillar 4 were: Validity of design/approach, RBM approach and goal orientation, Monitoring and reporting, Visibility and accessibility of knowledge and information.

- ▶ 20 per cent of ILO interventions had a complete results framework that allowed for regular monitoring of performance, with quantified, realistic targets linked to the project strategy, and a logical fit between indicators and outcomes. Often, while components of a results framework were established, there were discrepancies in the structure, limiting its use. Moreover, in 20 per cent of cases, there was no evidence that a results framework existed, or, if they had been developed, they were unreliable or irrelevant.
- Related to this, there were important challenges in monitoring and reporting frameworks, although there was a higher proportion of successful cases compared to the previous RBM criterion, with one-third of projects having established monitoring and reporting mechanisms that were used to measure progress. The presence of dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) officers was found to be very useful, as was the participation of trained partners on the ground, with both qualitative and quantitative data collected and analysed to assess progress and achievements of ILO interventions. In a majority of cases, while components were established, they were not well implemented; information for monitoring and reporting on performance was missing or not identified; or findings were not always valid or reliable, due to inadequate tools and methods to monitor and measure progress. Many projects focused on monitoring activities, rather than results at the output or outcome levels, and lack of baseline data and outcome-level targets led to challenges in measuring progress. In some cases, while monitoring tools existed, the amount of time it took to develop and start implementing interventions led to monitoring plans not being implemented as planned; lack of monitoring plans or budgets sometimes led to dependence on partners to collect data. There was evidence of improvement of systems over time, based on recommendations from mid-term evaluations or during the course of implementation. The quality and level at which reporting took place sometimes depended on donor requirements and types of intervention funding (e.g., RBSA-funding, or "lightly earmarked" Sida funding). In 20 per cent of cases, there were no functioning mechanisms for monitoring or reporting of project achievements.
- ▶ Over half of cases had approaches or strategies in place to document and disseminate project knowledge internally and externally, with evidence of good efforts to do so. Successful interventions had developed communication and visibility strategies, had dedicated budgets and hired communications officers to implement them, while others worked with partner organisations. In some cases, knowledge and experience-sharing was done through systematic documentation and sharing of good practices identified during implementation, and some interventions aimed to empower their partners to document and disseminate lessons learned, through participation in action research processes, and reflections on why certain outcomes occurred while others did not.

Challenges were noted when that project documents and studies were not shared with stakeholders and project partners, and that knowledge-sharing or restitution workshops did not take place or were ineffective.

Overall effectiveness of Pillar 4

- ▶ Pillar 4 was designed and implemented as a disparate set of activities which emphasised the development of tools and resources to add value to existing DC delivery. Notable achievements included the development of an online training platform and modules targeting DC staff (the DC Learning Journeys), greatly enhanced transparency of the ILO's DC work to improve its compliance with OECD-DAC, IATI and UN standards, and some positive steps towards developing an Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework for the ILO, including for its DC projects and programmes. Progress in developing a methodology for costing ILO services or new service delivery models were not well reported through the Strategy's monitoring and reporting framework. No efforts were made under Pillar 4 of the Strategy to improve DC efficiency.
- More ambitious and potentially more effective actions under this Pillar were not pursued. First, there is a need to improve the monitoring of ILO DC at both the project level and portfolio wide. This has been consistently identified by audits, MOPAN assessments, and evaluation reports as a major weakness of the ILO's approach to DC, but no direct action was taken under the strategy to address these concerns. There is a need to improve monitoring systems so that they can address underperforming of DC projects, identify and correct system inefficiencies, and improve the impact of interventions. Instead, the focus of the Strategy was on developing products and staff training which in themselves may be valuable, but their effectiveness may not be evaluable because of these same deficiencies in the ILO's monitoring of DC.

Similarly, the project appraisal system can be strengthened in important respects to improve the quality, sustainability and impact of DC projects and to ensure that the lessons of past projects are considered, that the focus of the ILO's DC work is clear, and that its strengths not its weaknesses are exposed.



EFFICIENCY

Despite continuing concerns about the overall efficiency of the ILO's delivery of DC projects, the Strategy gave little attention to this issue. Various internal and external reviews have highlighted problems with the speed and complexity of systems and procedures and these concerns were reinforced in HLE's interviews, desk review and staff survey.

As noted earlier, negative perceptions of the ILO's efficiency in supporting DC and calls for systemic review have a long history. Over time, the growth, decentralisation, and situational diversity of the ILO's development cooperation work have strained existing organisational systems, some of which may have been developed assuming a more predictable and centralised operation. The contemporary ILO – an organisation that depends on DC delivery to respond to far more dynamic circumstances in the field to achieve its goals – needs continuous and systematic scrutiny of its processes and procedures to ensure they optimally support this delivery. While processes and procedures are rightly and rigorously monitored from a compliance perspective (via internal and external audits), and evaluations assess past performance and highlight lessons learned, DC projects and the systems that support delivery need active and continuous improvement.

In terms of a high-level strategic focus on efficiency, both strategic plans in place in the period of the evaluation (2018-21 and 2022-25) made only broad references to improving organizational efficiency and did not single out any specific efficiency issues faced by those delivering DC. P&B deliverables over the period are similarly high level. Sometimes, the door seems open to meaningful engagement on systems - for example, Output C.4 of the 2022-23 P&B talked about the need for "an organizational culture that supports creative thinking and is open to exploring new approaches" and "staff engagement... to diagnose challenges, develop solutions, and implement improvements applicable in diverse situations". This is clearly needed by staff delivering DC, but the Programme Implementation Report gave no hints that such engagement and problem solving had been focused on DC delivery efficiency issues⁷⁹.

A mechanism within the current ILO structure to enable such engagement and problem solving seems absent. The DC strategy does not address these issues and PARTNERSHIPS does not currently play a prominent role in amplifying the voice of DC practitioners in the field to instigate change. As one senior ILO manager put it:



"There is no process for continuous improvement... There is no centralised unit that looks at these processes and the extent to which front line staff are consulted is variable."

Observations on efficiency

MOPAN assessments: Areas for improvement in the efficiency of ILO's DC implementation were highlighted in both the 2015 and 2020 assessment reports of the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN). The 2015 report found that "slow recruitment processes and administrative procedures hamper the effectiveness and efficiency of DC project implementation" and that "donors expressed concern about the ILO's ability to deploy staff resources in a timely manner." The 2020 report rated the ILO's performance under "KPI 11 – Results are delivered efficiently" as unsatisfactory, with the poor result for timeliness of DC work being the main reason for this rating the other component of this indicator, cost-effectiveness, being rated as satisfactory. These reviews did not delve deeply into the processes that may have been contributing to these results but singled out recruitment and procurement delays as areas of concern. While some improvements

⁷⁹ The 2022-23 Programme Implementation Report instead focused on higher level innovation and knowledge management initiatives when reporting on this issue (p.94).

were noted since the 2015 MOPAN assessment, including the development of supporting tools and templates, it concluded that results were still unsatisfactory and that more work was needed.

Project evaluations: The HLE's analysis of evaluation meta-study of over 200 projects in the period gave a more positive overall assessment of the efficiency of DC project delivery. Some caution is needed in interpreting these results - for example, the criterion "ILO support to project" included both the efficiency of "administrative and financial support" and of "technical and programmatic support" and this may have skewed the overall findings to some extent. A deeper analysis of the results revealed some problem areas that echoed issues raised in the MOPAN report and in HLEs interviews with staff:

- ► Challenges were noted in several reports with regards to administrative and financial procedures, which led to delays in accessing funds and limited the timely delivery of products.
- Cost-effectiveness of certain projects was questionable due to cost per beneficiary and low return on investment, as results only benefited a few beneficiaries.
- ▶ Weak results were noted when financial resources were not allocated strategically, with budgets that were not results-based, and the quality and quantity of outputs were inadequate in relation to the financial resources used.
- A recurrent limitation was the lack of adequate staffing and high staff turnover, with periods of limited progress due to the unavailability of key staff. This was compounded with time lost due to the logistics of hiring new project staff, and the need to build their capacity.
- ▶ there were instances of **project staff being hired by other ILO projects before the end of their contracts** with ongoing projects, with no handover of activities undertaken.

Challenges were also found when long internal timeframes for administrative and financial procedures delayed implementation, especially when compounded with partner organizations that had weak financial capacities and when these procedures were decentralized. This sometimes led to partners and beneficiaries working without financial resources and having to spend their own funds to participate in activities while waiting to be reimbursed.

External audits: Strengthening the monitoring of the efficiency of DC projects has also been recommended by external audits. For example, noting the 2021 audit referred to the role that could be played by Outcome Coordination Teams "in monitoring of projects funded by voluntary contribution", and specifically "encouraging the OCTs to strengthen the *mechanism in identifying bottlenecks and capacity or resource gaps thus, proposing corrective measures through the OCTs aggregated view* of the programmatic and financial progress of RBTC and XBDC projects" (p.85). Noting that this had also been raised in previous audits, the ILO's response was that it had already been implemented and that the terms of reference for OCTs had been updated and that efforts to identify and correct bottlenecks were "under way and will continue in the future" (p.114). The HLE requested data on the specific measures taken through OCTs and their results, but none were provided.

Strong views from staff on inefficiency of systems supporting DC

Many of the staff interviewed for the HLE – including DC staff in the case study countries, HQ-based staff involved in the coordination of major DC projects and programmes, technical specialists, regional programming staff, and senior managers – stressed the vital importance of re-visiting the issue of a systemic response to improving processes and procedures that support the efficiency and effectiveness of DC delivery. Interviews highlighted longstanding operational bottlenecks and procedural inefficiencies that they believed were negatively affecting the delivery of DC projects, the capacity of the ILO to work optimally with partners, and the overall reputation of the ILO. Their frustration about the lack of a systemic response was sometimes palpable. Examples are included in **Box 6**:

⁸⁰ Specifically, OCTs would be responsible for "identifying bottlenecks and capacity or resource gaps in delivery and proposing measures to address them to relevant managers in regions and at HQ."

▶ Box 6: Comments on ILO DC efficiency from the HLE's interviews

"I have been involved in ILO DC for thirty years and things are no more efficient and no quicker." Unit Head, JSP Cluster

"Rules seem to have been **designed by and for people who have meetings in Geneva** - not for people in the field who often have to run through brick walls to fix things and get things done." Director, AP

"There's **always someone who can click 'no'** and the process goes back to the start. Many of the problems may not be with processes or systems, but with people. Systems and IGDS don't change behaviours and it is behaviour that we need to change." CTA, JSP Cluster

"We need to identify the bottlenecks, but this is part of our identity issue. As long as **half the organisation questions the place of DC**, the ILO can't move forward." Senior Manager, ECR Cluster

"There is **no mechanism in the ILO for managing change** and continuously improving systems. The Business Process Review was a good concept but made little headway." Technical Specialist, JSP Cluster.

"In the ILO, HR talks to HR and Finance talks to Finance. We need a mechanism that allows people to share ideas from the field and across the organisation and to **initiate change**. The problem is that, in a hierarchical culture, people will only share with their supervisor the process that they know has been done before." Programming Specialist, Regional Office

"There's $\operatorname{\mathsf{no}}$ place in the ILO for courageous conversations." Programming Specialist, Regional Office

"We desperately need a systemic response." Branch Chief, JSP Cluster



The **HLE's surveys** strongly reinforced these concerns. Recruitment, procurement and financial management procedures receiving a high number of ratings on the negative side of a six-point scale of efficiency (i.e., responses of "highly inefficient", "inefficient" or "somewhat inefficient") with recruitment efficiency being the biggest concern (46 per cent negative) followed by financial management procedures (36.7 per cent negative) and procurement (32.7 per cent negative). More details are provided below, but comments made by respondents to these questions were **universally negative**. Examples are included in **Box 7**:

▶ Box 7: Comments on ILO DC efficiency from the HLE's staff survey

"The time, energy and number of emails that it takes to advance things is unbelievable."

"The recruitment processes of the ILO are **highly inefficient** and typically delay project start... In general, the ILO as an organization is **not well fit for project delivery.**"

"Recruitment is particularly slow and inefficient."

"They all take quite a long time, leaving the project team with even more limited time to complete activities. In the current situation without a project team established, which takes around six months, almost nothing starts."

"Ainsi **la lourdeur des procédures** d'achat et financières ne permet d'accélerer l'atteinte des objectifs" *As a result, cumbersome purchasing and financial procedures do not speed up the achievement of objectives*⁸¹".

"Recruitment processes/delays have caused some **serious problems**, especially on short timed projects, causing requests for time extensions which are not looked on favourably by donors".

"In small offices, where the number of RB staff is little, it is **overwhelming** for them to be part of the process".

"The ILO regulations for HR, procurement and financial management are **cumbersome and bureaucratic**, unlike some competing agencies which procedures are simpler and more agile."

"There is no change process in the ILO, so any Director is able to create **additional loops** to protect herself against accusation of fraud - so we end up with a maze of various processes and practices that are country or region specific and go beyond what is required to limit the risks."



Such was the desire to raise awareness of these administrative efficiency issues and the need for a systemic response, that a group of departments/units in HQ⁸² commissioned a "rapid assessment" of project implementation in the field, the so called "Frontline report" (Evans-Klock and Tegmo-Reddy, **Project Implementation at the Frontline – a rapid assessment**, December 2021). This was conducted by former senior ILO managers with extensive experience in HQ and the field and in the broader UN system. Collectively, the departments and units that commissioned the report had at that time, a DC portfolio with a budget of almost USD 900 million, ran 346 projects, employed 856 staff, and led four of the ILO Flagship Programmes. DC was very much their business.

The consultancy was an investigative exercise which directed its findings to the commissioning units themselves, gathering information from DC staff at the frontline on their experiences, good practices, bottlenecks, and possible solutions. It never set out to verify its findings or explore the feasibility of its recommendations with field offices or administrative departments. The idea was to equip the commissioning units with information and ideas that could help them to work with colleagues "to find constructive, practical solutions to new and perennial challenges."

Despite these apparently good intentions, the initiative has failed to build any new momentum for systemic change. Stakeholders said that there was some initial engagement between senior policy and administrative staff, but this did not advance. Some internal "push back" on the report was also mentioned with some stakeholders questioning what they saw as "largely anecdotal" nature of its findings, while others said that no opportunities were afforded to them to respond to its findings and to provide alternative points of view. These ignored the purpose of the report – to give voice to DC staff in the field and to initiate a dialogue. It was not an evaluation in the conventional sense, and neither a blueprint for change nor a manifesto for reform.

⁸¹ Translated by EVAL.

⁸² Better Work Branch, Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch (in the then Governance Department); Development and Investment Branch, Skills for Employability Branch (in the then Employment Department); and the Inclusive Markets and Entrepreneurship team in the Small and Medium Enterprise Unit (in the Enterprise Department).

The Final report of the Transition Team to the ILO Director-General referred to the report and, under "efficiency, flexibility and agility", proposed that its recommendations be analysed (Para 102.d) as part of "a series of measures to build on the ILO Development Cooperation Strategy 2020-25"83. More than two years after its release and wide circulation, any momentum it might have created has now been lost.

SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT DOES NOT MEAN ABANDONING THE RULES

Ensuring accountability and efficient delivery: Counterbalancing the need to improve the responsiveness and speed of the ILO's systems to improve DC efficiency and effectiveness is the equally important need to ensure that these systems continue to meet accountability and risk management requirements. Nobody disputes the need for processes to be governed by rules – they are there to protect both individual ILO staff and the organisation. Rather, operational procedures are intended to guide what needs to be done to deliver projects while simultaneously stipulating *how* things should be done to avoid fraud and waste. But they are not immutable or fixed in stone - as a senior manager working in the compliance area said:



"There's always scope to review systems, to re-balance control systems and to re-consider risks – but not to bypass control systems altogether. When things go wrong, they go spectacularly wrong."

This re-balancing theme was at the heart of the *Frontline* review, which lauded the ILO's reputation for integrity and transparency but said that it had not yet worked out how to maintain this reputation while also building a reputation for delivery efficiency. It made the reasonable point that managing the risk of poor delivery and impact was as important as managing fraud and waste – quoting staff who believed instead that *"the ILO manages for audits not delivery."*

Whatever process can be put in place for this "re-balancing", it needs to create a framework both to increase value (from a DC delivery side) and to ensure that accountability standards are maintained. A dialogue is needed between HQ administrative units that are responsible for systems and compliance and DC practitioners to ensure that they are accountable to each other. Without a continuous improvement mechanism that enables this dialogue, the ILO is stuck, as one informant told us, where:

"DC staff working in the field continuously complain that the processes don't fit their needs and HQ staff complain that the field is full of cowboys."

Such re-balancing also requires a better **understanding of risk**. Many of the people consulted by the HLE suggested that avoiding risk seemed to be the ILO's priority. Senior staff with a deeper knowledge of the issue explained that it was really about "managing uncertainty" and control frameworks were needed to reach the right balance:



"The ILO is not risk averse. It is risk naïve. We see evidence of both excessive risk taking and excessive risk aversion. Because we don't have a proper understanding of risk we end often end up with poorly designed processes."

⁸³ ILO Transition Team, For a new global social contract – Final report of the Transition Team to the ILO Director General, October 2022.

Not understanding what is possible in existing systems: Some stakeholders also pointed out that it was not always the systems themselves that led to inefficiencies in implementation but also how they were understood and used. Sometimes the people using the systems just do not have the knowledge they need to work within the systems. In an organization as large and as decentralized as the ILO, there are also local variations in systems, policy changes are sometimes not known, understood or implemented, or there are no available local staff who can advise on what is possible. Steps are being taken to improve problem areas, but they do not always filter down to operators as quickly as they could. As an HR staff member said:



"The problem we face is that we are overwhelmed. Even if you communicate you don't guarantee take up - if you write, it's not read. So, people remain in ignorance and retain outdated views when a lot has been done to resolve these issues. Managers have responsibility for their CTAs and individuals have a responsibility to self-inform. It's not all HRD's responsibility."

Planning and good project management: Better planning by DC staff was often mentioned as a factor that needed more attention.



"DC projects need to consult early with HRD and Finance. They need to form alliances with people who can help them consider the important planning issues. Some say the rules are preventing agility and speed, but they have often protected the ILO from fraud and other problems." Director

Efficiency improvements were reported at different points within systems, but DC staff remain frustrated by the ILO's lack of responsiveness to their needs. Existing monitoring arrangements do not provide management with enough data to ensure that whole systems are working efficiently and can be continuously improved.

One of the difficulties identified by the HLE and through evaluations, audits and external reviews is a lack of data to help identify performance issues and analyse root causes of apparent efficiency problems, delays, and financial underspend. Monitoring of DC projects is weak overall, and problems can therefore go unnoticed until they escalate.

For example, one frequently cited potential indicator of inefficiency in the ILO's delivery of DC projects was the frequency of "no cost extensions". These extensions are often granted by funding partners following requests from the ILO to extend the project end-date within the existing approved budgets. Data on these extensions are not systematically collected, but they are apparently a very common, even routine practice. Unspent funds returned to funding partners

might also be a related indicator. The HLE learned that USD 44.7 million was returned to funding partners in the period 2018 to 2024 from over 700 projects. Taken at face value, this is a somewhat startling figure, but the per project returns were generally smaller with only around 100 projects returning more than USD 100,000. The highest returned amount was USD 1.5 million for a regional project in the LAC region. So, do such measures reflect inefficiency or something else?

On the one hand, staff from PARTNERSHIPS rightly pointed out that, while common, these extensions do not in themselves necessarily reflect inherent inefficiencies in the ILO's delivery of DC. There are many reasons why projects are extended in this way, and some are outside the ILO's control. Some are related to the internal practices of funding partners - for example, working within their own financial planning cycles and constraints, some funding partners were said to set timeframes that they know in advance would need to be extended. Sometimes there are delays imposed or created by governments. Crises, political upheavals, and natural disasters also have a profound effect – as was the case during the period of this evaluation, with the COVID-19 pandemic which required many projects to adapt their activities and often to seek extensions. No cost extensions can even be a positive in terms of efficiency - for example, when cost-efficient delivery creates savings that enable extensions for value added activities beyond what was originally planned. PARTNERSHIPS also told the evaluation that, from their perspective, funding partners themselves were not generally concerned about these extensions⁸⁴.

On the other hand, some delays *are* more within the ILO's control and understanding how these might be contributing to the timeliness and general efficiency of project delivery is important. These might relate to any number of issues where real improvements can and should be made including:

- over-ambitious design (frequently identified as a weakness in project evaluation reports)
- the approval of projects that stretch or are beyond the ILO's existing capability
- delays in recruitment and procurement
- inadequate planning and project management
- line management bottlenecks or
- deficiencies in DC staff capability and knowledge

In short, these reflect many of the same "pain points" identified in DC delivery that have been raised in reviews, evaluations and audits over the years and which continue to frustrate many DC practitioners in the field.

The key point to make here is that mechanisms to monitor these efficiency issues across the DC portfolio are weak, fragmented or non-existent. This hinders the ILO's capacity to make improvements. Evaluations capture information on these issues, but the lessons they identify are not applied well in subsequent project design or in broader improvements of ILO systems. Financial delivery rates are monitored and there is an annual "rephasing" of DC budgets, but these data do not offer any real insights into inefficiency or its root causes. As one senior financial manager said:



"Can we say, if there is a no-cost extension, that this is because there's more to do? Or is it just because we are slow? Expenditure is the worst form of performance measurement but it's the only one we seem to have."

⁸⁴ Other views were expressed about this. Some DC staff pointed out that funding partners often had an imperative to move money quickly and delays were a real concern to them. One funding partner in a case study country thought it was an indicator that the "project implementation was not an ILO strength".

Another senior manager said that "IT systems supporting DC project management are from the Stone Age – we should be embarrassed", suggesting that an IT platform is needed to support monitoring, one that "asks difficult questions to support continuous improvement" and which explores and measures these efficiency (and effectiveness) issues and concerns. "People's behaviours will be driven by what you're measuring – if all we're measuring is delivery rate, this leads to distortions."

Weak monitoring of DC has been highlighted in the MOPAN reports, evaluation meta-studies and, more recently in the 2023 Annual Report and Plan of the ILO's Senior Risk Officer:



"The performance of key management processes is not consistently or comprehensively measured. For example, data are collected on the achievement of outcome and output targets for individual DC projects, but they are not consolidated to identify performance in **spend against budget**, **timely completion**, **or percentage of outputs or outcomes achieved**, **whether globally, or comparatively between offices, regions**, **departments and clusters**." p5

Steps have been taken to address identified efficiency problems affecting DC project implementation, but these do not generally go beyond individual "pain points" within the system and fail to look at interdependencies along the whole value chain of the process. The examples of DC recruitment and procurement provide an insight into this issue.

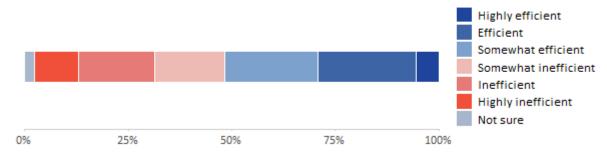
IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF DC RECRUITMENT

Delays in getting key staff in place has been a perennial concern for the ILO. Historically, the average recruitment time for CTAs was mentioned in several reports and in the HLE's interviews as being around six months from advertising the job to commencement. Some DC staff shared examples where this had been much longer – 11 months or more. Without these key DC staff in place, nothing much can happen. Inception periods are sometimes built into project contracts, and this allows some administrative breathing space, but, regardless, constituents and other targeted beneficiaries of the projects still must wait to receive the support these projects are offering.

