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ACRONYMS

ALI	Association of Lebanese Industrialists
CBJ	Central Bank of Jordan
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CPO	Country Programme Objective
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DW4W	Advancing Decent Work for Women to Achieve Economic Development Project
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
EIIP	Employment Intensive Infrastructure Project
EMBO	Employer and Business Membership Organization
EPIC	Equal Pay International Coalition
ERRY	Enhanced Rural Resilience in Yemen
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
FEI	Federation of Egyptian Industries
FPCCIA	Federation of Palestinian Chambers of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture
GAP	Gender Participatory Audit
GD	Group