The HLE's surveys confirmed that recruitment is overwhelmingly perceived by staff as being inefficient. 46 per cent of respondents ranked recruitment to be inefficient including 10.6 per cent rating in "highly inefficient", 18.5 per cent "inefficient", and 17 per cent "somewhat inefficient". Fewer than a third of staff respondents rated recruitment as being efficient. See **Figure 16.** Constituents' perceptions were more favourable (52 per cent of respondents rating as "somewhat efficient", "efficient" or "highly efficient").

FIGURE 16: STAFF SURVEY QUESTION - "HOW WELL DO RECRUITMENT SERVICES SUPPORT EFFICIENT AND TIMELY DELIVERY OF DC?"

How well do recruitment services support efficient and timely delivery of DC?

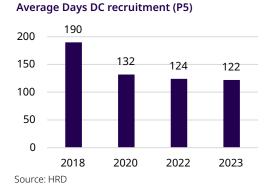


HRD reported that, during the period of the evaluation, its measures of recruitment efficiency showed improvements - the average number of calendar days between the posting of vacancies for key project positions (P5 level) and the selected candidate's start date has decreased by more than a third. The corresponding result for all development cooperation positions (P level, excluding NO/GS positions) was better still, with a decrease of 44 per cent – See **Figure 17.**

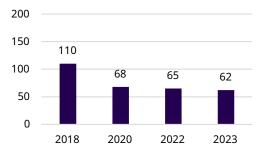
The exact reasons for this improvement are not clear. Failure to start recruitment early enough was frequently mentioned as a major source of delays and maybe this message has started to get through to hiring managers - despite some lingering beliefs that nothing can start until funding has been received⁸⁵. Other good practices may also have been identified and shared and, as practices vary in the ILO's decentralized structure, some Regional Offices and Country Offices may have improved more than others.

HRD is seeking to further improve recruitment times. In December 2023, to tackle perceived knowledge gaps and to communicate good practice, HRD published an online **Development Cooperation Recruitment and Selection Toolkit**⁸⁶. This resource reinforces the need to reduce delays through its guiding principles of "advanced planning", "prepare job descriptions and advertise early", and "hiring manager commitment", especially to "respecting the timeframes provided in the toolkit". It includes a step-by-step guide to the DC recruitment and selection procedure, including recommended timeframes for each step. The envisaged timeframe from advertising to completion (not commencement in the position) is 42 to 63 days⁸⁷. **These timeframes need to be actively promoted as performance benchmarks and continuously improved**.

FIGURE 17: RECRUITMENT TIME FOR DC STAFF



Average Days DC recruitment P staff



⁸⁵ Evans-Klock and Tegmo-Reddy found that: "In the majority of cases that we heard, nothing in recruitment started before the project document was signed and money transferred. And in these cases, there was nothing to be shown on delivery for 4 to 6 months."

⁸⁶ ILO, Development Cooperation Recruitment and Selection Tool kit, Accessed 8 June 2024.

⁸⁷ Two to four weeks to advertise and four to five weeks to complete the selection process.

While working on identified weaknesses in procedural efficiency are welcome and can make a difference, to optimise efficiency, **broader procedural reviews are needed** that take a fuller view of systems and their interconnections. Such was the intention of the ILO's Business Process Review (BPR), initiated in 2016 and carried out in collaboration with McKinsey & Company. This large-scale review of the ILO's business processes was broad though its focus was more on HQ-linked transactions than on processes in the field. McKinsey trained ILO staff in the BPR team in its review methodology. Improving the responsiveness of administrative services was part of the BPR's terms of reference, and this included an assessment of the expectations and satisfaction of users of these services and identified actions for improvement.

The BPR team transformed into the **Business Innovation Unit** (BIU) which operated until June 2022 as:



"An internal thought partner, providing expertise supporting staff and managers to continuously improve the way we work through a focus on innovation and change management, strategic problem solving and team development... We use our in-depth knowledge of the ILO and take a people-centred approach to identifying and shaping change in processes, strategies and team dynamics."

The BIU had a broad scope⁸⁸ and acted as a type of internal consultancy service to units and offices across the organization. The full extent of its work in supporting DC efficiency was unclear, but one good example was a project commissioned by the Country Offices for Algiers and Addis Ababa to review "pain points" related to DC recruitment and procurement. From December 2020 to June 2021, the BIU engaged with staff and management in the Country Offices as well as relevant stakeholders in Regional Office and HQ.

The work was detailed, closely examining processes, identifying their root causes, and setting goals and timelines for improvement. It illustrates the kind of participatory approach that is needed to address DC efficiency concerns more broadly and systemically - bringing DC practitioners together with systems designers and custodians, collecting and using evidence to analyse scope for continuous improvements to support delivery while complying with standards. **Figure 18** below summarises the findings of a "Recruitment Diagnostic: Post-mortem case study on lead time" based on data collected by HR assistants in the two countries from a sample of P and G staff recruitment exercises. It highlighted and quantified the "pain points" in the process – where the delays had blown out – providing the basis for further dialogue, analysis, and the identification of root causes. It then set out a plan for change, defining the "current state", including existing working methods, tools, quidelines and templates, and the desired "future state".

The BIU is now gone but their exercise in Algiers and Addis Ababa offers four valuable lessons. First, is that "you cannot improve what you do not measure". None of the data used in this exercise were routinely collected to inform improvements in processes. Second, efficiency improvements in complex systems often need coordinated action across multiple units. The action plan this exercise produced required action and inputs not just from the HR Department, but from Regional Office units, PROGRAM, FINANCE, and Country Office Directors. Practices and rules vary from place to place, and different units and stakeholders need to be engaged to solve their unique efficiency

problems⁸⁹. Third, you need someone to monitor where the problems are, to initiate the review, and to facilitate it. Last, while practices and circumstances vary across the organisation, you need a way to share procedural innovations that can be emulated elsewhere.

Driving such efficiency improvements across the organization will require an approach that incorporates all these lessons. A first step, as the 2019 external audit recommended (Rec 4), is a much more rigorous approach to measuring recruitment efficiency and to improving accountability of the process owners:

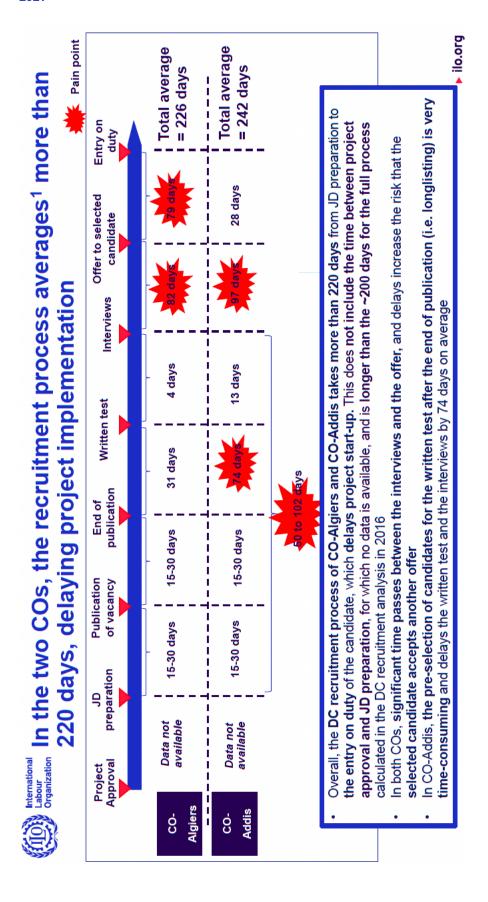


"The ILO should set clear parameters to measure efficiency, effectiveness and timeliness of the various stages of the recruitment process which include among others, setting a maximum length for each process stream, and exacting accountability on the process owners to enhance better performance monitoring of the whole recruitment and selection process".

While HRD measures now recruitment times, "accountability on the process owners" does not seem to have been advanced, probably because it is not HRD's job to do this. The problem is that there may not be a unit within the ILO that does have this role.

⁸⁹ The example was given where, in one location, no HR related planning meetings could be held without a representative of HR being present. In another, there was of a rule that only HR staff were allowed to write up the selection reports.

FIGURE 18: EXAMPLE OF BIU RECRUITMENT PROCESS ANALYSIS IN TWO AFRICAN COUNTRIES, 2021

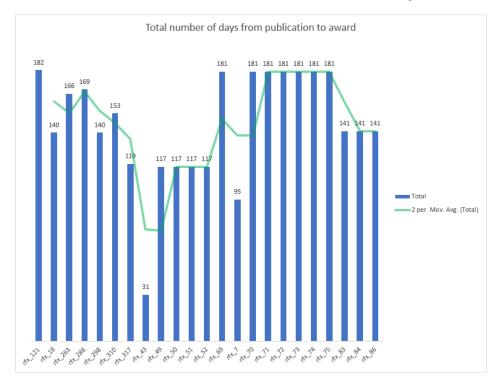


IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF DC PROCUREMENT

Significant progress has been made in recent years in introducing new procurement systems and processes, and the ILO is moving towards a full digitalization. Innovations include the "Jaggaer" platform introduced to manage procurement from solicitation of proposals to awarding of contracts (for purchases over USD 50,000), and the "OPP" online submission and approval system for procurement planning. The Procurement Department has also invested time and resources into staff capacity development (through online modules, training in Jaggaer, webinars, and Communities of Practice) and outposted specialists in some locations with a direct reporting line to HQ (e.g., in Addis Ababa and Colombia). Use of Long-Term Agreements (LTAs) has improved efficiency by accelerating recurring purchases of good and services. The ILO's procurement strategy is looking to do more to streamline and benchmark services against best practice, further develop capacity in HQ and the field and continue to digitize operations, such as for contract management.

Measuring the extent to which these innovations have so far improved procurement efficiency is hampered by a lack of data. This is because Jaggaer is still being rolled out and staff are still being trained. PROCUREMENT did supply the HLE with a sample of data extracted from Jaggaer of 23 projects covering two countries (Papua New Guinea and Lebanon) running between 2022 and 2024 (see **Figure 19**). This represents a proxy available for DC project procurement and reflects the timeline from date of tender to the award date. On average, the cycle was completed in approximately **146 days or 4.9 months**^{90.} Some took much longer, closer to six months, while others were closer to three.

FIGURE 19: TIME TO COMPLETE PROCUREMENT – SAMPLE OF 23 PROJECTS IN PNG AND LEBANON

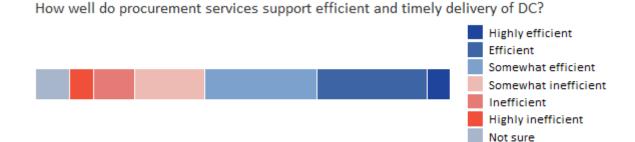


⁹⁰ These data need some context – Jaggaer was only launched in late 2021 and capacity building for both ILO staff and suppliers was still be rolled out. PROCUREMENT advised that many of the projects that took longer to complete their procurements were from early 2022 in the period when staff were still learning how to use the system. Also, both the sample countries were in difficult or fragile settings which can affect the timeline negatively.

To compare performance against a baseline, the evaluation also requested information on procurement times prior to the introduction of Jaggaer, but data was not readily available for this purpose. Previously, a paper-based system was used. PROCUREMENT advised that, based on a small sample of projects, the average timeline was **5.2 months** from date of tender to award date. This suggests that Jaggaer has at least begun to make a difference and once fully operational this trend seems likely to continue.

The HLE's surveys reinforced the view that procurement efficiency needs further improvement. 32.7 per cent of respondents rated procurement to be inefficient including 5.8 per cent rating in "highly inefficient", 10 per cent "inefficient", and 17 per cent "somewhat inefficient". Another 27.3 per cent rated it as "somewhat efficient" and 31.8 per cent as either "efficient" (26.4) or "highly efficient" (5.45). Fewer than a third of staff respondents rated recruitment as being efficient, see Figure 20. Constituents' perceptions were more favourable (53.1 per cent of respondents rating as "somewhat efficient", "efficient" or "highly efficient").

FIGURE 20: STAFF SURVEY QUESTION - "HOW WELL DO PROCUREMENT SERVICES SUPPORT EFFICIENT AND TIMELY DELIVERY OF DC?"



75%

100%

More generally, including with exercises beneath the USD 50,000 threshold, improvements in procurement are still to flow through to DC delivery in some locations. With some notable exceptions – such as countries with a large DC portfolio and more specialist procurement staff – capacity is stretched in the field. Sometimes there are project-specific procurement issues where the ILO lacks expertise. This is particularly the case with more "exotic" procurements built into projects.

50%

25%

The HLE found that responsiveness to the needs of DC projects working in **fragile and crisis situations** was a specific procurement pain point. From the HQ side, there was a view that ILO is simply not structured to procure goods and services in the same way as humanitarian agencies, which often need to quickly meet the survival needs of beneficiaries. Working in partnership with these agencies can make the ILO look slow and can place enormous pressure on the organisation. The ILO does have emergency provisions for waivers, but these do not seem to always solve the problems faced in the field.

In processing smaller procurement exercises, those between USD 20,000 and 50,000, the role of procurement oversight committees was highlighted as a "pain point" in some locations. In Africa, these Local Oversight Review Committees (LORCs) are tasked with reviewing tender documentation. Committee members have their own full-time jobs and sometimes meet only infrequently. The HLE learnt from the interviews that this had had a negative effect on the speed of procurement which adversely affected DC project performance. A review of the LORCs effectiveness is underway in Africa.

Larger programmes have been able to circumvent some of these problems. For example, global Flagship Programmes like Better Work have their own systems. PROSPECTS activities are subject to a country-level LORC process in the participating African countries, but a waiver has recently been introduced for Uganda and Kenya by appointing a project-dedicated Finance Certifying Officer. In Bangladesh, its high level of DC project funding means that it has its own resident "Local Procurement Review Committee". This gives it greater control and was reported to work efficiently in meeting the many procurement needs of its diverse DC portfolio.91

Some interviews suggested that procurement thresholds needed to be reviewed, but others thought that, in most cases, the current rules were appropriate and could be used efficiently: "For procurement up to USD 50,000 you need three quotes – this is not a complicated process. Maybe people are not planning well and are leaving things to the last minute."

Moving forward, stakeholder identified several ways DC-related procurement efficiency could be enhanced:

- ▶ Improved training for CTAs on procurement
- Analysis of procurement processes on the ground (including through data on Jaggaer), reviewing who is doing what and where skills gaps are evident.
- Closer scrutiny of projects in the appraisal stage including planned procurement to avoid known problem areas and to commence procurement planning earlier.
- ▶ Publishing performance standards for processing procurement so that DC staff can build that time into their plans.
- Using procurement to reinforce the positioning of the ILO as a leader in inclusion (gender, disability) and building this into procurement processes.
- ▶ Similarly, aligning procurement with the ILO's goals in promoting environmental sustainability, and pursuing socially responsible procurement.
- ▶ Investigating options to replace the current procurement review committee approach with a more agile virtual alternative, using panels of people who could be brought together more regularly and reliably to improve the speed and efficiency of the process.

There is potential to improve the efficiency of DC delivery through changes to staff mobility and contracting arrangements and by giving more attention to DC talent management and retention.

Lack of staff mobility across the ILO hinders the efficiency and quality of the ILO's DC work and the development and prospects of its staff. There have been many past recommendations on how improving staff mobility across the ILO would enhance and enrich its work, but stakeholders reported that not enough progress has been made.

Ten years ago, the 2014 Field Operations & Structure and Technical Cooperation Review identified facilitating staff mobility as a "crucial enabling recommendation" for the reforms its set in motion, saying that even then that this was "long overdue" and a "pre-requisite for any field reform to work" (p.10). The ILO has a clear policy in place for staff mobility of and offers incentives, but senior managers consulted during the HLE believe that the potential benefits of a more mobile and agile workforce have not been realised, especially as they relate to DC. As one senior manager said:

 ⁹¹ As set out in IGDS 216: "When a single purchase of goods and/or services is likely to exceed the T1 ceiling but remains below the T2 threshold, informal competitive bidding to demonstrate value for money should be undertaken. This should normally involve seeking comparative prices from three or more suppliers." (10)
 92 ILO, Mobility, Viewed 10 June 2024.



"You have two types of staff who can't be moved around and there seems to be no capacity to adjust these rules. Why then can other UN agencies be more rapid and flexible? Other agencies face delays with hiring but can more easily move people to fill gaps, even in the short term as a transition until the long-term appointment is in place."

The HLE's scope did not allow the evaluation team to explore in depth the reasons why improved staff mobility remains such an elusive goal in the ILO, but we learnt that barriers include rules forbidding any mixing of DC and RB funding, contractual differences, managerial reluctance to release staff, RB staff fears that they would lose the position they "own" in HQ, and perceptions that even a temporary move from an RB role to a DC role was a retrograde step in terms of status⁹³ – a possible "career killer" if you made the wrong choice. The HLE offers no "magic wand" to address these seemingly entrenched issues but believes the issue should be revisited.

Another form of staff mobility relates to **mobility of DC staff themselves** and this also has an efficiency dimension. DC staff are fixed-term appointments (up until recently on one-year contracts, but this has been extended to two-year contracts) and while some complete their assignment and their connection with the ILO then ends, the HLE interviewed some DC staff who had been working in the ILO for as long as 20 years "on and off" with each gap (often between phases of the same project) requiring interviews, examinations, and selection interviews before they could resume – essentially as a new starter in the ILO. While ILO rightly champions good practice in hiring practices to ensure fairness and transparency, it also needs to be sensitive to the decent work deficits of precarious employment, something its own DC staff know all too well.

This also links to the broader efficiency issue of **talent management and retention**. Given the inordinate amount of time that the ILO seems to take to find talented DC staff, it seems strange that it is not more strategic in its approach to keeping them. In past DC project evaluations conducted by the HLE team, we have engaged with extremely talented CTAs with skills and experience that would add value to the ILO wherever they might work but, as their contracts near completion, they started applying for jobs elsewhere. A process to give priority consideration to identified DC staff for relevant positions elsewhere across the organizations is not beyond reach or in conflict with the principles of fairness and equal opportunity. DC talent pools and rosters - **lists of pre-assessed and endorsed candidates** that can be hired for similar positions without a new competitive process – could be a solution. As the ILO's Human Resource Strategy 2022-2025 promotes:



"The Office seeks to ensure that it has the right people in the right place at the right time, but this is becoming an increasingly complex equation. There is a need to rethink talent management strategies in order to address these changing needs, to innovate ILO processes and refresh the skillsets in ILO teams." (p.7)

⁹³ In some important respects, this perception of lower status is understandable given the huge gap in employment conditions between RB and DC staff and the effect this has on morale. See for example the findings of the ILO staff union's 2022 Global survey of ILO staff.

The issue of using DC staff rosters or eligibility lists to meet DC project staffing needs in a more efficient is not new. Along with recommendations to facilitate the drafting of job descriptions and to better measure the efficiency of the entire recruitment process, the 2019 external audit included the following:



Recommendation 6: We recommended that the ILO should develop a system of rosters/pools of pre-assessed candidates to facilitate in the attainment of a sound, timely and effective selection process.

Although the ILO responded that it would act on the other recommendations of the audit, it indicated that without modification of the ILO's current rules and regulations on recruitment and selection, it was not "in a position to implement this recommendation for all ILO vacancies". Since we are not concerned here with "all ILO vacancies", is there scope to **loosen these rules and regulations for DC recruitment**? It would make an enormous difference to the organisation and to the many ILO staff employed under precarious conditions.

Another idea that has been floated periodically as a mechanism to help fill gaps in DC staff employment – as well as to greatly accelerating the speed of project start up and possibly to facilitate staff mobility arrangements as well – is the establishment of a "DC capital fund" which could be used to get DC staff in place before funds were received from funding partners. This was a recommendation of the Business Process Review and while the HLE was not privy to the details of this proposal and the circumstances where it was envisaged to apply, it could in principle be a major boost to DC efficiency and timeliness. Presumably, funds could be drawn down and later reimbursed when project funds were received (provided, of course, the funding partner was amenable to such an arrangement). The Frontline review mentioned a similar idea for a pooled funding mechanism which "could provide bridging funds to give project staff some security and to reduce projects" risk of losing experienced staff" as well as enabling an accelerated project start-up.

There may be good reasons why this idea has not been implemented, but the HLE considers it to be worth re-examining to assess its technical feasibility as well as its potential risks and potential rewards. The HLE learned that, under certain circumstance, PSI can also be used pre-finance DC activities⁹⁴ though its practice is discouraged as it is deemed administratively difficult. Other creative options to fill short-term funding gaps were also mentioned (including by people responsible for compliance-related functions) including use of RBTC and RBSA. But, as one informant said, "there is a risk aversion – but you could equally ask 'how often has a funding partner signed an agreement with the ILO and not paid us?""

IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF DC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

An in-depth analysis of the efficiency of DC financial management was outside the HLE's Terms of Reference. Two issues were raised in the consultations that may warrant further attention.

The first is closely related to the issue discussed earlier of "no cost extensions". In line with the evaluation's finding on the need for closer monitoring of projects so that performance can be continuously improved, there is a need too for more transparency in DC project budget management. Improved information on how well budgets are developed, the extent they need to be modified, and the reasons for these modifications would provide important insights for future project design, identify DC staff training needs, and contribute to better performance monitoring.

For example, the HLE sought details of the extent that project budgets had been "re-phased" – that is, the degree that budgets had been re-allocated from one year to subsequent years due to underspending. No data was readily available to the HLE on this. Re-phasing is not a problem in itself, but it may be an indicator of other efficiency issues, such as over-ambitious project design, or any number of other issues inside or outside the ILO's control. A 2020 external audit calculated that had it not been for re-phasing in that year, DC delivery would be calculated at only 48 per cent. This was the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, and was therefore unusual, but the HLE was told by senior managers that "delivery rates" of 60 per cent or less are standard⁹⁵. Flexibility is important, but without stronger monitoring and accountability, there is little incentive to improve financial efficiency in DC delivery – or to get to the root causes of problems, which may relate to broader ILO administrative support systems. There may even be disincentives to be efficient - slow delivery rates and no-cost project extensions mean that staff contracts can be extended.

Some stakeholders interviewed by the HLE team were quite concerned about the issue, but others were quite relaxed, seemingly accepting it as a natural and unavoidable part of DC delivery. The ILO's Results-based Budgeting Guide identifies the risks inherent in this:



"Failure to deliver means that the ILO is vulnerable to reputational risk when a project cannot complete its designed outcomes on time and within budget, making the mobilization of resources from the same and other donors more difficult."

Second, there is the issue of how **Programme Support Income** (PSI) is levied and applied. PSI is generated by charging programme support costs to extra-budgetary financial contributions in line with agreements with donors. It is allocated by the DG to support the effective delivery of DC projects and programmes.

The HLE did not examine PSI processes and allocations in any depth, but there were strong views expressed by staff involved in DC concerning these issues. Among these was the issue of how much support from HQ specialist projects were entitled to by virtue of their PSI contribution to HQ operations. Large DC projects like PROSPECTS generate a significant amount of PSI but reported that they are often asked to draw additional funds from their budgets to pay for support. With Regular Budgets under pressure, access to the ILO's technical expertise is not guaranteed. Instead, a sort of bartering takes place where, as one informant said, "back-stopping work months have become a currency in the ILO".

There is clearly a disconnect between the PSI that comes out of project budgets and the level of technical support that is delivered to these projects as a result. Too much is left to what deals can be negotiated by CTAs and programme managers. Access to technical support for DC is what sets the ILO apart from its competitors and a clearer policy and institutional response is needed. As one programme manager said:



"You can't do something so critical in an ad hoc manner. But that is what we are doing, and it is a big risk to the ILO."

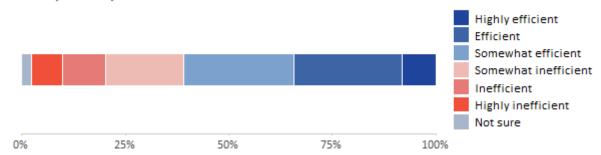
⁹⁵ A 2006 paper to the ILC (ILC 2006, Report VI) illustrates that this has been the norm for a long time: "Constituents and donors have always seen the delivery rate... as an important indicator of the efficiency with which the Office manages its programmes... The delivery rate averages between 60 and 70 per cent each year."

⁹⁶ ILO. Results-based Budgeting: A guide to prepare and entering results-based budget in IRIS (ILO internal document).

More broadly, the HLE's surveys reinforced the view that financial management procedures were adversely affecting the efficient and timely delivery of DC. 36.75 per cent of respondents rated financial management procedures to be inefficient including 7.5 per cent rating in "highly inefficient", 10.2 per cent "inefficient", and 19 per cent "somewhat inefficient". Another 26.8 per cent rated it as "somewhat efficient" and 34 per cent as either "efficient" (25.9) or "highly efficient" (8.13). See **Figure 21**. Constituents' perceptions were more favourable - 62.3 per cent of respondents rating it as "somewhat efficient", "efficient" or "highly efficient".

FIGURE 21: STAFF SURVEY QUESTION - "HOW WELL DO FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES

How well do financial management procedures support efficient and timely delivery of DC?



IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Strategy mainly reaffirms existing practices rather than providing innovative guidance for future priorities and approaches. Its development lacked transparency and stakeholder engagement, leading to low staff ownership. To ensure impact and sustainability, future efforts should emphasize "what success looks like".

The DC Strategy has contributed to several changes in the ILO's development cooperation approach. These include improvements at various scales in such areas as services to constituents, partnerships for policy coherence, partnerships for finance, and enhancements in efficiency, decent work results, and transparency. These changes have taken some time to become established and their sustainability and impact cannot be confirmed. Furthermore, many of the changes promoted by the Strategy under its four pillars were already well under way in ILO approaches before the Strategy was approved by the Governing Body. From this perspective, many ILO stakeholders expressed the view that the Strategy has made a more useful contribution as a confirmation of what ILO was already doing at various levels than as an innovative guide to future priorities, directions and approaches. Since many stakeholders across ILO feel that the current Strategy lacks a clear sense of direction and prioritisation, they often expressed disappointment with its content, effects and contribution towards eventual impact.

The ILO's DC Strategy has led to notable improvements in its operations and effects. However, to sustain and enhance these gains, the Strategy must focus on promoting innovations, ensuring transparent development processes, and establishing clear exit strategies for interventions. Future efforts should also emphasize inter-connectivity of the four pillars and address substantial deficiencies in data necessary to track long-term progress towards impacts effectively.

A THEORY OF CHANGE BASED ASSESSMENT OF PROGRESS TOWARDS LONG-TERM IMPACT UNDER THE DC STRATEGY

As discussed under **RELEVANCE**, the ILO's DC Strategy does not include a Theory of Change and the HLE has retrospectively created one to help assess the intended and actual results promoted by the Strategy (see **Figure 22**). A Theory of Change provides a foundation for assessment of performance against a set of pre-determined criteria – in this case, against the OECD-DAC Evaluation Criteria of relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and impact (or often, progress towards impact).

These criteria distinguish between different stages of results, most particularly between outputs (which the implementer largely controls) and outcomes, which require external stakeholders to build on the outputs to deliver the next level of results. However, implementation designers are less stringent in maintaining such distinctions, often leading to an over-estimate of outcome achievements, many of which are actually outputs. The DC Strategy and its Implementation Plan and associated "deliverables" show such a tendency, which therefore needs "correction" in describing levels of achievement, which are expected to be attained.

Where an intervention has not been based on a comprehensive Theory of Change, as is the case with the DC Strategy, significant gaps are likely in the availability of performance data capable of addressing some of the DAC criteria. A prevalent weakness across development cooperation evaluation stems from the preference of implementing institutions to focus their "Results Based Management" on elements, which lie within their own control, rather than on the contribution that these results are making to broader processes at country, regional and even global level. Characteristically, detailed results attention is focussed on activities, inputs and outputs, which are all internal to the institution. Progress from outputs towards outcomes is often weakly reported, while assessment of actual or potential movement from outcomes towards impacts is rarely realistically undertaken.

An assessment of ILO RBM systems based on findings from over 200 Decent Work performance appraisals of final independent project evaluations conducted between 2019 and 2023 highlights

substantial weaknesses in results reporting.⁹⁷ It summarises that "20 per cent of ILO interventions had a complete **results framework** that allowed for regular monitoring of performance, with quantified, realistic targets linked to the project strategy, and a logical fit between indicators and outcomes. Often, while components of a results framework were established, there were discrepancies in the structure, limiting its use. Moreover, in 20 per cent of cases, there was no evidence that a results framework existed, or, if they had been developed, they were unreliable or irrelevant.

Related to this, there were important challenges in monitoring and reporting frameworks, although there was a higher proportion of successful cases compared to the previous RBM criterion, with one-third of projects having established monitoring and reporting mechanisms that were used to measure progress. The presence of dedicated Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) officers was found to be very useful, as was the participation of trained partners on the ground, with both qualitative and quantitative data collected and analysed to assess progress and achievements of ILO interventions. In most cases, while components were established, they were not well implemented; information for monitoring and reporting on performance was missing or not identified; or findings were not always valid or reliable, due to inadequate tools and methods to monitor and measure progress. Many projects focused on monitoring activities, rather than results at the output or outcome levels, and lack of baseline data and outcome-level targets led to challenges in measuring progress. In some cases, while monitoring tools existed, the amount of time it took to develop and start implementing interventions led to monitoring plans not being implemented as planned; lack of monitoring plans or budgets sometimes led to dependence on partners to collect data. There was some evidence of improvement of intervention results monitoring systems over time, based on recommendations from mid-term evaluations or during implementation. The quality and level at which reporting took place sometimes depended on donor requirements and types of intervention funding (e.g., RBSA-funding, or "lightly earmarked" Sida funding). In 20 per cent of cases, there were no functioning mechanisms for monitoring or reporting of project achievements".

The **Programme and Budget** provides the main system for results reporting in ILO. The HLE has not found the P&B to be very useful as a tool for evaluating the results chains to which the DC Strategy is contributing. Its main emphasis is on inputs, outputs and to a lesser extent outcomes, placed within the context of the distribution of ILO funds between functional areas and work programmes. It is not well-suited to help define and coordinate priorities within a DC Strategy or to assemble and assess data necessary to assess performance against them.

The HLE's understanding of the intentions of the DC Strategy is presented in the ToC. As the DC Strategy moves towards its final year, the HLE assessment of progress can be presented, building on its findings in the areas of efficiency and effectiveness.

LEVEL ONE - OUTPUTS

The four boxes shown as "Outputs" on **Figure 22** show the intended outputs from each Pillar of the Strategy. These must be aggregated from reporting on specific activities and DWCPs. Based on available data, Outputs for Pillars 1 and 2 appear to have produced broadly positive results, while the Outputs for Pillar 3 do not show substantial improvement and the Outputs for Pillar 4, notably in the area of results reporting and management, as well as HR and procurement, have made little progress.

LEVEL TWO - OUTCOMES

Similarly, the four boxes shown as "Outcomes" for each Pillar cover the outcomes towards which the outputs are intended to contribute. As reported above, RBM and reporting systems are weak and often focus on inputs and outputs, with less robust reporting on outcomes. These require constituents, partners and (where appropriate) beneficiaries to build upon the support by ILO and its partners to generate additional and longer-term results. While some level of outcome results

⁹⁷ ILO/EVAL. Inputs from DW performance appraisals of final independent project evaluations to the HLE on DC Strategy, 2024, p.4.

can be assessed for the Outcomes related to Pillars 1 and 2, the areas of financing partnerships and visible and sustainable results show relatively little progress.

LEVEL THREE - INTERMEDIATE STATES

This is the level at which stakeholders outside of ILO take increasing responsibility for generating results on a larger and longer-term basis. The HLE has found no convincing evidence that there has been progress at this level.

OVERVIEW OF PROGRESS TOWARDS IMPACTS OF THE DC STRATEGY

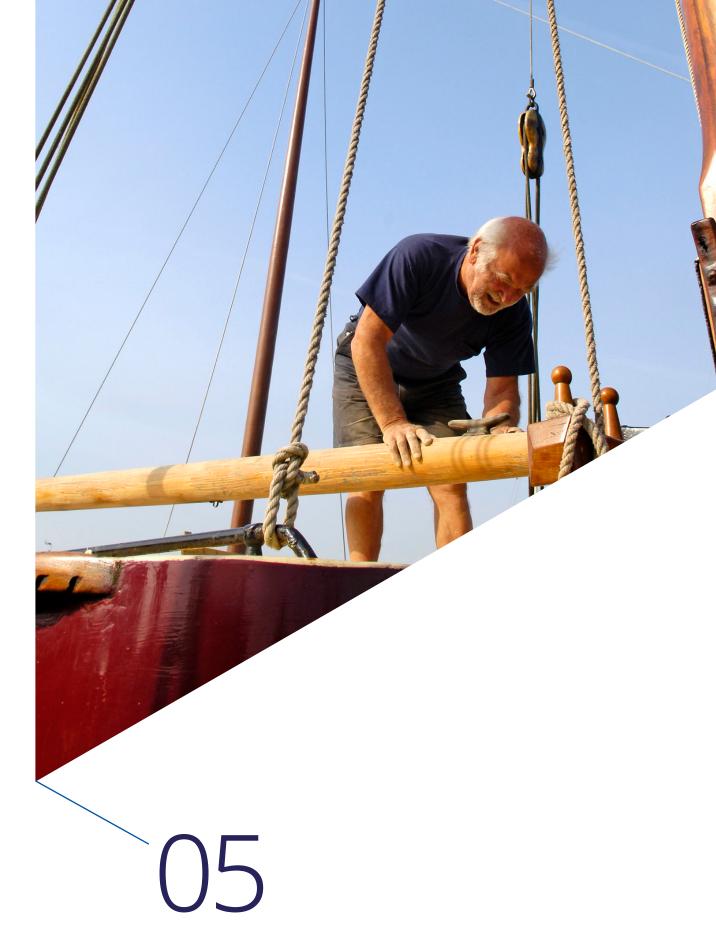
In the first place, it is essential to note that the intended overall impact could not be expected in the short period of the Strategy's implementation. However stronger progress towards intermediate states could reasonably be expected. At this point, it is important to note that the Technical Cooperation High Level Evaluation (2015)⁹⁸ reported: "The evaluation, therefore, concludes that there are currently **insufficient data to enable the impact of ILO TC to be evaluated**". Given the continuing weaknesses in ILO reporting beyond outputs, this reservation still stands.

However, it is still possible to make some assessments of progress and achievements of aspects of the DC Strategy, based on evidence from evaluation documents and many stakeholder interviews. These are the following:

- ▶ To make progress towards impacts, all four pillars need effective delivery, and they need to be well inter-connected with each other. To date, Pillar 3, partnerships for finance, which had increased substantially in the years before the Strategy, have somewhat reduced based on commencement data from the ILO's Development Cooperation Dashboard.⁹⁹ The extent to which this limit overall progress depends on how much additional finance (particularly unearmarked or loosely earmarked) ILO would like to raise and for what priorities. These aspects are not clearly defined in the Strategy, reducing the likelihood of strong progress towards impacts.
- ► Furthermore, Pillar 4, Efficiency, Decent Work results, and transparency aims to address a set of institutional issues, which have been discussed and assessed by numerous internal and external bodies and studies for years, or even decades. These include procurement, human resources, and the status and position of DC personnel. Many staff reported that these issues have been known and unresolved for so long that their current inclusion in the Strategy is unlikely to bring meaningful change. Given the high level of dissatisfaction on these dimensions and the prevailing opinion that they will not change, this Pillar is seen as posing a serious limitation on what the Strategy can deliver in the long run.
- An underlying defect in the Strategy concerns the manner in which it was developed and approved. The prevailing opinion among ILO internal stakeholders is that the Strategy was not developed in a transparent manner and that there was minimal communication and participation in the process. This being so, "buy in" is low, resulting in an uneven level of commitment and activity among staff. This is exacerbated by the apparent lack of involvement of staff or work units as Focal Points for the Strategy in effectively monitoring and reporting the Strategy's implementation. A few even expressed surprise to the HLE team that they had such a role, and it is reported that scheduled meetings of these key ambassadors either did not take place at all or were poorly attended. This uneven and often low level of commitment among staff suggest that long term progress will be slow and erratic.
- ▶ A final inhibiting factor on progress towards impacts is the widely distributed opinion among staff that "the ILO needs a DC Strategy, but not this one". It is felt that the Strategy does not give clear guidance on priorities and is not related in a clear way to financial requirements and allocations, still less to human resources, particularly at the country level.

³⁸ ILO/EVAL, Independent high-level evaluation of ILO's technical cooperation strategy, 2010–2015.

⁹⁹ **Note:** this assessment is based on the commencement data included on the DC dashboard, for projects starting 2018 – 2024. The approvals volume has increased, as stated previously in the report.



Conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations

CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The ILO is a complex, decentralized, multi-disciplinary organization working in vastly diverse and dynamic circumstances. Its work in development cooperation is particularly diverse and involves intervening at multiple levels from policy, legislation, and institutional reform to the direct support of enterprises and workers as well as people facing poverty, discrimination, and exclusion. In the period of this HLE, the ILO has had great success in responding to the challenges created by this complexity and by the COVID-19 pandemic. Its portfolio of DC projects has continued to grow, extending its reach and relevance in a way that can complement its normative role and charter.

However, the growth of the ILO's DC work has also stretched its capabilities in many ways. Continued growth of the DC portfolio will require a systemic response to ensure that the quality, efficiency, and impact of its work is continuously improved. Senior managers consulted in the HLE indicated that there were growing concerns about "organizational overstretch" and of resources in the field and in HQ and its monitoring systems being insufficient to properly manage the DC portfolio. As the MOPAN review and various internal and external audits have shown, key data on project performance are not collected and this prevents the identification of poorly performing projects. Efficiency of delivery is a continuing concern and needs to be better understood and systematically addressed. Project appraisal needs to respond to concerns raised by technical specialists and to integrate lessons learned from evaluations. The cost-benefits of some smaller project proposals may need closer scrutiny.

While the current DC Strategy touches on many of these issues, ticking boxes that broadly align it to the 2018 ILC Resolution on DC, it fails to say: "this is where we are, this is where we need to be, and this is how we are going to get there". Instead, the Strategy and its Implementation Plan list activities which are sometimes specific but more often quite vague. Many of these activities proved to be of value in themselves but their contribution towards improved DC delivery is unclear. In a real sense, the ILO's DC strategy and Implementation Plan mirror a criticism often levelled at individual DC projects – that they are activity-driven, lack Theories of Change, and are inadequately focused on measuring progress towards impacts.

LESSONS LEARNED

Lessons learned include the following:

Need for a strategy that provides clarity on the centrality of development cooperation.

Some stakeholders reported a dichotomy within the ILO regarding the place and importance of DC, relative to "core" work on norms and standards. Many consulted through the HLE stressed how vital DC now is in deepening the delivery of its core role, but others were said to regard it as secondary to this role or even a distraction – even though, or perhaps because DC funding now exceeds RB funding.

Many staff interviewed by the HLE expressed strong views on a perceived and experienced divergence of emphasis in the organization – "having two ILOs under one roof" – seen to underline a "them and us" mentality. For some, administrative staff were seen as bureaucratic blockers, unresponsive to the realities of DC work, while for others DC staff were seen as "cowboys" trying to bypass established and necessary procedures. This was especially the case in interactions between the field and HQ, but sometimes also between the field and Regional Offices.

Under this divergence of perspectives, some referred to DC staff being treated as "second class citizens" compared with Regular Budget staff. Although the distribution and effects of these perspectives could not be quantified by the HLE, they are reinforced by the results of a survey carried out by the ILO staff union in 2022. 100 This laid bare the different entitlements and contractual precariousness faced by colleagues on DC funded contracts. Some DC staff we interviewed in the field had been engaged intermittently by the ILO for more than 20 years and were understandably disappointed at how little their expertise and experience were recognised as an organizational asset and how the precarity of their employment was accepted as a fact of life 101.

The uniqueness of the ILO's approach to DC – built on tripartism, social dialogue, and normative action - needs to be unapologetically reinforced as a primary mechanism for the ILO to achieve its goals and to meet constituent needs. Such messaging should be for all staff and to encourage two-way accountability between administrative units and DC delivery units in the organization. With more than half of ILO funds now derived from voluntary DC funding it needs to be understood that "DC is everybody's business" in the ILO – just as the promotion of International Labour Standards and decent work is everybody's business. As one senior ILO manager told the HLE:



"You will not get fulfilment of the organisation's goals in DC unless everyone is committed to it."

The Frontline Report expressed the ideal the ILO should be working towards:



"A goal for the Office should be that no staff person thinks it is their job to enforce the rules. And no staff person thinks it is their job to deliver a project. Rather, every staff person knows that principled delivery is their job."

Need for a strategy that emphasizes the importance of balanced growth, diversification and focus in development cooperation work – "doing fewer things better".

- ▶ Perennial concerns continue to be expressed that the availability of funds from funding partners might be unduly driving or shaping the ILO's DC work. On the other hand, some stakeholders indicated that funding partners often ask what the ILO's current priorities are, but the ILO struggles to articulate these beyond the P&B, which covers the full gamut of the ILO's work.
- ► This tendency to say that "everything we do is a priority" lets the ILO cast its net very widely when seeking DC funding. The broad scope of the P&B (and often of DWCPs) gives those working with funding partners great latitude to develop proposals that meet donor priorities because it is not hard to find some place in the P&B where projects can be conceptually

¹⁰⁰ ILO Staff Union, 2022 Global Survey of ILO staff.

¹⁰¹ The human and career effects of this are detailed in the ILO staff union's 2022 Global survey of ILO staff.

- anchored. This is a reasonable and desirable approach if growth of the DC portfolio is seen as the priority.
- ▶ But this approach has downsides. First, it leads to a situation where resource mobilization tends to gravitate towards meeting the strategic priorities of funding partners first and foremost. Links to DWCPs and the P&B can be drawn, but as some staff in the field told us, this is sometimes done as an afterthought. This leaves gaps in the ILO's DC coverage in areas where funding partners have less interest. Some efforts were made under the current strategy to conduct "structured funding dialogues" to address this issue but these would need to be significantly expanded to "promote all the pillars of decent work in a balanced manner" as the 2018 ILC Resolution urges (Para 8c). Given that so much of DC resource mobilization happens in the field, such efforts need also to be focused there. Diversification of funding away from traditional bilateral sources might also offer new possibilities in this regard.
- ▶ Second, a less focused, growth first approach can result in having many small projects which may offer only marginal returns for the ILO's investment. Small projects can be strategically important as a proof of concept or as a means of maintaining engagement in a country where the ILO really needs to be. But sometimes they just contribute to organizational overstretch and inefficiency. Again, the 2018 ILC Resolution (Para 8g) pointed the way:



"In order to achieve results and sustainability, development cooperation needs to take a longer-term, programmatic and focused approach, including through the ILO flagship programmes and other initiatives."

Need for a strategy that enhances national ownership and constituent empowerment.

While the HLE's survey of constituents and evaluation meta-studies suggest that there has been some improvement in constituent involvement in DC, this is another recurring concern and was raised in the previous 2015 HLE. Evidence is strong that constituent involvement enhances project results, but sometimes there are factors that complicate this engagement, including time constraints imposed by the funding partner, lack of familiarity with the subject matter, and local factors that are not conducive to tripartism. Sometimes, there can be "national ownership" of projects that are not day-to-day priority issues for workers' or employers' organizations or of Ministries of Labour but are still central to the ILO charter (e.g., Ministries of Education are often the counterpart for skills projects rather than the Ministries of Labour). Regardless of the cause, as project evaluations have sometimes highlighted, constituent engagement can become tokenistic.

Mechanisms to further consolidate constituent involvement are needed. One employers' representative told the HLE that a "more robust and transparent framework" should be established. Similarly, an ILO Regional Office staff member suggested that the project appraisal system could be strengthened in this regard – for example, by including a statement from constituents on their satisfaction with the proposal and its approach to their engagement. Improved planning by project proponents to allow timely engagement of constituents in development and review of proposals is also needed.

Need for a strategy that strives towards continuous improvement of its systems and approach for developing, delivering, monitoring and supporting DC projects.

As this HLE has shown, there are strong views on the need to continuously improve the systems the ILO has in place to manage its DC portfolio and to enhance its quality – for example, in appraisal, project start up and closure, performance monitoring (beyond just measuring expenditure), quality management, the use of evaluation and organisational knowledge, and administrative support in staff recruitment and development, procurement, and financial management.

There is no one part of the ILO that has a span of control that covers these diverse but critical elements of DC delivery. PARTNERSHIPS plays a crucial role up to the point where projects are approved, and in high-level engagement with donors, but beyond that the processes are fragmented, dispersed and often inconsistent from location to location. The current strategy's Implementation Plan tried to address this via multi-disciplinary work teams but with limited success. Good things were done, but the response was piecemeal and not systemic.

Establishing work teams like this might well be part of the solution, but they need to be driven by commitment from the top. A major finding of the 2022 HLE on the ILO's response to COVID-19 was how agile and responsive the ILO proved to be in the face of the crisis largely due to the willingness of the DG and senior managers to drive policy coherence and organizational synergy. Such a commitment is especially important for the ILO as it has traditionally found it difficult to break out of a silo mentality.

Need for a more focussed and ambitious DC Strategy:

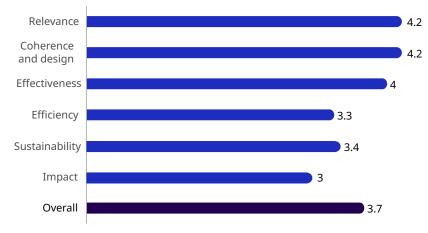
The current strategy proved to be unwieldy and difficult to monitor and ultimately seems to have run out of steam. If the ILO is to develop a new strategy, it needs to consider the scope and the organizational architecture in place to oversee it. As things are currently structured, PARTNERSHIPS is best placed to implement a "resource mobilization and partnerships strategy" because its span of control would lend itself to that task. Resource mobilization needs strategic guidance - there is no other policy or planning document that defines the detail of the ILO's approach.

The overall goals and Theory of Change for improving DC delivery overall would still need to determine and captured in a new DC Strategy – through a process led by PARTNERSHIPS (perhaps supported by ITCILO), with strong input from DC practitioners and key HQ departments and DWT and Regional Office staff. But the architecture for its operationalization might need to be different. If "DC is everybody's business" there may be a need to articulate how everybody contributes to the efficiency, quality and impact of DC, and to set performance benchmarks and deliverables into department/office strategies and workplans. This may be second nature to some field offices, but maybe less so for some HQ administrative departments and units.

RATINGS

The scores attributed to the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the ILO's Development Cooperation Strategy 2020-2025 comprise the survey results and the assessment of the evaluation team. The evaluation used a six-point scale (also used in the survey) to express these scores, with 1 being the lowest score, indicating highly unsatisfactory, and 6 being the highest, indicating highly satisfactory. Chart 2 below presents the evaluation team's overall assessment of the ILO's 2020-25 Development Cooperation Strategy, 2018-24.

FIGURE 23: OVERALL ASSESSMENT



RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

Initiate consultations on the need, form and scope of a new ILO Development Cooperation Strategy for 2026-29, aiming for possible submission to the GB by late 2025 via a transparent process involving constituents, senior management, policy specialists, DC project practitioners, oversight functions and administrative and financial management specialists.

This process should:

- Consider identifying and pursue opportunities for a more focused and strategic approach to resource mobilization, emphasizing links with the ILO's normative role and addressing resource gaps in key policy areas outlined in the Strategic Plan 2026-29, P&B Proposals for 2026-27 and Priority Action Programmes.
- ► Consider how best to ensure an ILO-wide commitment to improving the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of DC implementation, and to promote two-way accountability between administrative and DC delivery units.
- ► Consider ways to implement the 2018 ILC Resolution's principle of a **more programmatic approach** to DC, drawing lessons from successful larger-scale programs and considering mechanisms for enhanced integration and clustering of DC efforts.
- ➤ Consider how the new proposed architecture for the P&B 2026-27 (e.g., outcome 10 and enabling outcome A, output 4¹⁰²) might subsume the current "partnerships for policy coherence" pillar and allow future strategies to **focus on resource mobilization and efficiency** in delivering services to constituents.
- Consider how DC **project appraisals** can be strengthened to ensure quality design and better specify how inputs from ILO units will be actioned.
- Consider options for a **more robust framework to ensure constituent involvement** in crucial stages of DC development and implementation.
- ► Consider whether a "DC operations unit" responsible for monitoring and managing the DC portfolio is needed for a whole of ILO approach. This unit would identify and maximise DC linkages with the P&B and ILO norms and standards, and ensure that projects have optimal human resources and staff training.

^{102 &}lt;u>Draft Programme and Budget (version August 2024 Outcome 10: Enhanced Policy coherence and amplified action for better social justice and Outcome A.4 Partnerships and Resource Mobilization for enhanced Social Justice</u>

Responsible Units	Priority	Time implications	Resource implications
 Director-General's (DG) Office (regions and Decent Work Technical Support Teams (DWTs)) 	H	Immediate	Variable
 Assistant Director-General (ADG)/External and Corporate Relations (ECR): PARTNERSHIPS 			
 ADG/Corporate Services (CS): Programming and Management Department (PROGRAM) 			
 Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACTEMP) and Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) 			
ADG/Governance, Rights and Dialogue (GRD) and ADG/Jobs and Social Protection (JSP)			

Recommendation 2

Develop a new policy and mechanism for monitoring DC that promotes accountability, compares planned outcomes with results, allows flexibility to respond to changing needs, and makes visible not just what has been spent, but what projects have done and what they have achieved.

This should:

- ▶ Provide **real-time monitoring and visibility of project performance** for agile DC portfolio management (as opposed to the endline or retrospective view currently provided by evaluation and audits) supported by effective **IT** platforms and appropriate training packages.
- ► Consider the feasibility of creating a **dedicated function responsible for DC monitoring as practiced in other peer UN agencies.**
- ► Gather data on **administrative bottlenecks affecting delivery** which can be used for continuous improvements of these systems.
- ▶ Enhance accountability and performance management of DC programme and project managers, identifying their capacity development needs, and improving the processes used for their selection.
- ▶ Progressively improve **evaluation and measurement of progress towards impact** on beneficiaries of DC activities enabled through improved monitoring.

Responsible Unit	Priority	Time implications	Resource implications
▶ DG▶ ADG/CS: PROGRAM▶ ADG ECR: PARTNERSHIPS	H	Immediate to medium term	High
with Financial Management (FINANCE), Information and Technology Management (INFOTEC)			

Recommendation 3

Either as part of the new DC strategy or under the plans of the relevant Corporate Services cluster in HQ and Regional Offices, identify and implement specific and measurable steps to improve the efficiency of support provided to DC practitioners working in the field.

This should:

- ▶ Promote **two-way accountability between delivery units and support services** (with relevant efficiency/timeline KPIs) and seek to bridge the "cultural divide" between the two
- Explore innovations in DC recruitment such as appointment eligibility lists, DC talent management, and funding to bridge gaps in project phases
- ► Clarify how **Programme Support Income** raised by DC projects can be better allocated to support projects without the time lags currently occurring
- ▶ Review options to provide additional targeted **support to non-resident country** programmes at key points of the DWCP/CCA/UNSDCF cycles or to meet surges in demand.

Responsible Units	Priority	Time Implication	Resource Implication
▶ ADG/CS: FINANCE, HRD, PROGRAM▶ ADG ECR: PARTNERSHIPS	(H)	Immediate to medium term	Low to Medium

Recommendation 4

Strengthen communication strategies tailored and adapted for different audiences covering the unique contributions of the ILO in Decent Work and on the humanitarian development nexus, emphasising the major value added by its normative underpinning high quality technical research and the tripartite approach.

This should:

- Build on success stories
- Address challenges and how to overcome them through the ILO approach
- ▶ **Highlight the benefits** of longer-term investments to address decent work challenges by showcasing impacts achieved over time in specific countries or through a programmatic approach
- ► **Train ILO staff** with resource mobilization responsibilities on communicating ILO's added value to potential funding partners
- ▶ **Promote collaborative approaches** combining ILO comparative advantages with key strengths of other stakeholders

Responsible Units	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
 ADG/GRD: International Labour Standards Department (NORMES) 	H	Immediate to medium-term	Medium
▶ ADG/JSP: Social Protection and Employment			
 ADG/ECR: All technical units including Department of Communication and Public Information (DCOMM) 			
▶ DWTs			

OFFICE RESPONSE

- Overall Office response: The Office welcomes the high-level evaluation of the Development Cooperation Strategy and its recognition of the central role of development cooperation in delivering a wide range of services to ILO constituents and advancing the ILO mandate. The increase in voluntary funding and in the diversity of partnerships demonstrates the continued interest of partners in development cooperation activities and their trust in the ILO. While highlighting that this High-Level Evaluation is focused on the Development Cooperation Strategy itself and does not assess ILO's DC projects and activities, the Office is committed to address the evaluation findings and integrate the recommendations provided into the implementation of the current strategy and other related initiatives, as relevant. It is worth mentioning that the Office started in 2023 a process to review the implementation of ILO's development cooperation activities with the aim of identifying potential bottlenecks and areas of improvement.
- ▶ **Recommendation 1 Office response:** The Office welcomes the recommendation and its proposed actions. As has been the practice, an inclusive and transparent consultation process will begin in 2024 to develop a more focused and forward-looking strategy that considers the evaluation findings and responds to the needs of ILO constituents and the priorities of development partners in line with the strategic plan for 2026–29 and the related programmes and budgets 2026–27 and 2028–29.
- ▶ **Recommendation 2 Office response:** Despite the fact that this recommendation relates more to the implementation of DC projects, rather than to the Strategy itself, the Office agrees with the need to further develop policies and tools for monitoring development cooperation activities, enhance coordination and planning, and reinforce accountability for programmatic delivery. As earlier indicated, the Office started in 2023 an analysis of the administrative processes in the implementation of DC activities to identify areas of improvement. The Office will build upon the findings and recommendations in this evaluation and integrate them into its ongoing analysis. New or updated internal governance policies and procedures might be required to enable swift responses to performance issues of technical or operational nature in development cooperation, ensuring the programmatic fit of development cooperation with the priorities of ILO constituents as reflected in the programme and budget and in DWCPs or other national frameworks.
- ▶ **Recommendation 3 Office response:** As indicated under recommendation 2, the Office aims to strengthen accountability systems and, as far as possible, simplify and standardize functions and services across the operating environment, including the provision of technical support provided to DC staff. Further alignment of human resource policies, processes and contracts, improved induction and training, along with greater use of standardized information systems across all activities, will aim to improve efficiency and consistency. Focused risk analyses need to be strengthened at the onset of projects to ensure that the Office has the capacity and capability to deliver results within the negotiated timeframes.
- ▶ **Recommendation 4 Office response:** The Office will strengthen its communication strategies, products and staff skills by using communication technologies and tools to further emphasize the Organization's unique value added based on its normative and tripartite approach, and to enhance its reputation as a knowledge leader, effective development partner and dynamic collaborator in the multilateral system. Communication efforts will focus on the results achieved by DC projects and the broader impact and contribution of programmatic activities to the Decent Work Agenda. It will also continue to highlight the added value that the ILO's work brings to constituents and development partners.



Annexes

ANNEX A. TERMS OF REFERENCE

INTRODUCTION

High-level evaluations in the ILO

High-level Evaluations (HLE) are governance level evaluations that aim at generating insights into organizational level performance within the context of the results-based management system. The High-level evaluations in the ILO refer to evaluation of policy outcomes, institutional issues as well as selected Decent Work Country Programmes. Findings from HLEs contribute to learning and decision-making on policies and strategies, and accountability.

Senior management and the Governing Body (GB) are involved in identifying priorities for HLEs, determining the timing and intended uses of each evaluation.¹⁰³ The ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL), as an office with structural independence, is the custodian of the independence and transparency of the evaluation process. EVAL conducts a minimum of three high-level evaluations every year, based on a 3 yearly rolling work plan of upcoming evaluations, endorsed by the GB.

In its 349th Session (October – November 2023), the Governing Body approved EVAL's rolling workplan which included an HLE on the ILO's Development Cooperation Strategy, to be conducted in 2024. The evaluation will cover the period 2018 – 2024. The evaluation report, together with the Office's response to its findings and recommendations, will be discussed in the GB session of November 2024 with a follow-up plan prepared by the Office and monitored during implementation.

EVAL is currently undertaking the scoping phase of the evaluation. A consultation with select stakeholders took place in October/November and is reflected in the current version of the Terms of Reference.

Strategic directions of the ILO in development cooperation

ILO Development cooperation is a key means of action to achieve the ILO's strategic priorities and provide services to its tripartite constituents, especially at national level, and is essential to deliver the ILO's contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization adopted in June 2008 (the 2008 Declaration) identified technical cooperation as a means of action for realization of fair globalization based on Decent Work as well as for implementation of the Decent Work Agenda at the country level. By strengthening and streamlining ILO's technical cooperation, progress towards all the strategic objectives reflected in the Strategic Policy Framework (SPF) is expected to be achieved on a tripartite basis through Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) as well as within the framework of the UN system. Further, the institutional capacity of constituents is to be increased to facilitate meaningful and coherent social policy and sustainable development. These principles were initially reflected in the ILO's Technical Cooperation Strategy 2010-15.

Select findings and recommendations from the High-Level evaluation of the 2010-15 Strategy for Technical Cooperation are presented below:

¹⁰³ To this end a process of informal consultations including governments, through regional coordinators, and the secretariats of the Employers' and Workers' groups on the topics for high-level strategic evaluations and their terms of reference is organized annually.

Key findings:

- ▶ The strategy focused mainly on internal institutional goals rather than development objectives, reducing its
- Member States valued ILO's contribution to economic growth, technical expertise, and knowledge.
- ▶ Projects often had short durations, making it challenging to achieve significant national impact.
- Some funding partners found ILO's support costs high, and project start-ups were delayed due to recruitment and procurement issues.

Recommendations:

- Develop an outward-looking Development Cooperation Strategy emphasizing outcomes and impacts.
- ▶ Assess how ILO can better meet countries' development priorities and rationalize office distribution.
- ▶ Deepen the use of decent work and focus on national programmes for sustainability.
- ▶ Actively mobilize resources at the country level from diverse sources.
- ▶ Invest in "country managers" for sustained policy dialogue.
- ▶ Accelerate the rollout of the Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS) and raise budget authorization levels at country offices.
- Outpost some resource mobilization and monitoring capacity.
- ▶ Build communities of practice and enhance knowledge management.
- ▶ Implement a staff mobility policy with incentives linked to field experience.

A <u>Technical Cooperation Strategy for the period 2015-17</u> was proposed to the GB at its 332nd Session (2014). The strategy was developed within the context of the <u>2013 ILO Field Operations & Structure and Technical Cooperation Review</u>, and centred on four elements: a more focused ILO programme, effectiveness, capacity development of constituents and resource mobilization, including in the regions. It also introduced a shift from "technical cooperation" to "development cooperation, to highlight the realization that "development is a complex, universal and long-term process which can succeed only if grounded on comprehensive, mutual and accountable partnerships" and to include capacity development, good governance, social justice, rights, dialogue, and equality.

A revised Development Cooperation Strategy was adopted by the GB during its 325thSession (October-November 2015), to take into account the outcome of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Addis Ababa, 13–16 July) – the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as well as the decisions taken by the Governing Body at its 322nd Session (November 2014) 3 and 323rd Session (March 2015). The strategy also incorporated lessons learned from the implementation of the internal reform and the recommendations of the independent evaluation of the ILO's Technical Cooperation Strategy 2010–15. A specific focus on human rights, social equality and international labour standards formed the basis of the ILO's development cooperation programme.

At its 329th session (March 2017), following a report on progress in the implementation of the Development Cooperation Strategy 2015-<u>17</u>, the Governing Body approved its extension the end of 2018.

At its 107th Session (2018), the International Labour Conference adopted a <u>resolution and</u> <u>conclusions concerning effective ILO development cooperation in support of the Sustainable</u> <u>Development Goals (SDGs)</u>, which set out guiding principles and a road map for ILO development cooperation.¹⁰⁴ The report submitted to the Conference took account of the lessons learned from past experience of development cooperation.

Four areas of focus were identified by the Governing Body at its 334th Session (October–November 2018), to operationalize the guiding principles and road map of the 2018 Conference Resolution:

services to constituents; partnerships for policy coherence; partnerships for funding; and efficiency, decent work results and transparency.

These constitute the foundation of the ILO Development Cooperation 2020-25 Strategy. ¹⁰⁵ This Strategy details how the ILO promotes better services, partnerships, resources, and results for sustainable impact on people's lives. Through the strategy, the ILO applies the Effective Development Cooperation Principles, as promoted by the Global Partnership on Effective Development Cooperation: country ownership, focus on results, inclusive partnerships, and transparency and mutual accountability.

The Strategy also takes into account three key issues that have emerged in the development cooperation landscape since the adoption of the Conference resolution in 2018, including the Decade of Action for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda; the UN reform; and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world of work.

The ILO Development Cooperation Strategy 2020-25 was presented to the <u>Governing Body during its 340th Session (October-November 2020)</u>. The GB made an explicit request for an implementation plan to be submitted in 2021, and for a mid-term evaluation to be conducted.

The Strategy approach aims to align with, and support, the ILO's overarching policy and programmatic framework. It is oriented by the ILO's Strategic Plan and contributes to realizing programme and budget outcomes. It is linked to Enabling outcome C in the ILO's Programme and Budget 2020–21: Efficient support services and effective use of ILO resources, and to Enabling outcome A for the ILO's Programme and Budget 2022–23: Improved knowledge and influence for promoting decent work. It also contributes to the implementation of the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, which highlights the critical role of development cooperation in supporting the efforts of Member States to shape a human-centred future of work.

The ILO policy outcomes set the thematic decent work priorities for the Organization. The Office systematically incorporates the relevant, Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets and indicators into its results framework, responding in that way to the UN Secretary-General's call for accelerated progress towards achievement of those goals. This enables the Office to track progress on decent work aspects of the SDGs in such areas as poverty reduction, social protection, gender equality, employment, labour rights, productivity and economic growth, enterprise development and value chains. The policy outcomes therefore embody a gender sensitive, inclusive and environmentally sustainable approach: the bedrock for building back better and leaving no one behind.

The ILO's work at the regional and country levels is contextualized in light of constituents' demands as reflected in the Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs), relevant regional frameworks, and in conclusions of ILO regional meetings. DWCPs are derived from UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Frameworks (UN Cooperation Frameworks) and where relevant, aligned with UN socio-economic response plans to the COVID-19 crisis (SERPs). DWCPs are the key vehicles for providing ILO services to constituents, including through programmes, projects and activities supported by development cooperation and partnerships.

The Strategy complements and should be read in conjunction with the following documents: the Strategic Plan for 2022–25, the Programme and Budget 2022–23, and the documents presenting the ILO responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and forward-looking role in the recovery. Previous decisions of the Governing Body and guidance on relevant issues were taken into account when developing the Strategy, namely regarding previous decisions of the Governing Body and its guidance on partnerships and policy coherence, the ILO-wide strategy for institutional capacity development, and decisions on innovative financing. It also considers relevant recommendations

of evaluations, including the <u>High-level Evaluation of Public-Private Partnerships</u> (2019), and refers to the need to "improve its organizational performance by consistently implementing the recommendations stemming from evaluations, including from the reviews of partners such as the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN)".

As stated in the Director General's <u>Programme and Budget document for 2024 - 25</u>, the ILO will continue a trajectory of continued improvement in organizational performance through an increase in the efficiency and effectiveness of governance, oversight and management processes and practices, including in the areas of communication and development cooperation. The programme refers to the Development Cooperation Strategy 2020-25 and its implementation plan under Enablers A (Output A.4) and C (Output C.2).

Implementation of the Strategy is an Office-wide effort, and requires cooperation and coordination across the three portfolios, and between the Field and Headquarters. PARTNERSHIPS (formerly PARDEV) serves as the Secretariat for the monitoring of the work plan implementation and provides regular status reports on progress. Focal points from different ILO units and departments were appointed.

Results and performance are captured through existing corporate reports and evaluations, including the Programme Implementation Reports (PIR), High-Level Evaluations, project evaluations, meta-analyses of evaluation findings, ILO action plans, and the follow-up to the MOPAN Assessment.



FIGURE 1. KEY AREAS OF FOCUS OF THE STRATEGY

As mentioned above, the Strategy focuses on four key areas:

- ▶ **Services to Constituents:** This area emphasizes that services are both an objective and a foundation of the strategy. It underscores the importance of responding to Member States' decent work needs and demands through development cooperation while ensuring country ownership, relevance, focus, sustainability, and impact. This also highlights the importance of organizational and technical capacity development.
- ▶ **Partnerships for Policy Coherence:** The objective here is to promote decent work through closer convergence of policy actions. It calls for efforts to promote policy, programmatic, and budgetary coherence within the ILO, with constituents, and within the UN development system.

- ▶ **Partnerships for Funding**: This section aims to mobilize resources for the ILO's programme of work, seeking diverse funding sources and securing longer-term, predictable funding. It also highlights the importance of unearmarked contributions.
- ▶ Efficiency, Decent Work Results, and Transparency: The goal is to improve quality in development cooperation, focusing on results, efficiency, visibility, and transparency. This includes continuous improvement in results-based management, integrated delivery models at the country level, learning from past experiences, meeting accountability standards, and enhancing transparency in reporting and funding.

The figure below synthesises the main elements of each key focus area¹⁰⁷:

1. Services to constituents	2. Partnerships for policy coherence	3. Partnerships for funding	4. Efficiency, decent work results and transparency
Development cooperation more effectively integrated into the P&B Centre services on organizational and institutional capacity development Data and evidence-based services and examples of what works Services to constituents on the financing for decent work South–South cooperation and South–South and triangular cooperation	Support national priority-setting on decent work Facilitate policy coherence among development partners Leverage financing through policy coherence Multi-stakeholder partnerships for policy coherence	Mobilize adequate resources for the ILO's programme of work Encourage unearmarked contributions Align earmarked contributions to ILO outcomes Expand funding partners and sources	Continue to improve results-based management Improve service provision at the country level. Meet accountability standards

The ILO will collaborate closely with constituents and partners to effectively implement this strategy, with particular emphasis on policy coherence, funding partnerships, and organizational performance improvements.

In the period 2018-23 the ILO implemented 2089 projects and has a total budget of \$2.34 billion with an expenditure of \$1.92 billion. 108

REGION	NUMBER OF PROJECTS	BUDGET
Africa	545	\$618.06 million
Americas	338	\$226.89 million
Arab States	177	\$325.59 million
Asia and the Pacific	519	\$599.85 million
Europe and Central Asia	185	\$202.84 million
Global	436	\$356.86 million
Inter-regional	22	\$11.08 million

Source: ILO Development Cooperation Dashboard 2018-23 (current as of November 3, 2023.

The mid-term review of the Strategy and its Implementation Plan

A mid-term progress report was presented to the 347th Session of the ILO's Governing Body in March 2023, to provide updates on the four pillars of the Strategy and its implementation plan. It highlighted the changes in the development cooperation context since the last time the Governing Body had discussed the Strategy.

This mid-term review refers to the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) Assessment of ILO (2021), which highlighted the need to improve the ILO's intervention design and invest in cross-cutting issues, including environment and climate change, sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) and accountability to end-beneficiaries, as well as the importance of finding new solutions to increase the ILO's field presence.

ILO Annual Evaluation reports have underlined recurrent systemic issues where improvements are needed since 2018, with a particular emphasis on (a) Results-based management, adequacy of project design, monitoring and reporting; (b) Achievement and sustainability of results; (c) Constituents' engagement in project formulation and implementation; (d) Comprehensive poverty targeting and gender equality mainstreaming; (e) Integration of international labour standards and tripartism in project formulation and implementation; (f) Awareness-raising for policy-influencing. (g) resource-leveraging and adequacy of resources.

These challenges are also identified in the regular <u>meta-analyses of Decent work results and</u> <u>effectiveness of ILO operations</u>, based on assessments of final independent project evaluations on a yearly or bi-yearly basis.

While there have been some improvements noted in the <u>2022-23 Annual Evaluation Report</u>, these challenges are still present and further progress is needed.

A summary of areas where progress has been made, and where further work is needed for each Pillar / area of focus, based on the mid-term self-assessment, is presented below.

PILLAR	PROGRESS	FURTHER WORK NEEDED
Pillar 1: Services to constituents	Constituents' capacity has been strengthened regarding engagement with UN programming and partnerships at the country level and through SSTC in targeted policy areas. The Office is formulating guidance on capacity development with a focus on needs assessments and innovative approaches. To ensure that evaluations systematically review capacity-development initiatives, in 2022 the Office finalized a guidance note on the evaluation of capacity development.	The development of guidance for ILO staff on capacity development of ILO constituents and their involvement in project design and implementation needs to be accelerated. Increased support is needed, including through social dialogue, to ensure the participation and ownership of constituents in the design, implementation, and evaluation of projects.
Pillar 2: Partnerships for policy coherence	Partnerships for policy coherence and financing of policies have been forged, with the Global Accelerator at their core	Expanded ILO services for constituents on policy support and financing and the inclusion of decent work in integrated national financing frameworks and UNSDCFs are needed.

Pillar 3: Partnerships for funding	Funding for the ILO's work has been maintained at previous years' levels despite an increasingly competitive funding environment, mostly through earmarked contributions	Unearmarked and lightly earmarked funding represent a small share of voluntary contributions to the ILO.
		More efforts should be directed towards diversifying voluntary funding sources, including with IFIs, domestic funding, private sector and other non-State actors, emerging partners and SSTC partners.
Pillar 4: The Office's performance in the areas of transparency, country services and communication are on track overall cransparency		Communication on the ILO's comparative advantage in partnerships, including a business case, is still to be developed. More work is needed on the ILO Environmental and Social Sustainability Framework (ESSF) for enhanced accountability to end beneficiaries, including through measures against SEAH.

As <u>feedback to the mid-term review</u>, the GB members highlighted certain topics such as more measured data on progress and deliverables to be used to report on progress since 2020, strengthening partnerships with the IFC, development cooperation to be based on constituents' needs and that national ownership is a key precondition for ILOs work in the country.

PURPOSE, CLIENTS, AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

Purpose of the evaluation and main clients

The HLEs in the ILO take a summative as well as formative approach. They provide insights into the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency, sustainability and impact of the ILO's strategy, programme approach, and interventions (summative). They are also forward looking and provide findings and lessons learned and emerging good practices for improved decision-making within the context of the next strategic framework (formative). The OECD/DAC evaluation criteria will quide the work.

The main purpose of this evaluation is to:

- Provide an account to the Governing Body regarding the implementation and efficiency of the Strategy.
- Provide an opportunity to learn what works well and what does not work as well in the implementation of ILO's strategy for Development Cooperation.
- Explore efficiency gains related to external and internal coherence, including synergies with strategic partners.
- ▶ Reflect on and explore the implications of changes in the development cooperation landscape and their implications for the ILO, looking in particular at (i) delivering the 2030 Agenda, (ii) UN reform, and (iii) The COVID-19 pandemic¹09, as well as more recent socio-political conflicts that have emerged since the mid-term review.
- ▶ Support the Office and the constituents in making informed decisions about the future directions of Development Cooperation and provide inputs that can feed into the preparation of the new DC Strategy.¹¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ The <u>High-level independent evaluation of ILO's COVID-19 response (2020-22)</u> is an important source of evidence in this context

¹¹⁰ The current strategy is due to come to an end in 2025.

The evaluation will take into account the findings and recommendations of previous high-level evaluations and reviews relevant to ILO's development cooperation strategy, including the Independent evaluation of the ILO's strategy for Technical Cooperation 2010–2015 (2015), the High-level evaluation of the ILO's field operations and structure 2010-2016 (2017), the High-level evaluation of ILO's capacity development efforts 2010-2017 (2018), the High-level evaluation of ILO's public-private partnerships, 2008-2018 (2019), and the Mid-term review of the ILO Development Cooperation Strategy 2020–25 (2023).

The evaluation will also take into account the findings and recommendations from EVAL's annual Meta-analyses of Decent Work Results and Effectiveness of ILO Operations, which are based on assessments of final independent development cooperation evaluations. These assessments serve as proxies for measuring ILO's effectiveness and results, by focusing on the strategic relevance, coherence, effectiveness, sustainability and impact, and efficiency of ILO interventions, using a well-established, robust methodology. Performance around normative and social dialogue issues, gender equality, disability inclusion and just transition is also reported in these annual meta-analyses.

These meta-analyses reveal strengths related to strategic alignment and coherence, including links with SDGs and collaboration with UN agencies, Strong performance is also found in areas such as knowledge development, capacity building, and the development of strategic relationships.

Recurrent issues identified through the meta-analyses relate to challenges in the design of interventions and limited stakeholder engagement, inadequate goal orientation and weak RBM and monitoring and reporting frameworks; missed opportunities to promote ILS, social dialogue and tripartism; and weaknesses related to human and financial resources and associated delivery processes.

The main client for the evaluation is the Governing Body, which is responsible for governance-level decisions on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation. Other key stakeholders include the Director-General and members of the Senior Management Team at Headquarters, the Evaluation Advisory Committee composed of senior management overseeing follow-up to evaluations and the departments, regional and country offices involved in planning and implementing the four strategic areas of ILO's development cooperation strategy. It should also serve as a source of information for ILO funding partners, other partners, and policy makers.

Scope

The evaluation will cover all ILO's programme activities and actions between 2018 to 2024 (3 full biennia: 2018-19, 2020-21, 2022-23, and a partial biennium: 2024), with a particular focus on the work carried out by the ILO to enhance efficiency, effectiveness, and development impact, while remaining aligned and coherent with ILO's Programme and Budgets. The scope has been determined based on desk review of the above-mentioned past evaluations and meta-analyses as well as consultations with select stakeholders.

Interviews with selected key stakeholders and qualitative analysis of secondary data will serve as a basis to further delimit the scope of the evaluation and to inform the selection of the case studies, in consultation with key stakeholders.

An overview of the main areas that will be included in the HLE will be presented through a ToC and corresponding evaluation framework in an inception report, showcasing ILO's existing means of action and models in the context of its Development Cooperation Strategy.

The HLE will look into the ILO's role in maximizing internal and external synergies and involvement in inter-agency networks/other relevant global networks and partnerships at national, regional, and global levels based on ILO's comparative advantage. The efforts made to achieve the SDGs and support to the UN reform should be covered and emerging lessons in this regard should be documented. The evaluation will cover internal synergies between departments and units (both at the HQ level and at the level of field offices).

The ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work and the ILO's strategic Plan and associated P&B should also be considered, especially in light of the ILO's strategic objectives for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic, as development cooperation is a key means of action for delivering decent work priorities in this context. The scope may evolve during the evaluation, to include any other particular area of ILO contribution that might be critical to highlight in the wake of future directions.

PROPOSED EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The overarching proposed evaluation questions are presented below¹¹¹

- Context and Strategy (Relevance)
 - ▶ To what extent are the aims, objectives and purpose of the DC Strategy relevant and coherent?
 - ▶ What have been the contributions of the DC strategy to the delivery of the P&B 2020-21 and 2022-23? Has the strategy delivered the outcomes it was supposed to deliver?
 - ▶ How well does the ILO's development cooperation strategy 2020-25 (thereafter called strategy) fit the needs and concerns of ILO constituents and other partners? To what extent has the DC Strategy contributed to the implementation of the 2018 ILC Resolution and the 2019 Centenary Declaration? How well do the focus areas of the DC strategy address the calls for action made in the 2018 Resolution and the Centenary Declaration? Is the strategy responsive to emerging concerns as expressed in GB/ILC discussions and other guidance and frameworks?
 - ► How well does the ILO's strategy encourage the alignment of DWCPs and UNSDCF to achieve coherence of ILO action in service delivery?
 - ► How well does the ILO's strategy promote synergies and complementarities with other P&B outcomes as well as global outcomes such as SDGs?
 - ▶ To what extent does the Strategy and its Implementation Plan support a "One ILO" approach and integrate ILO's normative and social dialogue mandate, ILO's commitment to gender equality, non-discrimination of persons with disabilities and inclusion and just transition? To what extent did it take into account the recommendations of the previous HLE on Development Cooperation?
 - ▶ What means are there to review internal processes and ensure relevance of action and timeliness of response of development cooperation interventions?
 - ▶ Is the design process adaptable to changing circumstances and stakeholder needs? To what extent does the design process incorporate lessons learned from previous projects or programmes?
 - Are the objectives and outcomes of the ILO's Development Cooperation strategy 2020-25 logical and realistic?
 - ▶ What has been the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the ILO's development cooperation strategy and action plan? What means are there to ensure continuing relevance vis-à-vis changing needs and new developments?

¹¹¹ The list is based on identified areas of work and concern for the ILO on the subject matter, as per reading of the minutes of the ILC and GB meetings, Programme and Budget documents, Programme implementation reports, and previous evaluation reports. This list is aimed at initiating the consultation process with key internal stakeholders of the ILO to validate them and gather inputs on additional information needs.

- - ► To what extent and how have tripartism, normative action and social dialogue been mainstreamed in ILO's development cooperation?
 - ▶ What role have funding and development partners played to support implementation of the Strategy?

Pillar 1: Services to constituents

- ► To what extent has ILO consulted and engaged with constituents in development cooperation activities?
- ▶ Is there evidence that ILO promoted the participation and ownership of the three constituent groups in the design, implementation, and evaluation of projects, including through the promotion of social dialogue, as a result of the DC strategy?
- ▶ How has the Turin Centre been integrated into development cooperation approaches and programmes to ensure synergies and mutually reinforcing actions, and to promote innovative approaches to capacity development?
- ► To what extent are the ILO actions designed and implemented in ways that maximizes ownership and allow for mainstreaming at national policy level?
- ▶ How, and to what extent, has ILO invested in the generation and use of evidence-based services to constituents and examples of what works in development cooperation, to promote evidence-based decision making?
- ► How well has ILO supported its constituents in the development of national financing frameworks?
- ► To what extent, and how, has the ILO's Strategy encouraged the promotion of South-South cooperation and South-South and triangular cooperation?

▶ Pillar 2: Partnerships for Policy Coherence

- To what extent and how has the ILO engaged with international financial institutions (IFIs) to influence policy and financing decisions aligned with decent work objectives?
- ► To what extent has ILO expanded services for constituents on policy support and financing and the inclusion of decent work in integrated national financing frameworks and UNSDCFs?
- What has been done to enhance communication on, and visibility of, ILO results and the ILO's comparative advantage in partnerships for decent work?
- ► To what extent, and how, does the DC Strategy support national priority-setting on Decent Work?
- ► How does the DC strategy facilitate coherence among development partners, and engagement with the private sector to achieve ILO's objectives?

Pillar 3: Partnerships for funding

- ► To what extent has ILO's development strategy and action plan led to the diversification of voluntary funding sources, including with IFIs, domestic funding, private sector and other non-State actors, emerging partners and SSTC partners?
- ▶ What has been the role of public private partnerships in mobilizing financial and technical support for ILO development cooperation?
- ► To what extent, and how, has the ILO's development strategy and action plan led to the mobilization of adequate resources for the ILO's programme of work?
- ▶ Has the ILO expanded its unearmarked contribution modality?
- ➤ To what extent have earmarked contributions been aligned with ILO policy outcomes, thematic priorities and DWCPs? What progress has been made to develop pooled funding for larger, integrated programmes?
- ➤ To what extent has the DC Strategy contributed to mobilize resources to address constituents' needs in a demand-driven and needs-based manner? How does the DC Strategy balance constituents' needs and funding partner priorities in resource mobilization?
- ▶ Is there evidence of funds being secured from both traditional and new partners? What has been learned from Multi-stakeholder partnerships and what lessons can be used in other initiatives?

▶ Pillar 4: Efficiency, decent work results and transparency:

- To what extent, and how has the DC Strategy promoted improved quality in the ILO's results focus, including in the design of ILO interventions?
- ▶ To what extent, and how, has progress been achieved to improve the ILO's organizational performance and the provision of integrated, agile country services?
- ➤ To what extent has ILO implemented recommendations stemming from ILO evaluations, including external ones such the 2021 MOPAN review, to improve its organizational performance?
- ▶ To what extent, and how, has the DC Strategy promoted improved transparency in relation to how resources are used, and results achieved?
- Are regular progress reports generated and disseminated to relevant stakeholders? Do these progress reports include key performance indicators and evidence of project or programme achievements? Are there mechanisms for stakeholders to provide feedback on progress reports?
- ➤ To what extent have measures been put in place to meet ILO and UN accountability standards, including through development cooperation, including for gender equality and disability inclusion, and to enforce social and environmental safeguards, to ensure that no-one is left behind in ILO's operations?
- Are there mechanisms in place to ensure accountability to end beneficiaries? To what extent are these effective?
- ▶ Does the current monitoring and reporting (Outcome and indicators) framework of the workplan associated with the DC strategy allow for effective tracking of progress and informing the strategy? Are the indicators measurable and traceable? To what extent does the framework in place complement, rather than duplicate, the established structure of strategic reporting to the Governing Body?

▶ Pillar 4: Internal Processes

- ▶ Is the organizational/regional structure for delivering the DC strategy compatible to the strategy/actions?
- ▶ To what extent, and how, has ILO promoted the capacity of staff to deliver quality results linked to Pillar 4?
- ► To what extent does ILO have the capacity to deliver projects effectively when there is no field presence?
- ► How effective is the recruitment process in identifying and selecting qualified project personnel including those with adequate background in ILO's tripartite structure and social partners?
- ▶ Does the induction process adequately prepare project staff for their roles and responsibilities, including adequate understanding of the ILO's mandate, tripartite structure, and the role of social partners?
- Are there mechanisms in place to assess the performance and satisfaction of newly recruited project staff?
- ▶ Does the recruitment and induction process support diversity and inclusion within the organization?
- To what extent has ILO put in place systems to prevent, report and handle cases of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment in its operations? Have these been effective?
- ▶ Is the procurement process transparent, fair, and able to ensure timely provision of project services compliant with relevant regulations and policies?
- Are there adequate resources to implement the strategy as intended? Are financial resources allocated efficiently to support project or programme goals?
- ► How effective is the financial management system in ensuring timely delivery of project services?

Lessons learned and way forward

- ▶ What are the areas of success for the ILO? Are there missed opportunities?
- ▶ What are the emerging lessons and good practices for the future, specifically in the post pandemic context?
- ▶ What are the emerging recommendations for future strategy and action of ILO's development cooperation?

Upon completion of the inception phase, the evaluation team will structure the questions around the OECD-DAC evaluation criteria of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact. When designing the questions, the evaluation team will consider availability and reliability of data, how the answers will be used and if the data are regarded as credible. Further evaluation questions will be proposed and refined by the evaluation team during the inception report phase.

EVALUATION APPROACH

The evaluation will be conducted in accordance with <u>EVAL Protocol No 2.1: Policy Outcomes</u> and <u>Institutional Evaluations</u> (<u>High-level Evaluations</u>), <u>Version 3</u>, <u>March 2021</u>. <u>EVAL proposes a combination of Theory of Change and outcome-based evaluation approaches</u>, which will determine whether an initiative has achieved the intended outcome based on a relevant and coherent approach and using effective and efficient ways to achieve or contribute to changes that can be sustained. The theory of Change will be (re)constructed at the inception phase based on existing Theory of Changes in ILO results framework and within policy areas and will serve as the analytical framework against which operations and results will be measured.

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

There will be three key phases in the evaluation:

- Inception phase: a detailed scoping will be undertaken based on desk research, individual and group interviews with the reference group, ILO staff, ITUC, IOE and other key stakeholders as necessary. Inputs gathered during this phase will already serve as primary data to inform the evaluation analysis, as well as to inform the case study selection, based on which the evaluation team will design the interview guidelines and survey questionnaire.
- Main data collection process: the evaluation team will implement the interview programme and launch the survey to gather statistical information from a wide range of stakeholders from different thematic and geographic backgrounds. Specific P&B and CPO analysis may be undertaken during this phase. The latter will help validate results from interviews with a wider group of stakeholders. All the sources will be triangulated during data analysis.
- Reporting: data analysis will be undertaken to serve as a basis to draft the evaluation report and summary documents.

The evaluation will be undertaken with primary data collection by a group of evaluation experts through **interviews**, **case studies** and **surveys** with key information.

PROPOSED METHODOLOGY FOR THE EVALUATION

The methodology will be based upon the ILO's evaluation policy and procedures, which adhere to international standards and best practices, articulated in the OECD/DAC Principles and the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation (UNEG) in April 2016.

The evaluation should pay specific attention to respond to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate, the role of social partners, gender equality responsiveness, just transition and contribution of the ILO to the relevant targets set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regard, normative work, social dialogue and tripartism, the gender and inclusion dimension, and environmental issues will be considered as a cross-cutting concern throughout the methodology, deliverables, and final report of the evaluation. In terms of this evaluation, mainstreaming gender equality implies involving both men and women in the consultation, evaluation analysis and evaluation team as possible.

Moreover, the evaluators should review data and information that is disaggregated by sex and assess the relevance and effectiveness of gender and disability inclusion related strategies and outcomes. Specific measures to reflect gender and inclusion concerns should be elaborated in the inception report, in line with the UN GEEW-SWAP guidance in this regard. It is expected that

the evaluation team will apply mixed methods, which draw on multiple lines of evidence (both quantitative and qualitative) and apply multiple means of analysis.

The overall methodological approach and data collection tools of the evaluation will include, among others, the following:

- **Desk review of relevant documentation,** such as:
 - Normative frameworks including relevant GB/ILC discussions, relevant conventions, protocols, and recommendations.
 - ► Strategic Framework(s); and progress reports; and P&B strategies covering the period 2018-24.
 - ▶ Development Cooperation (DC) portfolio and related reviews.
 - Decisions of regional meetings
 - ▶ Implementation planning, management and reporting related documents.
 - Existing meta studies, synthesis reviews and project and programme evaluations notably DC and RBSA funded interventions, including other HLES in the period.
 - ▶ Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) and country programme reviews, as relevant.
 - ▶ Review of Policy Outcome, CPOs and Global Products Review of financial (all sources and all modalities) and human resource portfolio that could inform efficiency related analysis within the scope of the evaluation.
 - ▶ Review of alignment to UN response plans, and SDG targets and indicators
- Thematic, geographical, and sectoral case studies. The purpose of case studies is to conduct in-depth analysis of the ILO's work in delivering and implementing its Development Cooperation Strategy. The case studies will seek to determine the result of ILO's interventions on ground and determine if these interventions had any observable immediate impacts, and to the extent possible determine the links between the observed impacts and the ILO interventions. The case studies may also highlight any specific achievements, good practices or emerging lessons with reference to key intervention models being used. The case-studies might also focus on a cross cutting theme or specific dimension identified through the scoping phase and presented in the inception report. The thematic and country case studies will be identified at inception phase based on the results from the scoping phase, including indepth desk review, and interviews with the reference group and other relevant stakeholders. Overall, the case studies will consist of a combination of interviews, field studies, focus group discussions, and desk reviews to synthesize and aggregate information such as technical studies, and DWCP reviews from the selected countries and projects/programmes. This will allow greater triangulation while minimizing cost and time being expended on new, possibly repetitive studies.
- ▶ **Structured and semi-structured interviews** that reflect diversity and representation within the Office (relevant sector, technical unit, regions and country situations) as well as of the constituents and relevant partners and institutions.
- ▶ **Field visits** if local health regulations will allow at the time (5-6 countries, covering regions with coverage of each region as appropriate).
- ▶ Online surveys to obtain feedback and/or information from a wider set of constituents and other key stakeholders such as multilateral partners.
- ▶ **Participatory workshop** to discuss preliminary findings, lessons learned and recommendations prior to the finalization of the evaluation report.

The details of the methodology will be elaborated in the inception report by the team of evaluators based on the Terms of Reference (TORs) and initial desk review and interactions. The inception report will include a detailed evaluation framework with the methodological approach identified.

DELIVERABLES

The following deliverables will be submitted to the ILO Evaluation Office:

Deliverable 1: Inception report with methodology

The inception report should detail the evaluators' understanding of what is being evaluated and why, including an agreed scope and set of questions and showing how each evaluation question will be answered by way of an evaluation matrix that describes: proposed methods (both data collection and analysis); proposed sources of data; data collection procedures (including interview protocols, focus group protocols, survey template, etc.). The inception report should also include the reconstruction of the intervention logic including the theory of change and limitations, the rationale behind the selection of the country and thematic case studies for in-depth analysis and country visits (including the selection criteria), proposed schedule of tasks, activities, and deliverables.

Deliverable 2: Intermediate products presenting draft findings – at the request of EVAL's task manager.

A standardized template or outline can be agreed at the inception phase. Intermediate products are meant to get early feedback from the task manager in EVAL and ensure the evaluation is proceeding on the right track. It can also be used for interaction with the reference group.

Deliverable 3: Draft reports

- A. Executive Summary for the Governing Body (GB)
- B. Draft evaluation report

Both documents should reflect the summary and the detailed presentation of the main findings, conclusions and recommendations. For each of the thematic and country case studies, short notes should be produced, these reports will be made available upon request from the key stakeholders and the public. A final word count for the GB summary will be made available to the evaluation team once we have confirmation but is normally not more than 3,000 words.

Deliverable 4: Final reports

- A. Executive Summary for the GB
- B. Final evaluation report with executive summary

The report and the annex(es) should be submitted in English. The quality of the report should meet the OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation and consider UNEG evaluation checklists and quality assurance guidelines. The report will be considered final once it is formally approved by the ILO Evaluation Office.

Deliverable 5: PowerPoint presentation (and any other targeted inputs to feed into communication products upon request)

MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Timeframe of the evaluation and evaluation work plan

The timeframe of the high-level evaluation is November 2023 to September 2024, with the presentation of the evaluation findings and recommendations to the Governing Body in November 2024. An overview of the schedule is provided below. The overall level of effort is expected to be between a **total of 100-120 workdays spread over a team of a minimum of three people**, with a dedicated team leader (see proposed team composition in Section 7.3)

TASKS	DATES	RESPONSIBLE
Draft and finalize Terms of Reference	December 2023	EVAL
Launch of Call for Expressions of Interest for evaluation team	Dec. 2023 – Jan 2024	EVAL
Preliminary scoping by identified team leader	February 2024	Team leader in cooperation with EVAL
Scoping mission by the team and drafting of inception report	Feb 2024	EVAL and Evaluation team with Reference group, and ILO staff
Evaluation mission and case studies conducted with case-study notes/reports prepared by team members as required	March/April 2024	Evaluation team to interview ILO, Constituents and partners
Draft GB summary and presentation of preliminary findings and recommendations	Early June 2024	Evaluation team and EVAL. ILO stakeholders to provide comments.
Final GB summary incorporating suggestions	End June 2024	Evaluation team
Draft of full report (first and revised draft based on comments).	End of June 2024	Evaluation team and EVAL. ILO stakeholders to provide comments.
Final Report, addressing the feedback on draft. The final report should have the executive summary and required annexes	Mid-July 2024	Evaluation team
Dissemination of results: Participation in workshop / presentation of the evaluation results	September 2024	Evaluation team with inputs from ILO responsible Units, and EVAL
Discussion of the evaluation report by the ILO Governing Body	October – November 2024	EVAL

Implementation arrangements

MANAGEMENT OF THE EVALUATION

The Evaluation Office is mandated to manage the evaluation function and ensure proper implementation of the evaluation policy. The evaluation team will be composed of a Senior Evaluation Specialist who will work as a team member along with the external team, composed of international consultants with expertise in evaluating ILO's work, and evaluation team members/ national consultants to support the case studies. The director of EVAL will provide inputs and quidance throughout the evaluation process.

The Senior Evaluation Specialist within EVAL appointed as the task manager of the evaluation will play a critical coordination role and will be responsible for the evaluation implementation and contribute to desk review and case studies. She will facilitate access to all information from ILO sources, as required by the evaluation team. The Senior Evaluation Specialist will also provide supervision support and substantive inputs during the drafting and finalization of the report.

REFERENCE GROUP AND STAKEHOLDER CONSULTATION

While it is important that the HLE is conducted independently as required by the ILO's Evaluation policy, it is equally important that the evaluation process and the evaluation report provide for a good learning experience. In view of the multidisciplinary and transversal nature of the ILO's work on development cooperation, the Evaluation Office suggests establishing a reference group for the evaluation.

The reference group will be established to contribute to the relevance, credibility, and utility of the independent evaluation by offering inputs and suggestions in an advisory capacity at various intervals of the process. The creation of this group will contribute to ensure understanding and ownership of the evaluation to enhance follow-up and use of its results. Separate TORs for the reference group will be prepared.

The group will comprise senior-level representatives from various departments of the ILO who are familiar with the work carried out to implement the ILO's Development Strategy. The group may be expanded within reasonable limits with additional members as required.

As part of the evaluation process consultations will take place with the reference group to keep key stakeholders at HQ and regions informed about the major steps of the evaluation process. Key outputs will be circulated for comments. Other stakeholders will be identified and involved in the process as required as part of the normal evaluation process.

Proposed evaluation team composition and related tasks

A team composed of a minimum of three evaluation experts, with a dedicated team leader, is proposed. EVAL will be responsible for overall coordination and be a member of the evaluation team. The evaluation team composition will take into account gender diversity. The evaluation team can be supported by a team of national consultants, as relevant, in the identified case study countries.

The evaluation team leader will provide technical leadership and be responsible for:

- ▶ Participating in the scoping of the evaluation; drafting the inception report, producing the draft reports, executive summaries, and drafting and presenting a final report.
- ▶ Providing any technical and methodological advice necessary for this evaluation within the team.
- Ensuring the quality of data (validity, reliability, consistency, and accuracy) throughout the analytical and reporting phases.
- ▶ Managing the evaluation team related to the evaluation process, ensuring the evaluation is conducted as per TORs, including following ILO EVAL guidelines, methodology and formatting requirements.
- ▶ Producing reliable, triangulated findings that are linked to the evaluation questions and presenting useful and insightful conclusions and recommendations according to international standards.
- ▶ Producing a selected suite of communication products and participate in the presentation to ILO staff on the findings of the report once the report has been finalized.

The team members will be responsible for:

- Providing feedback to the inception report, drafting inputs to the inception report.
- ▶ Data collection in their designated case study areas and themes based on evaluation work plan, preparing required notes ad identified and drafting sections of the draft report.

- ▶ Providing feedback and factual corrections to the final report.
- ► Ensuring the quality of data (validity, reliability, consistency, and accuracy within their responsible areas.
- ▶ Producing a selected suite of communication products and participate in the presentation to ILO staff on the findings of the report once the report has been finalized.

The evaluator(s) will be required to ensure the quality of data (validity, reliability, consistency, and accuracy) throughout the analytical and reporting phases. It is expected that the report shall be written in an analytical and evidence-based manner such that all observations, conclusions, recommendations, etc., are supported by evidence and analysis. The ILO senior evaluation specialist will provide overall quality assurance on all key outputs.

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

Profile of the evaluation team

The applicant teams should have the following profile:

- ► Team leader should possess at least 10 years' experience in leading evaluations of policies, strategies and organizational effectiveness.
- Sound understanding of concepts and issues related to development cooperation and technical cooperation as evidenced by past evaluation work on the topic.
- ► Knowledge of and experience in the ILOs development cooperation work and normative framework would be an asset.
- ▶ Proven high level strategy evaluation experience with UN agencies, including ILO.
- ▶ Demonstrated knowledge of ILO internal processes, the ILO's tripartite mandate, and the role of social partners (governments, employers' organisations and workers' organisations), including in national contexts, and cross-cutting issues of gender and inclusion, and decent work
- Language ability in the official languages of the ILO (English, Spanish and French) including the ability of the team to conduct interviews in the three languages and draft surveys and analyse survey results. The report will be drafted in English.
- Available for work between January and September 2024 including possible travel to field visit countries in line with UN Security Advisories and international health regulations.
- No involvement/engagement in the design and delivery of ILO interventions, or a personal relationship with ILO Officials

USE OF EVALUATION AND COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Use of evaluation

Findings of the evaluation and the office response to the evaluation recommendations will be discussed at the Governing Body session in October / November 2024. Furthermore, EVAL will oversee the follow-up actions to the evaluation recommendations as part of the regular meetings with the Evaluation Advisory Committee.

The following products are expected to enhance the use of the evaluation findings and conclusions by developing different products for different audiences:

- ▶ GB executive summary document for the GB 2024 (Oct-Nov) discussion
- ▶ The full evaluation report available on the EVAL website
- ► Knowledge event in the ILO on the evaluation findings and recommendations and communication of progress and results of the evaluation via EVALs social media. For that, the following products will be prepared:
 - An article in the EVAL newsletter on the findings of the report and dissemination of the report through EVALs social media accounts on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram
 - ► Info Story on ILO's website (tbc)
 - A PowerPoint presentation or visual summary of the report will be prepared for EVAL's website and for presentations on the evaluation.
 - A 2-page 'Quick Facts' summarizing the HLE findings will be prepared by EVAL.
- ▶ Presentation to the ILO/ UN/external audience on the evaluation
- Other communication tools as identified.

Communication strategy

Efforts will be made to keep the main stakeholders informed about the major steps of the evaluation process. Key outputs will be circulated for comments. Different audience-specific products may be produced to enhance learning and utility.

► ANNEX B – EVALUATION QUESTIONS

RELEVANCE		
Торіс	Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions/Areas to cover
Relevance of the strategy as a means of guiding/ improving ILO performance	(1) How relevant are the aims, objectives and purpose of the DC strategy (and its implementation plan)?	 concerns of ILO constituents and other partners? Do they adequately address concerns expressed in GB/ ILC discussions? Are their objectives and outcomes logical, realistic and measurable? Has the strategy continued to be relevant/adaptable in the face of changing needs, new developments and crises?
	(2) Does the strategy create a clear and shared vision for the ILO's DC work that is beir	 Do the strategy's four pillars articulate or suggest a "Theory of Change" for the ILO's DC work? To what extent is the strategy known and applied across
	actively pursued across the organisation?	the organisation? Are responsibilities clear for implementing the strategy and achieving outcomes across the four pillars?
	(3) To what extent have the recommendations of the 201 HLE of Technical Cooperation been implemented?	- 1.1.2.
COHERENCE		
Topic	Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions/Areas to cover
Coherence with other ILO plans, strategies and priorities	(4) How well does the strategy align and support the achievement of outcomes of the P&Bs and DWCPs?	 How well has the strategy addressed enabling outcomes of P&B (e.g., relating to efficiency, influence) and promoted synergies and complementarities with other P&B outcomes? In what ways has the strategy supported national priority setting and the implementation of DWCPs?
	(5) Has the strategy contributed to the "One ILO" approach?	How well do processes for DC project design, development, implementation and management reinforce the "One ILO" approach?
		Has the strategy led to more multi-disciplinary teams drawn from across the organisation?
	(6) Has the strategy addressed the need for improvements in the integration into DC initiatives of: The ILO's normative and social dialogue mandate? Gender equality, non-discrimination, and inclusion? Just transition?	➤ To what extent have DC projects addressed the need for improved integration of these elements?
	(7) To what extent does the strategy align with the 2018 Resolution on DC and with	▶ What is covered by the strategy? What is not?

Resolution on DC and with the Centenary Declaration?

COHERENCE (CON	COHERENCE (CONT'D.)			
Topic	Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions/Areas to cover		
ILO/constituent cooperation with other development actors	(8) In what ways has the strategy sought to bring about a closer convergence of policy action between the ILO, the UN development system and other stakeholders?	 Involvement of constituents in partnerships for decent work with regional and sub-regional organizations and with UN system? Enhanced engagement with IFIs? ILO and constituents' involvement in "financing for development" initiatives? Alignment of DWCPs with UNDSCFs? 		
	(9) How has the strategy sought to develop constituents' capacity to engage in these efforts and partnerships?	► Capacity development tools and initiatives?		
	(10) How has the strategy sought to increase collaboration with the private sector and other non-State actors?	Approach to PPPs?Working with NGOs, universities et al?		

EFFECTIVENESS

Implementation of

the Strategy and

Implementation

Topic

Plan

Evaluation Questions

(11) Does the current

Sub-Questions/Areas to cover

- ▶ Are the indicators measurable and traceable?
- monitoring and reporting framework of the workplan associated with the DC strategy allow for effective tracking of progress and
- informing the strategy?
- To what extent does the framework in place complement, rather than duplicate, the established structure of strategic reporting to the Governing Body?
- (12) What were the key actions taken under each of the strategy's pillars and what were the results? What actions are planned? Are there significant gaps?

Pillar 1 - results of actions to:

- Support capacity development needs of constituents in relation to DC.
- Strengthen constituents' ownership of needs-driven DWCPs and EC programmes and projects.
- ▶ Support constituents to engage effectively in UN programming and partnerships at the country level.
- Promote capacity development and peer-to-peer exchanges on DW through SS and SSTC.
- ▶ Other

Pillar 2 - results of actions to:

- ▶ Promote ILO comparative advantage and DW in global partnerships, alliances and networks at global, regional and country level.
- Increase collaboration with IFIs to enhance policy coherence and finance DW outcomes at country level.
- ▶ Develop constituents' capacities and foster ILO partnerships with development actors within financing initiatives/frameworks that promote decent work.
- ▶ Increase collaboration with the private sector and other non-State actors.
- Other.

Pillar 3 - results of actions to:

- Mobilize resources based on defined ILO funding needs per policy outcome, major theme or country/region.
- Expand voluntary funding sources and modalities for unearmarked and lightly earmarked funding.
- Expand and diversify voluntary funding sources and partnerships.
- Other.

Pillar 4 - results of actions to:

- ▶ Improve accountability, monitoring, reporting and transparency in relation to how resources are utilized and results achieved.
 - ▶ Progress reports shared? Mechanisms for stakeholder feedback?
 - Transparency in how resources are used and results achieved?
 - Implementing recommendations from internal and external evaluations (e.g. MOPAN) and audits
 - ▶ Effective mechanisms to ensure accountability to funding partners and to end beneficiaries
- ▶ Continuously improve the ILO's organizational performance and learning, and the provision of agile country services (inc. new service models et al.)
- ▶ Meet ILO and UN accountability standards (inc. for gender equality and disability inclusion, reinforcement of social and environmental safeguards, ensuring no-one is left behind)
- Enhance communication on and visibility of ILO results and comparative advantage in partnerships for DW.
- Other.

Topic Evaluation Questions Sub-Questions/Areas to cover Internal processes for Development Cooperation (13) Is the organizational/ regional structure for delivering the Dc Strategy compatible with the strategy/ actions? (14) How efficient and effective are ILO human resources and procurement systems and processes in supporting DC projects (in the field and in HQ)? Are project staff adequately prepared for their roles and procurement systems and processes in the field and in HQ)? What innovations have been introduced to improve the efficiency of IR systems and processes in supporting DC What has been their effect? Are there adequate resources including staff to implement the strategy as intended? Are there adequate resources including staff to implement the strategy as intended? Are there any issues related to the ILO's approach to Project Support Income (PSI) that need to be clarified or addressed to enhance the ILO's CO work? Are financial resources (including Project Support Income) allocated efficiently to support project services and effective are internal controls built in the financial management systems in assisting the decision-making processes by DC Managers and in ensuring the appropriate use of funds for the purpose they are intended?			
To what extent does ILO have the capacity to deliver projects effectively when there is no field presence?	EFFICIENCY		
regional structure for delivering the DC strategy compatible with the strategy/ actions? (14) How efficient and effective are ILO human resources and procurement systems and processes in supporting DC projects (in the field and in HQ)? (15) How efficient and effective are ILO financial management systems and processes in supporting DC projects (in the field and in HQ)? (15) How efficient and effective are ILO financial management systems and processes in supporting DC projects? (15) How efficient and effective are ILO financial management systems and processes in supporting DC projects? (15) How efficient and effective are ILO financial management systems and processes in supporting DC projects? (15) How efficient and effective are ILO financial management systems and processes in supporting DC projects? (15) How efficient and effective is the financial management approach to Project Support Income (PSI) that need to be clarified or addressed to enhance the ILO's DC work? Are there any issues related to the ILO's approach to Project Support Income (PSI) that need to be clarified or addressed to enhance the ILO's DC work? Are financial resources (including Project Support Income) allocated efficiently to support project or programme goals? How effective is the financial management approach and systems in ensuring timely delivery of project services and effective planning and monitoring of project resources? How effective are internal controls built in the financial management systems in assisting the decision-making processes by DC managers and in ensuring the appropriate use of funds for the purpose they are intended?	Торіс	Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions/Areas to cover
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supporting DC projects (in the field and in HQ)? How well does the ILO measure the efficiency of its HR and procurement systems and processes to support continuous improvement in the efficiency of DC projects? What innovations have been introduced to improve the efficiency of HR systems and processes supporting DC? What has been their effect? (15) How efficient and effective are ILO financial management systems and processes in supporting DC projects? Are there adequate resources including staff to implement the strategy as intended? Are there any issues related to the ILO's approach to Project Support Income (PSI) that need to be clarified or addressed to enhance the ILO's DC work? Are financial resources (including Project Support Income) allocated efficiently to support project or programme goals? How effective is the financial management approach and systems in ensuring timely delivery of project services and effective planning and monitoring of project resources? How effective are internal controls built in the financial management systems in assisting the decision-making processes by DC managers and in ensuring the appropriate use of funds for the purpose they are intended?		effective are ILO human	gender equality, diversity and inclusion within the
 How well does the ILO measure the efficiency of its HR and procurement systems and processes to support continuous improvement in the efficiency of DC projects? What innovations have been introduced to improve the efficiency of HR systems and processes supporting DC? What has been their effect? Are there adequate resources including staff to implement the strategy as intended? Are there any issues related to the ILO's approach to Project Support Income (PSI) that need to be clarified or addressed to enhance the ILO's DC work? Are financial resources (including Project Support Income) allocated efficiently to support project or programme goals? How effective is the financial management approach and systems in ensuring timely delivery of project services and effective planning and monitoring of project resources? How effective are internal controls built in the financial management systems in assisting the decision-making processes by DC managers and in ensuring the appropriate use of funds for the purpose they are intended? 		supporting DC projects (in	
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systems in ensuring timely delivery of project services and effective planning and monitoring of project resources? How effective are internal controls built in the financial management systems in assisting the decision-making processes by DC managers and in ensuring the appropriate use of funds for the purpose they are intended?			allocated efficiently to support project or programme
management systems in assisting the decision-making processes by DC managers and in ensuring the appropriate use of funds for the purpose they are intended?			systems in ensuring timely delivery of project services and
IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY			management systems in assisting the decision-making processes by DC managers and in ensuring the appropriate
IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY			
	IMPACT AND SUS	TAINABILITY	
Topic Evaluation Questions Sub-Questions/Areas to cover	Topic	Evaluation Questions	Sub-Questions/Areas to cover

Overall impact (16) What significant changes Impacts and their sustainability in each pillar and sustainability have been made in the ILO's of the DC strategy development cooperation work because of the strategy and the actions taken? (17) What evidence exists ► From the perspective of constituents? that the strategy has ▶ From the perspective of development cooperation improved the overall impact partners? of the ILO's DC work? ► From the perspective of beneficiaries?

► ANNEX C – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE HLE OF TC (2015)

	Recommendation	Priority	DC Strategic Plan 2020 - 2025 pillar
1	The forthcoming Development Cooperation Strategy should be outward looking and focus on development objectives that implement ILO's ILS, emphasizing results at the level of outcomes and impacts. It should include a realistically costed and budgeted action plan for creating the capacity required in the field to further raise the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of TC.	High	4
2	ILO should carefully assess how it can best meet the development cooperation (DC) priorities of different categories of countries based on demand and how to structure the expertise to support clusters with similar development conditions.	High	1
3	ILO should continue to deepen the use of decent work as the core of its brand, building on the expected inclusion of the concept under the new sustainable development goal (SDG 8). In this respect, the use of annual flagship publications envisaged under the Director-General's reform commitment linked to clear communications strategies should also be implemented without delay.	Medium	4
4	To maximize ownership and sustainability, the principle emphasis of ILO's DC should be on national programmes. Regional programmes should ideally be applied only where they address cross-border issues. Capacity development should ensure that essential systems and processes are implemented and institutionalized to guarantee the continuation of activities once the ILO exits, including capacity for ex-post monitoring and evaluation to assess and record the developmental impact of DC.	Medium	1
5	In order to achieve scale for impact, the ILO should actively mobilize resources at country level, moving beyond traditional ODA to government resources, international financial institutions (IFIs), the private sector and related combinations in a way that does not compromise its independence or perspective. The commitment of national resources to complement ILO's funds and ensure sustainability should be a prerequisite for project approval.	High	3
6	Despite the current constraints on funding, the ILO should find ways to invest in "country managers" in non-resident member States with large TC portfolios with a view to engaging in sustained policy dialogue with constituents to support resource mobilization and achieve scale in its programme.	High	1
7	In fragile states and those emerging from conflict, project personnel may be "embedded" in ministries, and workers' and employers' organizations with a view to serving as mentors, trainers and technical advisers to accelerate implementation, and the development of national capacity where it is particularly low. However, all such instances should be accompanied by a clear exit strategy.	Medium	1
8	In all countries, clear analysis of the country situation and priorities contained in UNDAFs/UNDAPs should precede the design and implementation of DWCPs, ensuring linkages and mutual reinforcement between activities and United Nations (UN) bodies.	Medium	2

9	ILO must urgently address the perception that its support costs are higher than those of other agencies. A dedicated study to review actual administrative and technical support costs by ILO, benchmarked against other agencies of the UN system, NGOs and bilateral agencies should be undertaken. PSI should also be allocated as early as possible for sound planning purposes.	High	4
10	ILO must make a concerted effort to reduce time lags in project start-up. Consideration should be given to establishing a pool of pre-screened project personnel who can be tapped quickly without extensive re-interviewing. Overall, ILO needs to distribute sufficient authority to each level of the system to achieve its objectives, whilst ensuring clear accountability.	High	4
11	With regard to administrative and financial management, the rollout of the Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS) to all COs and projects should be accelerated. At the same time, the level of budget authorization available at CO level should be raised to reduce the amount of procurement and recruitment activities needing to be referred back to ROs or HQ.	High	4
12	While resources for global and inter-country projects and programmes should continue to be mobilized by the Partnerships and Field Support Department (PARDEV) HQ and ROs, it is strongly recommended that some of its capacity should be outposted. This should create resource mobilization and monitoring units uniformly across ROs or COs with a mandate to support mobilization at country level.	Medium	3
13	ILO should enhance its approach to building communities of practice around priority issues in different categories of countries to enhance knowledge management .	Medium	3
14	ILO's staff mobility policy should be rolled out providing strong professional and financial incentives linked to the number of field positions staff members have served in as well as their performance, with senior staff positions being filled by staff with extensive field experience. In order to compete for the best national staff, ILO should reconsider its policy of limiting the maximum grade of national officers to the NO-B level.	High	4
(1 5)112	Mainstreaming gender issues alone is not sufficient, and the strategy should continue to promote the current practice of having major projects target issues affecting women workers and employers. The current practice of placing gender specialists in Decent Work Teams (DWTs) should continue irrespective of the country category and state of development, as it is apparent that gender issues in the labour market remain a major area of concern irrespective of country category.	High	4

¹¹² This recommendation is not listed separately in the TC Evaluation but is derived from text in recommendations 1 and 2.

► ANNEX D – DC STRATEGY AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN - RESULTS

PILLAR 1

What the Strategy sets out (paras 23-27)	What the Implementation Plan sets out		What was delivered and the effects
	Action	Deliverables	
Improve integration of development cooperation into the Programme and Budget: Better integration of development cooperation	1.2 Strengthen constituents' ownership of needsdriven DWCPs, DC programmes and Projects.	1.2.1 Organizational processes, guidance and tools for DWCPs, development cooperation programmes and projects are enhanced and	Integration of development cooperation into the P&E has no direct corresponding actions or deliverables in the Implementation Plan.
into the programme and budget processes to increase the coherence of ILO action in service delivery and enable better identification of funding gaps		updated to ensure participation and ownership or constituents	Policy outcomes on social dialogue and normative work in the P&B are largely funded by RB, less emphasis in DC projects, where these issues tend to be mainstreamed.
Action to improve the effectiveness of the DWCPs as mechanisms for constituent engagement and as frameworks for the ILO delivery at the country level			Projects like PROSPECTS and others working in crisis contexts do not have an appropriate place in the Outcomes/outputs of the P&B despite the DG inaugural speech stating the importance of ILO action in this space, and the new Crisis AP
			Regarding strengthened constituents' ownership of DWCPs and DC projects organizational guidance includes more upfront support for designing proposals and a help desk for ILO staff to better consult across the office.
			ILO plan of action on social dialogue and tripartism 2019-2023
			Effects: Constituents' ownership in overall DC programming through the DWCP is increasing, while there is varying ownership of individual projects, which may not have the buy-in of the core constituents.

What the Strategy sets out (paras 23-27)	What the Implemen	Vhat the Implementation Plan sets out What was delivered and th	
	Action	Deliverables	
Centre services on organizational and institutional capacity development by implementing the ILO-wide strategy for institutional capacity development Continue to support the implementation of constituents' national capacity development plans, responding to their own diagnosis of needs Continue reviewing tools and methods and producing guidance on capacity development, including measuring capacity development results Continue to develop innovative approaches to support capacity development, with support of the ITC ILO (Turin Centre)	Development cooperation services respond to identified capacity development needs of tripartite constituents based on priorities and institutional capacity-development plans	Updated guidance tools on the design of capacity -development interventions are produced, including in collaboration with ITC-ILO Updated evaluation methodologies and tools are developed, to improve assessment of capacity -development results, and enhance organisational learning, including with ITC-ILO	ACTRAV developed a guidance note on the involvement of trade unions in the design and implementation of DC projects, launched on their website in late 2023. ACTRAV developed a training module on the design and formulation of DC projects for trade unions in collaboration with ITCILO, completed in 2023. ACT/EMP conducts country-level needs assessments on a biennial basis, followed by development of workplans, but that these are internal confidential documents. ACT/EMP also noted that the field specialists work with the country offices to develop country programme outcomes, considered to be suitable for the next programming cycle, and that their field staff make sure that DC projects mainstream and integrate capacity development needs of employers and workers. Effects: Not clear EVAL released guidance on the assessment of capacity building initiatives Effect: Improved evaluation of capacity building efforts in project evaluations.
	1.3 Support the effective engagement of ILO constituents in UN programming and partnership processes at country level.	1.3.1 Awareness raising approaches, tools, and capacity building programmes on common country analysis, UN Cooperation frameworks and SERPS are rolled out for constituents in 5 regions, including in cooperation with ITCILO 1.3.2 Awareness-raising approaches and tools on the ILO's comparative advantage and DW agenda are rolled out with UNRCs and UNCTs 1.3.3 Timely assistance in relevant policy areas is provided to constituents for their engagement in UN programming at country level (see UN Sustainable Development Group)	The Office reported on constituents' engagement in UN programming and partnerships at the GB meeting of Oct-Nov 2022, and most regions have supported dialogues and guidance tools for constituents to build their capacity to engage with the UN development cooperation frameworks, including the SDGs. Effect: Gradual improvement in constituents' understanding of and engagement with the UN sustainable development processes. The ILO's DW Agenda has been disseminated among UNRCs and UNCTs through dialogues and guidance materials in countries in most regions. Effect: Growing awareness among UNRCs and UN country team peer agencies of ILO's Decent Work Agenda, tripartite structure and comparative advantage.

What the Strategy sets out (paras 23-27)	What the Impleme	ntation Plan sets out	What was delivered and the effects
	Action	Deliverables	
Provide data services and examples of what works Par.25 ➤ Invest in generation, management and brokering of reliable and timely research, statistics etc. to support constituents in measuring progress on SDGs	This element does not have an action in the Implementation plan		This area of the Strategy had no direct corresponding actions or deliverables in the Implementation Plan, though elements are included in the actions under institutional capacity development.
► Particular attention to sectors most affected by COVID-19			
 Constituents and the Office will be better placed to advocate for national decent work priorities and to influence policies and their financing 			
Develop and offer services to constituents on the financing for decent work (para 26) Where relevant the ILO will provide support in the development of country sustainable development frameworks and how these will be integrated in national financing frameworks. E.g. in the area of social protection, ILO provides TA on fiscal space analysis	This element does not have an action in the Implementation plan		This area of the Strategy had no direct corresponding actions or deliverables in the Implementation Plan.
▶ With accelerated action to realize the SDGs there is likely to be heightened demand for such services, including through UN country teams			
Promote South-South Cooperation and South-South Triangular cooperation As a follow-up to the second high level UN	1.4 Promote and expand capacity development and peer-to-peer exchanges for decent work between constituents and other partners through	1.4.1 10 new partnerships that promote SSC BAPA+40 principles to support delivery of ILO policy outcomes are concluded (21-25)	ILO has been very active at HQ and at the regiona level in the promotion of South-South and Triangular Cooperation.
Conference on SSC (BAPA+40) and as part of the UN system-wide SSC strategy, the office will enhance the normative and tripartite grounding of SSC and SSTC and the use of social dialogue	SSC and SSTC modalities and partnerships	1.4.2 New ILO methodologies and tools for increased results and sustainability of SSC and SSTC and partnerships developed and supplied to constituents, staff in cooperation with ITC-ILO.	Effects: Constituents benefiting from peer-peer exchanges and common regional approaches to issues are being developed.
➤ Reinforce results-focussed programming, monitoring and impact while optimising SSC and triangular cooperation, e.g. city-city, fragile to fragile, subregional and interregional cooperation		1.4.3 Twenty SSC capacity-development initiatives are undertaken with and for the constituents in cooperation with ITC-ILO	
		1.4.4 UN Inter-agency mechanism for SSC and SSTC integrates good practices from the ILO tripartite partners' experience into its system-wide policy orientation to UN entities	

Pillar 2

What the Strategy sets out (paras 30-34)	What the Implementation Plan sets out		What was delivered and the effects
	Action	Deliverables	
Support national priority setting on decent work: ▶ DC support of integrating DWCP priorities in CCAs and UNCFs			These areas of the Strategy had no direct corresponding actions or deliverables in the Implementation Plan, though elements are
Facilitate policy coherence among development partners: Encourage/facilitate joint development & implementation of national/regional priorities			included in the actions below and under other Pillars.
Convene/engage in policy dialogues			
▶ Promote normative, tripartite & social dialogue mandate in UN country teams & IFIs			

What the Strategy sets out (paras 30-34)	What the Implementation Plan sets out		What was delivered and the effects
	Action	Deliverables	
 Leveraging financing through policy coherence Continue policy dialogues with IFIs on decent work themes & sustainable financing Assess risks/opportunities presented by such finance mechanisms & promote integration of ILS, social dialogue & safeguards Strengthen constituents' and staff capacities in this area 	2.2 Increase collaboration with IFIs including regional multilateral development banks for greater policy coherence and in pursuit of financing of decent work outcomes at country level	2.2.1 Three institutional arrangements on themes that advance decent work at regional & global level in place between the ILO & IFIs & regional multilateral development banks.	Mid-Term Review reported new collaboration with IMF & AfDB and some new initiatives with ADB, DBLA and IDB. Effect: Agreements with IMF on social protection promotion, with AfDB on including a "jobs marker" for investments, with ADB on social protection and FPRW. Collaboration with DBLA on skills systems & a MOU with IDB to facilitate cooperation.
	2.3 Develop constituents' capacities & foster ILO partnerships with development actors in the framework of financing initiatives & integrated national financing frameworks promoting decent	2.2.2 ILO maintains leadership role in the Initiative on Financing for Development in Era of COVID-19.	No action reported.
	work.	2.3.1 Capacity-development tools and initiatives are developed for and with ILO constituents on financing for decent work, including in collaboration with ITC-ILO.	Mid-Term Review reported research into new financing strategies that would include constituents' perspectives, and ITCILO training on financing for decent work through SSTC. May 2024 update alluded to additional training/webinars Effect: Training delivered (reach & results unclear) & research completed
		2.3.2 National governments and ILO constituents at the country level are supported in development finance initiatives, including in the context of UN Cooperation Frameworks and the UN SDG Fund.	The Global Accelerator is intended to play a key role in this area. Effect: Still in its early stages but some "pathfinder countries" have been identified where countries show strong commitment from government.
		2.3.3 Approach and tools are developed with and for tripartite constituents for assessing opportunities and risks when considering innovative finance mechanisms.	No action reported.

What the Strategy sets out (paras 30-34)	What the Implementation Plan sets out	What was delivered and the effects	
	Action	Deliverables	
Multi-stakeholder partnerships for policy coherence: Convene partnerships on decent work issues at national, regional and global levels including with UN, IFIs, development/funding partners, private sector and civil society.	2.1 Promote the ILO's comparative advantage and Decent Work Agenda in global multi-stakeholder partnerships, alliances and networks, including with the UN at global, regional and country levels.	2.1.1 Multi-stakeholder partnerships – convened by ILO or with ILO & its constituents - integrate value of, and respect for ILS, tripartism, and social dialogue in support of decent work	Mid-Term Review reported engagement by ILO & its constituents in various partnerships covering different policy areas and decent work themes as well as with ASEAN and the African Union. Effect: New tools & initiatives developed by partnerships were reported (e.g., in social protection, climate action, child labour).
		2.1.2 Promotion of Involvement of ILO constituents in intra- and interregional partnerships for decent work with and between sub-regional and regional organizations as well as with UN system entities	May 2024 update reported regional initiatives in the Americas promoting inter-agency cooperation and South-South & Triangular Cooperation and in Africa supporting constituent capacity to integrate DWCPs into regional frameworks. Effect: Development of survey tools, e-courses (Americas) & delivery of training by ITCILO to constituents (Africa)
 Engaging with the private sector for policy coherence: Further engage with companies to achieve ILO policy objectives Use joint/network approaches involving multiple companies on issues or sectors to share good practice & increase impact of all parties' activities Engage with safeguards and UN Common Approach to Due Diligence 	2.4 Increase collaboration with the private sector & other non-State actors (such as NGOs or universities) to leverage respective capabilities, knowledge and expertise in pursuit of the ILO's decent work objectives.	2.4.1 Public-private partnerships, alliances and business networks are secured or facilitated by the ILO to promote decent work objectives.	Mid-Term Review reported cooperation in the textile and food supply chains in Africa & Asia and growth in membership of the ILO Global Business & Disability Network. May 2024 update included reference to work in Europe with Ferrero to address decent work deficits in hazelnut production, in Africa with ENI to address OSH in agribusiness linked to biofuels, and in Latin America with Nestlé to advance youth employment & skills. Effect: Opportunities to advance decent work objectives through these business-led initiatives.

PILLAR 3

What the Strategy sets out	What the Implementation Plan sets out		What was delivered and the effects	
	Action	Deliverables		
The Office will seek to deepen, expand and diversify its funding partnerships and to secure longer-term, more predictable funding, including through lightly earmarked and unearmarked voluntary contributions.				
Mobilize adequate resources for the ILO's programme of work.	Action 1: Enhance the integration of ILO development cooperation into the ILO programme of work by mobilizing resources based on clearly defined ILO funding needs per policy outcome, major theme or country/region.	Two structured funding dialogues to mobilize voluntary funding are organized. (2021–23)	This overview incorporates the following assessments against the three actions:	
Align earmarked contributions to ILO outcomes.	Action 2: Expand voluntary funding sources and modalities for unearmarked and lightly earmarked funding.	An approach to time-bound thematic campaigns is developed and one campaign piloted. (2021–23)	Action 1 has been only partially implemented. There is no evidence that ILO has mapped out specific funding needs per policy.	
Encourage unearmarked contributions.	Action 3: Expand and diversify voluntary funding sources and partnerships.	Concrete modalities of unearmarked (Regular Budget Supplementary Account) and lightly earmarked funding are promoted with funding partners in support of policy outcomes, in line with the Funding Compact priorities. (2021 – 2025)	Action 2 has not yet generated strong results and most funding still comprises earmarked resources.	
 Expand funding partners and sources. Strengthen domestic funding partnerships. Sustain existing bilateral partnerships and develop new ones. Increase private sector contributions. Build on relationships with IFIs and other development finance institutions Strengthen participation in UN funding. 		A consolidated approach is applied, specifically to develop large and integrated development cooperation programmes, including Flagship Programmes, making it possible to attract contributions from multiple funding partners. (2021 – 2025)	Action 3 has not yet produced strong results in terms of expanded partner networks, although there have been some specific new inputs, for example from Netherlands and Colombia.	

What the Strategy sets out	What the Implementation Plan sets out		What was delivered and the effects
	Action	Deliverables	
		Four specific approaches are developed for mobilizing voluntary funding of ILO priorities respectively from the UN, domestic funding providers, private sector, IFIs and other development finance institutions, within the frameworks of the UN Funding Compact and the Programme and Budget. (2021 - 2023)	Overview of Progress at Mid Term Review: Funding for the ILO's work has been maintained at previous years' levels despite an increasingly competitive funding environment, but mostly through earmarked contributions.
		Funding strategies are developed for the implementation of DWCP and decent work priorities in UN Cooperation Frameworks at the country level. (2021 – 2023)	More efforts should be directed towards diversifying voluntary funding sources, including with IFIs, domestic funding, private sector and other non-State actors, emerging partners and SSTC partners.

PILLAR 4

What the Strategy sets out	What the Implementation Plan sets out		What was delivered and the effects
	Action	Deliverables	
Continue to improve results-based management: RBM practices Quality of design, implementation, evaluation	4.1 Enhance RBM through improved accountability, monitoring, reporting & transparency in relation to how resources are utilized and results achieved.	4.1.1 Updated approaches, guides & tools on RBM in place and used	DC Learning Journey developed & delivered online through ITCILO that covers RBM, ILS, project scoping & strategy, & Theory of Change.
 Longer-term large-scale & integrated programmes Continuous monitoring & agility Better use of data, including impact evaluations 			A revised DC Internal Governance Manual was published in 2021, updating the manual that had been in place since 2010, building on the DC Strategy and following the phases of the DC project cycle. Effect: A core document for DC practitioners that provided a much-needed resource to DC practitioners with guidance on DC strategy implementation.

What the Strategy sets out	What the Implementation Plan sets out		What was delivered and the effects
	Action	Deliverables	
 Improve transparency. Align with UN/IATI financial data reporting Improve integrated reporting of results & resources Increase transparency in costing services 	Action 1: Enhance the integration of ILO development cooperation into the ILO programme of work by mobilizing resources based on clearly defined ILO funding needs per policy outcome, major theme or country/region.	Two structured funding dialogues to mobilize voluntary funding are organized. (2021–23)	This overview incorporates the following assessments against the three actions:
 Communicate results, enhance ILO visibility, provide open access of this data to constituents & partners 	Action 2: Expand voluntary funding sources and modalities for unearmarked and lightly earmarked funding.	An approach to time-bound thematic campaigns is developed and one campaign piloted. (2021–23)	Action 1 has been only partially implemented. There is no evidence that ILO has mapped out specific funding needs per policy.
Align earmarked contributions to ILO outcomes.	Action 3: Expand and diversify voluntary funding sources and partnerships.	Concrete modalities of unearmarked (Regular Budget Supplementary Account) and lightly earmarked funding are promoted with funding partners in support of policy outcomes, in line with the Funding Compact priorities. (2021 – 2025)	Action 2 has not yet generated strong results and most funding still comprises earmarked resources.
Encourage unearmarked contributions.		A consolidated approach is applied, specifically to develop large and integrated development cooperation programmes, including Flagship Programmes, making it possible to attract contributions from multiple funding partners. (2021 – 2025)	Action 3 has not yet produced strong results in terms of expanded partner networks, although there have been some specific new inputs, for example from Netherlands and Colombia.
 Expand funding partners and sources. Strengthen domestic funding partnerships. Sustain existing bilateral partnerships and develop new ones. Increase private sector contributions. Build on relationships with IFIs and other development finance institutions Strengthen participation in UN funding. 			

What the Strategy sets out	What the Implementation Plan sets out		What was delivered and the effects
	Action	Deliverables	
		Four specific approaches are developed for mobilizing voluntary funding of ILO priorities respectively from the UN, domestic funding providers, private sector, IFIs and other development finance institutions, within the frameworks of the UN Funding Compact and the Programme and Budget. (2021 - 2023)	Overview of Progress at Mid Term Review: Funding for the ILO's work has been maintained at previous years' levels despite an increasingly competitive funding environment, but mostly through earmarked contributions.
		Funding strategies are developed for the implementation of DWCP and decent work priorities in UN Cooperation Frameworks at the country level. (2021 – 2023)	More efforts should be directed towards diversifying voluntary funding sources, including with IFIs, domestic funding, private sector and other non-State actors, emerging partners and SSTC partners.

► ANNEX E - LIST OF STAKEHOLDERS INTERVIEWED/CONSULTED¹¹³

GENDER	NAME	POSITION	OFFICE/DEPARTMENT
Bangladesh case s	tudy		
Male	Humayun Kabir	Additional Secretary, International Organization Wing	Ministry of Labour and Employment
Male	Saiful Haque Chowdhury	Additional Secretary, Planning and Development wing	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
Female	Dr. Nashid Rizwana Monir	Deputy Secretary, Employment wing	Ministry of Expatriates' Welfare and Overseas Employment
Male	Saidul Islam	Additional Secretary-General	Bangladesh Employers' Federation
Male	Santosh Kumar Dutta	Deputy Secretary-General	Bangladesh Employers' Federation
Male	Muhammad Habibur Rahman	Assistant Secretary-General: Legal Affairs	Bangladesh Employers' Federation
Male	Asif Ayub	Joint Secretary General	Bangladesh Employers' Federation
Male	S M Bashir Ullah	Deputy Secretary (Planning Cell-1)	Technical and Madrasah Education Division, Ministry of Education
Male	Babul Akhter	Chairperson and Member	WRC
Male	Mesbah Uddin Ahmed	President, Jatiyo Sramik Jote, Chairman	National Coordination Committee for Workers' Education
Male	Mazedul Islam	Development Coordination Officer, Economist	UN RC
Female	Tapati Saha	National Programme Officer	UN Women
Female	Nodoka Hasegaw	Senior Development Officer	UNHCR
Female	Sonali Dayarante	Deputy Country Representative	UNDP
Male	Dia Sanou	Deptury Country Representative	FAO
Female	Corinne Henchoz	Deputy Head of Mission and Director of Cooperation (SDC)	Switzerland
Female	Sylvia Islam	Senior Development Advisor	Canada
Female	Fredrika Noren	First/Second Secretary, Private Sector Development	Sweden
Male	Thijs Woudstra	Deputy Head of Mission/Head of Development Cooperation	Netherlands
Other/Unknown	TMs ahera Jabeen	Social Development Adviser	UK

¹¹³ Interviews feeding into remote case studies without their own standing sections were embedded throughout the interviews conducted (Jordan, ITC ILO Turin, Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions and Better Work).

GENDER	NAME	POSITION	OFFICE/DEPARTMENT
Female	Rafeza Shaheen	Project Coordinator	Manusher Jonno Foundation
Female	Tasmiah Tabassum Rahman	Head of Programme, Skills Development	BRAC
Female	Camelia Fatema	Senior Programme Manager, Resource Mobilisation and New Business Development	BRAC
Female	Marina Sultana	Director, Programme	RMMRU
Male	C.R. Abrar	Executive Director	RMMRU
Male	Syed Sultan Uddin Ahmmed	Executive Director	Bangladesh Institute of Labour Studies
Male	Sayan Md. Rafi	Monitoring & Evaluation Officer	Better Work Bangladesh, ILO
Female	Mahsin Hamuda	Programme Officer, M & E	Labour Administration and Working Conditions Cluster, ILO
Male	Mokther Hossain	Sr. Programme Officer, M & E	Labour Administration and Working Conditions Cluster, ILO
Female	Kazi Hasin Savera	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	ISEC Project, ILO
Male	Mohammad Mohebur Rahman	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	ProGRESS Project, ILO
Female	Mosrat Jahan	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer	EIS Project, ILO
Female	Sohana Samrin Chowdhury	External Collaborator (Project Evaluation)	CO-Dhaka, ILO
Male	Neeran Ramjuthan	Programme Manager	Labour Administration and Working Conditions Cluster, ILO
Female	Lotte Kejser	Chief Technical Adviser	Skills21, ILO
Male	Peter Bellen	Project Manager	ProGRESS Project, ILO
Female	Rahnuma Salam Khan	National Programme Manager	Reintegration for Migrant Workers Project, ILO
Male	Mohamad Anis Agung Nugroho	Programme Manager	Better Work Bangladesh, ILO
Male	Syed Saad Hussain Gilani	Chief Technical Adviser	EIS Project, ILO
Male	Pratik Ranjan Bishi	Senior Operations Officer	CO-Dhaka, ILO
Paraguay case s	study		
Female	Camila Candia	Responsable Cooperación Internacional	UIP
Male	Roberto Recalde	Jefe de Gabinete	UIP
Male	Julio Marcial Viveros	Miembro Comisión Asuntos Legales y Estatutarios, Directivo	ARP
Female	Cristina Rolón	Abogada	ARP

GENDER	NAME	POSITION	OFFICE/DEPARTMENT
Лale	Jorge Figueredo	Asesor jurídico	FEDEMIPYME
Male	Luis Tavella	Presidente	FEDEMIPYME
Male	Cesar Pimentel	Asesor y Consejero	FEDEMIPYME
Male	Ramón Avalos	Secretario General	CNT
Female	Laura Díaz Grütter	Jefa Dirección General Protección de la niñez y Adolescencia	MTESS
Female	Basilia Formino	Jefa de Denuncias y Seguimiento Dirección General Protección de la niñez y Adolescencia	MTESS
Female	Silvia	Técnica Dirección General Protección de la niñez y Adolescencia	MTESS
Female	Verónica López	Viceministra de Empleo y Seguridad Social (antes Dirección Normas Internacionales)	MTESS
Male	Wilberto Otazú	Dirección General de Empleo	MTESS
Female	Mónica Recalde	Ministra (antes Dirección General de Seguridad Social)	MTESS
Male	Jorge Barboza Franco	Juez de Primera Instancia en lo Laboral	Corte Suprema de Justicia
Female	Teodora Recalde	Gerencia de Gestión Financiera del Estado	Ministerio de Hacienda
Male	Gustavo Rojas	Oficial de Políticas Sociales	UNICEF
Male	Mario Samaja	Coordinador Residente	ONU
Male	Matteo Sirtori	Jefe Cooperación	Unión Europea
Female	Vera Valente	Especialista	Unión Europea
Female	Silvia Morimoto	Representante Residente	PNUD
Male	Fabio Bertranou	DWT/CO Director	DWT/CO-Santiago, ILO
Female	Maria Carmen Bueno Pareja	Specialist, OSH	DWT/CO-Santiago, ILO
Male	Juan Jose Guilarte-Villalobos	Specialist, Workers' Activities	DWT/CO-Santiago, ILO
Male	Guillermo Montt Armanet	Specialist, Social Protection	CO-Islamabad, ILO
Male	Sergio Paixao Pardo	International Labour Standards and Labour Law Specialist	DWT/CO-Santiago, ILO
Male	Andrés Yuren	Senior Specialist, Employers' Activities	RO-Latin America and the Caribbean, ILO
Male	Gerhard Reinecke	Senior Specialist, EmploymentDevelopment	DWT/CO-Santiago, ILO
Male	Aram Cunego	National Program Officer	DWT/CO-Santiago, ILO

GENDER	NAME	POSITION	OFFICE/DEPARTMENT
Female	Claudia Ruiz	Chief, Regional Programming Services	RO-Latin America and the Caribbean, ILO
Female	Verónica Herken	National Project Coordinator	DWT/CO-Santiago, ILO
Uganda case st	tudy		
Male	Dan Okanga	Head, Policy and Research	Federation of Ugandan Employers, Uganda
Male	Nicholas Businge Carpenecus	Programme Officer	National Organization of Trade Unions (NOTU), Uganda
Male	Amuriat Bernard	Assistant Commissioner, Labour Inspectorate	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda
Male	Kalanda Isma	Principal Labour Officer for Child Labour	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda
Female	Rebecca Namwire	Labour Inspection Officer	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda
Male	Ibroi Kissu Woko	Apprenticeship and Graduate Volunteer	Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda
Male	Masiga Isaiah	Head-Public Employment Services	Department of Employment Services, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda
Female	Hilda Nakagga	Labour Officer, Industrial Relations	Labour Inspection, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Uganda
Female	Susan Ngongi Namondo	UN Resident Coordinator, Uganda	United Nations
Male	Issa	Head of UN Resident Coordinator Office	United Nations, Uganda
Female	Yukari Tsunokake	Adolescent Development officer	UNICEF, Uganda
Female	Elise Villechalane	Senior External Relations Officer	UNHCR, Uganda
Male	Simone Mattiussi	Program Coordinator	UNHCR, Uganda
Male	MD Arifure Rahman	Senior Development Officer	UNHCR, Uganda
Female	Lizzelotte de Rijk	Second Secretary for Climate, Migration and Youth	Netherlands, Embassy, Uganda
Female	Joy Okello	Policy officer, Humanitarian affairs and Migration	Netherlands, Embassy, Uganda
Male	Thomas Kamusiime	EU Representative	EU, Uganda
Female	Maria Lofstrand	Development and Program Analyst for Economic Growth and Employment	Swedish International Development Assistance, Swedish Embassy, Uganda
Male	Aloysius Gumisiriza	Refugee Liaison Officer, and Assistant Chief Officer, Administration	Insigiro District Office, Uganda

GENDER	NAME	POSITION	OFFICE/DEPARTMENT
Male	Cuthbert Kohiro	Finance and Administration Officer, Kenya and Uganda	CO-Dar Es Salaam, ILO
Female	Caroline Khamati Mugalla	Country Director	CO-Dar es Salaam, ILO
Male	Jealous Chirove	Employment Specialist, Resource Mobilisation Committee	CO-Dar es Salaam, ILO
Male	Edmund Moshy	Programme Officer	CO-Dar es Salaam, ILO
Male	David Mawejje	National Project Coordinator, HIV and AIDS Project	Uganda project office, ILO
Female	Jackie Banya	National Project Officer, ACCEL Project, Uganda	Uganda project office, ILO
Male	Wouter Cools	CTA, Ending Child Labour in Supply Chains (CLEAR Supply Chains) project	Uganda project office, ILO
Male	Benedict Akansiima	National Project Coordinator, Ending Child Labour in Supply Chains (CLEAR Supply Chains) project	Uganda project office, ILO
Female	Molly Namirembe	National Project Coordinator, Strengthening Capacity of Governments to Address Child Labour and/or Forced Labour and Violations of Acceptable Forms of Work in Sub-Saharan Africa	Uganda project office, ILO
Female	Deborah Ssali	Admin and Finance Officer, Ending Child Labour in Supply Chains (CLEAR Supply Chains) project	Uganda project office, ILO
Female	Christine Bako	Admin and Finance Officer, ACCEL Project	Uganda project office, ILO
Male	Stephen Opio	Programme Manager, PROSPECTS	Uganda project office, ILO
Male	Richard Ale Sunday	M&E Officer, PROSPECTS	Uganda project office, ILO
Female	Bethelhem Tessfaye Kassa	JPO, PROSPECTS	Uganda project office, ILO
Female	Mwenya Kapasa	Social Protection, Technical Officer, PROSPECTS	Uganda project office, ILO
Female	Melissa Kyeyune	NPC, PROSPECTS	Uganda project office, ILO
Female	Pheona Namuyaba	NPC, Skills Development, PROSPECTS	Uganda project office, ILO
Female	Helen Ayot	Finance and Admin Assistance, PROSPECTS	Uganda project office, ILO
Male	Andrew Odela Eyitu	Admin and Finance, PROSPECTS	Uganda project office, ILO
PROSPECTS cas	se study		
Male	Gerald Asiimwe	Project Coordinator	Ripple Effect, PROSPECTS partner, Uganda
Male	Joel Amani Mafigi	Programmes Director	Unleashed, PROSPECTS partner, Uganda
Male	Victor Turatsinze Mafigi	Managing Director	Unleashed, PROSPECTS partner, Uganda
Male	Vincent Asaba John	Project Coordinator	AVSI Employment services, PROSPECTS partner, Uganda

GENDER	NAME	POSITION	OFFICE/DEPARTMENT
Female	Sheila Akampa	Business Coach	AVSI Employment services, PROSPECTS partner, Uganda
3 Male 6 Female	FGD with Soy Value Chain Development group – Nakivale Settlement	PROSPECTS beneficiaries	Ripple Effect, PROSPECTS partner, Uganda
5 Male 2 Female	FGD with PROSPECTS hospitality apprentices	PROSPECTS beneficiaries	Four Points Sheraton Hotel, Kampala
Male	Nicholas Grisewood	Programme Manager, PROSPECTS	ILO HQ
Female	Fatma Kaya	Senior Technical Officer, PROSPECTS	ILO HQ
Female	Shaza El Jondi	CTA, PROSPECTS, Lebanon	ILO
Female	Dahlia Tawhid Roque	Programme Manager, PROSPECTS, Lebanon	ILO
Male	Luis Cotinguiba	Monitoring and Evaluation Officer, PROSPECTS, Lebanon	ILO
Female	Meredith Byrne	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, PEOSPECTS	ILO HQ
Male	Evans Lwanga	CTA Sudan, PROSPECTS	ILO
Uzbekistan cas	e study		
Male	Dr. Michael Wimmer	Head of Cooperation Department of the Embassy	Germany
Male	Jakhongir Razzokov	Head of International Department of the Ministry	Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction of the Republic of Uzbekistan
Male	Abdusamat Abdukarimov	Acting Head of Labour Inspection of the Ministry	Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction of the Republic of Uzbekistan
Male	Bakhtiyor Makhmadaliev	Vice Chairman	Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan
Male	Makhmudjon Isaev	Head of the Department for the Protection of Social and Economic Interests of Workers	Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan
Female	Nodira Gaybnazarova	Head of OSH department	Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan
Male	Khamidulla Premkulov	Head of Legal Department	Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan
Male	Eldor Shukurullaev	Chief specialist of International Department	Federation of Trade Unions of Uzbekistan
Female	Eka Margishvilli	Executive Director of the Confederation	Confederation of Employers of Uzbekistan
Female	Ismoilbek Ozodbekov	Head of International Department	Confederation of Employers of Uzbekistan
Male	Samadov Salohiddin	Executive Director of the Public Works Fund under the Ministry of Employment and Poverty Reduction of the Republic of Uzbekistan	Public Works Fund

GENDER	NAME	POSITION	OFFICE/DEPARTMENT
Female	Sadieva Guzal	Head of the Department of "Political Foundations of Public Administration" of the Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan	Public Works Fund
Male	Usmonbey Eroglu	Member of the Board of Directors, Representative of the Turkish company "TESMAK TEXTILE MAKINA", founder of the Uzbek-Turkish enterprise TALOS in Uzbekistan	Public Works Fund
Female	Yusupova Dildora	Chief specialist of the Public Works Fund	Public Works Fund
Male	Anas Fayyad Qarman	Resident Representative a.i.	UNDP
Female	Nargiza Khamidova	Project Manager	UNDP
Female	Tinatin Baum	Chief of Social Policy	UNICEF
Female	Ceren Guven Gures	Country Programme Manager	UNWOMEN
Male	Sardor Yusupov	Head of international department	National Agency for Social Protection under the President of Uzbekistan (NASP)
Male	Bakhrom Khidirbayev	Head of strategic analysis department	National Agency for Social Protection under the President of Uzbekistan (NASP)
Male	Bakhodir Bekov	Head of department on social services	National Agency for Social Protection under the President of Uzbekistan (NASP)
Male	Khurshid Zafari	Director of the Institute on Social Policy under the NASP	National Agency for Social Protection under the President of Uzbekistan (NASP)
Female	Marina Novikova	Economist for Central Asia	World Bank
Female	Azizkhon Khankhodjaev	National Coordinator	NC-Tashkent, ILO
Female	Nilufar Kamalova	Social Protection Officer	Better Work, ILO
Male	Abu Yousuf	Programme and Operations Officer	Better Work, ILO
Male	Mirsaidov Mirazim	National Project Coordinator (Enterprise Advisor)	Better Work, ILO
Male	Khayrulla Mashrabov	National Project Coordinator (Enterprise Advisor)	Better Work, ILO
Male	Aziz Khakberdiev	National Project Coordinator (Enterprise Advisor)	Better Work, ILO
Female	Sayyora Iskandarova	Admin Finance Assistant	Better Work, ILO
Male	Hamidulla Hamdamov	Senior National Programme Officer, INDITEX Project	DWT/CO-Moscow, ILO
Male	Mikhail Pouchkin	Country Director	DWT/CO-Moscow, ILO

GENDER	NAME	POSITION	OFFICE/DEPARTMENT
Other			
Female	Giulia Massobrio	Coordinator, Development Cooperation Network/Equality Unit	ITUC Brussels
Male	Pierre Vincensini	Senior Advisor	IOE
Male	Amadou Sako	Adviser and Project Officer for Africa	IOE
Female	Maité Llanos	Deputy Director	ITUC Geneva
Female	Vera Kadas	EC Directorate General EMPL	European Commission
Male	Stefan Schroeer	EC Directorate General EMPL	European Commission
Male	Daniel Klein	EC Directorate General EMPL	European Commission
Female	Lisa van Schaik	Senior Policy Officer- Ministry of Foreign Affairs Netherlands	Netherlands
Male	Stefano Severi	Responsible Sourcing Manager	Ferrero
Male	Indalecio Perez	Social Sustainability Director	Inditex La Coruna Spain
Male	Mayank Kaushik	Sustainability Department	Inditex India
Male	Kevin Willcutts	Deputy Director for Technical Assistance and Cooperation	U.S. Department of Labor
Female	Therese Andersson	Programme Specialist	Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA)
Female	Beata Plonka	EC Directorate General INTPA	European Commission
Male	Sean-Paul Heerschap	EC Directorate General INTPA	European Commission
ILO staff			
Female	Carlien Van Empel	Unit Head, Development Cooperation Support	DCSU
Female	Esther Gomez	Development Cooperation Officer	DCSU
Female	Mito Tsukamoto	Branch Chief	DEVINVEST
Male	Chris Donnges	Head of Unit	DEVINVEST
Male	Bjorn Johannessen	Sr Engineer, Employment-Intensive Investment	DWT-Bangkok
Female	Martha Espano	Tech Officer, Employment Intensive Investment	DEVINVEST
Male	Frederic Mboyong	Tech Spec, Employment-Intensive Investment Policies & Programs	DWT/CO-Dakar
Female	Akiko Yamamoto	Junior Professional Officer	EMPINVEST
Male	Patrick Daru	Skills and Lifelong Learning Specialist	SKILLS

GENDER	NAME	POSITION	OFFICE/DEPARTMENT
Female	Anna Carolina Viera	Social Protection Officer	SOCPRO
Female	Manuela Tomei	Assistant Director-General	ADG/GRD
Female	Laura Thompson	Assistant Director-General	ADG/ECR
Female	Claire Courteille	Senior Adviser, World Social Summit	PARTNERSHIPS
Female	Danielle Guijo	Department Director	HRD
Male	Marc Fillieux	Branch Chief	HR/OPS
Female	Sharon Compton	Branch Chief	HR/TALENT
Male	Alex Aziz	HR Partner	HR/OPS
Female	Katerina Tsotroudi	Legal Standards Specialist	NORMES
Female	Vera Paquete-Perdigao	Department Director	GOVERNANCE
Female	Caroline O'Reilly	Sr Technical Expert	GOVERNANCE
Female	Sophie De Coninck	Head of Operations	GOVERNANCE
Male	Joaquim Nunes	Branch Chief	LabAdmin/OSH
Female	Alexa Hough	Finance Manager	Better Work
Male	Francesco d'Ovidio	Unit Head, Development Partners Relations	DPRU
Male	Dan Rees	Director, AP/Supply Chains	AP/SUPPLYCHAINS
Male	Srinivas Reddy	Branch Chief	SKILLS
Female	Rie Vejs-Kjeldgaard	Director	ENTERPRISES
Male	Dragan Radic	Chief, Micro, Small and Medium sized Enterprises Branch	MSME
Male	Guy Tchami	Spec, Cooperative Policy and Research	COOP
Male	Josée Laporte	Spec, Corporate Social Responsibility	MULTI
Male	Craig Churchill	Unit Head, Social Finance	SFU
Female	Vanja Ostojvaic	Chief of Procurement	PROCUREMENT
Female	Anny Zhang	Financial Governance Officer	TR/CF
Male	Jean Francois Klein	Employment Policy Advisor and Head of DMCU	EMPLOYMENT
Male	Adnan Chugtai	Treasurer and Financial Comptroller and Department Director	FINANCE
Male	Mohui Jiang	Department Director	PROGRAM

GENDER	NAME	POSITION	OFFICE/DEPARTMENT
Female	Giovanna Rossignotti	Deputy Department Director	PROGRAM
Male	Iain Bald	Sr Strategic Planning and Policy Analyst	PROGRAM
Male	Peter Van Rooij	Department Director	PARTNERSHIPS
Female	Dianna Chavez Varela	Branch Chief	PARTNERSHIPS
Male	Merten Sievers	Global Coordinator, Value Chains and Entrepreneurship	MSME
Male	Andreas Klemmer	Director of Training	ITCILO
Male	Tom Wambeke	Chief of Learning Innovation	ITCILO
Female	Claudia Oehl	Program Officer, Organizational Development & Project Services	ITCILO
Male	Paolo Salvai	Programme Manager Bureau of Employer's Activities	ITCILO
Female	Vera dos Santos Costa	Programme Manager Bureau of Workers' Activities	ITCILO
Male	Guillaume Mercier	Programme Manager, Organizational Development & Project Services	ITCILO
Female	Luisa Guimaraes	Programme Manager, International Labour Standards, Rights at Work & Gender Equality Programme	ITCILO
Female	Maura Miraglio	Senior Programme Officer, International Labour Standards, Rights at Work & Gender Equality Programme	ITCILO
Male	Nocholas Torres Vieira	Senior Programme Officer, International Labour Standards, Rights at Work & Gender Equality Programme	ITCILO
Male	Andre Bogui	Director of CABINET	CABINET
Male	Baizebbe Na Pahimi	Programme Analyst	RO-Africa
Male	Nguessan Pierre Dje	Programme Officer	RO-Africa
Female	Mia Seppo	Assistant Director-General	ADG/JSP
Male	Julien Magnat	Adviser JSP and Partnerships	ADG/JSP
Female	Reiko Tsushima	Chief, Regional Programme Services	RO-Asia and the Pacific
Male	Redha Ameur	Chief, Regional Programming Unit	RO-Arab States/DWT-Beirut
Female	Hiba Al Rifai	Regional Monitoring & Evaluation Officer	RO-Arab States/DWT-Beirut
Female	Dorothea Schmidt-Klau	Branch Chief	EMPLAB
Female	Susana Gonzalez	Sr Youth Employment Specialist	EMPLAB

GENDER	NAME	POSITION	OFFICE/DEPARTMENT
Female	Valentia Barcucci	Sr Administrator (Operations Specialist)	EMPLAB
Female	Valeria Esquival	Employment Policies and Gender Specialist	EMPLAB
Male	Michael Mwasikakata	Head, Labour Market Services for Transitions Unit	EMPLAB
Female	Tugschimeg Sanchir	Principal Officer Relations	ACT/EMP
Female	Laura Greene	Sr Programme and Operations Officer	ACT/EMP
Male	Sergejus Glovackas	Desk Officer, Central and Eastern Europe	ACTRAV
Male	Grayson Koyi	Spec, Workers' Activities	ACTRAV
Male	Michael Watts	Technical Officer	ACTRAV
Male	Federico Negro	Coordination & Crisis Response Sr Specialist	AP/CRISIS
Male	Maurizio Bussi	Director, AP/Crisis	AP/CRISIS
Male	David Mosler	Policy and Data Analyst	AP/CRISIS
Male	Manzoor Khaliq	Technical Specialist	AP/CRISIS
Female	Laetitia Dumas	Sr Administrator	LABADMIN/OSH
Female	Anne Marie La Rosa	Sr EIS Pilot Project Technical Expert	SOCPRO
Female	Amber Barth	Office Director	ILO-Washington
Female	Gulen Muftuoglu	Chief, Regional Administration Services, Regional Office Africa	RO-Africa
Male	Vitalii El-Dani	Programme Officer	ILO Beirut
Male	Qais Qatamin	CTA oic Coordinator Jordan	ILO Amman
Male	Peter Rademaker	Deputy Regional Director Arab States	ILO Beirut

ANNEX F – DATA ANALYTICS OF RESULTS ACHIEVED THROUGH HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION ANALYSIS BY FUND SOURCE AND STAFF HOURS

METHOD

This analysis combined three sources of data in a working dataset:

- a financial dataset with data for each of the three sources of funding, i.e., RBTC, RBSA and XBTC, per year, outcome, region, project and CPO. This dataset provided information on allocations and actuals (referred here as expenditure);
- a dataset with staff hours reported by staff in relation to each CPO, embedded in projects, regions, and outcomes, for two biennia, 2020-21 and 2022-23;
- PIR data on number of results achieved per outcome and region, by biennium.

This working dataset was aggregated according to a hierarchy of variables: regions nested in each corresponding outcome, which were nested in each biennium. This allowed to mitigate the bias introduced by the high occurrence of missing values in the non-aggregated dataset and yet kept the ILO's RBM structure.

Some caveats to this analysis are:

- Staff time is self-reported and may not be accurate.
- Number of results reported does not consider the magnitude of change produced by a project or intervention, so a tripartite workshop counts as a result as much as a change in law.

Description of findings

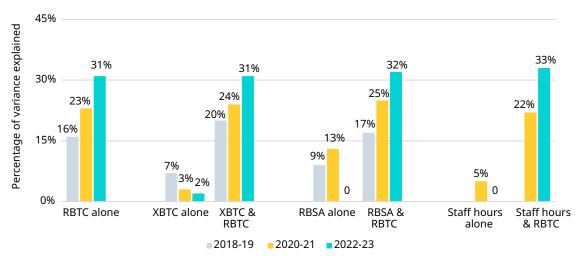
1. RBTC expenditure is the main contributor to explain the variance¹¹⁴ in the number of results achieved in each biennium. Although XBTC and RBSA, alone, have significant¹¹⁵ contributions to the number of results achieved, RBTC showed an outstanding effect, alone and in combination with other sources of funding. Staff hours, alone, showed no significant contributions explain the variance in the number of results achieved¹¹⁶. Figure 1 summarises these results per biennium.

¹¹⁴ Variance is a measure of the variability of a variable. It is defined as the average squared difference between each data point and its mean. When we estimate the extent in which an independent variable (e.g., DC funding) affects a result (e.g., number of results at the end of the biennium), we are estimating the contribution of fund to the variability in number of results. Because this analysis is based on correlations, we can simplify the reading as for each 1 USD of fund, what is the percentage effect on the number of results achieved?

¹¹⁵ Significant, here, refers to the statistical significance of a hypothesis test. For this exercise, p<0.05 was the cut-off value to indicate when an estimation was significant. P-value indicates the strength of the evidence against a null hypothesis (e.g., funding does not contribute to results achieved).

¹¹⁶ The contribution of 5% in 2020-21 was statistically non-significant.

FIGURE 1. CONTRIBUTION OF SOURCES OF FUNDING AND STAFF HOURS TO EXPLAIN THE NUMBER OF RESULTS ACHIEVED PER BIENNIUM

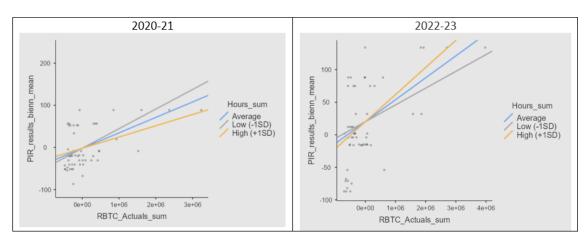


Source: own elaboration

This result can be explained by RBTC being a ubiquitous source of funding, cutting across all projects, regions, and outcomes. Even if its amount is comparatively smaller, it keeps ILO's work operational until another source of fund is added to the pool. It may be accountable for the groundwork that creates the conditions for additional development to happen. This finding corroborates some evidence on the RBSA effectiveness published by EVAL in 2023¹¹⁷.

2. The contributions of staff hours to the number of results achieved show different patterns between the 2020-21 and the 2022-23 biennia. In the 2020-21 biennium, for larger projects, more staff hours led to less results, whereas in 2022-23, for larger projects, more staff hours led to more results, across all sources of funding. Figure 2 compares these two biennia, considering RBTC expenditure, but these findings were corroborated for RBSA as well118 (not shown here).

FIGURE 2. EFFECT OF STAFF HOURS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RBTC EXPENDITURE AND NUMBER OF RESULTS ACHIEVED.



¹¹⁷ EVAL, Corradi (2023). Assessing strengths and challenges of RBSA-funded interventions – A meta-analysis of ILO RBSA-funded interventions, 2018-2022. i-eval Think Piece, No. 24. Geneva: International Labour Organization.

118 The same analysis for XBTC could not be calculated, because of too many missing values.

A possible explanation for this result is the COVID-19 pandemic, which required extra hours of work from ILO staff to repurpose activities and revise project and intervention designs to respond to the crisis, notably in larger projects (e.g., more activities, more partnerships to handle, etc.) in order to keep a high level of results at the end of the biennium. This effect was reverted in the 2022-23 biennium, with more staff hours boosting the number of results achieved, especially in larger projects.

3. At the outcome¹¹⁹ level, there is diversity in how different sources of funding¹²⁰ and staff hours explain the variance in the number of results achieved. Considering all sources of funding and staff hours across biennia, there were significant contributions of XBTC explaining 40% of the variance in the number of results achieved under Outcome 6 Gender and equal treatment (2020-21 and 2022-23 biennia), RBTC explaining 79% of the variance in the number of results achieved under Outcome 7 Promoting workplace compliance through labour inspection (2018-19 biennium) and staff hours explaining 67% under the theme of social protection (the three biennia together). Table 1 summarises these results.

TABLE 1. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS OF SOURCES OF FUNDING AND STAFF HOURS TO POLICY OUTCOMES.

Outcome ¹	% variance explained	Weight of each variable ²
Gender and equal treatment	40%	XBTC expenditure: 0.690
Safe Workplace	79%	RBTC expenditure: 0.981
Social protection	67%	Staff hours: 1.045

Note: this analysis used the disaggregated dataset to ensure the minimum number of valid cases for analysis.

- ¹ No significant results were found for the number of results achieved in the other outcomes.
- ²Only significant estimates, standardised values.
- 4. At the regional level, RBTC expenditure is the most important contributor to explain the variance in the number of results achieved across the three biennia for Africa (35%), the Americas (53%) and Asia and the Pacific (64%). No significant results were found for the other regions and the global projects. It is noteworthy that staff hours is an important variable to explain the variance in the Americas and Asia and the Pacific, but this effect becomes non-significant by the introduction of RBTC expenditure. This may be partly because both variables are associated with the regular budget, although the correlations between them are not significant.

TABLE 2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS OF SOURCES OF FUNDING AND STAFF HOURS TO POLICY OUTCOMES.

Regions ¹	% variance explained	Weight of each variable ²
Africa	35%	RBTC expenditure: 0.764
Americas	53%	Staff hours (before including RBTC3): 0.864 RBTC expenditure: 0.532
Asia and the Pacific	64%	Staff hours (before including RBTC): 1.029 RBTC expenditure: 0.504

Note: this analysis used the disaggregated dataset to ensure the minimum number of valid cases for analysis.

- 1 No significant results were found for the number of results achieved in the other regions and for global results.
- ²Only significant estimates, standardised values.
- ³ This result indicates that staff hours, without RBTC expenditure, have a significant contribution to explain the number of results achieved in these regions. However, when RBTC expenditure is added to the equation, staff hours becomes non-significant.
- 5. The same statistical analyses of sources of fund and staff hours to explain results, described above, could not be reproduced to explain the variance in the delivery rates per biennium. Statistical requirements (i.e., significant Pearson correlations) were not met.

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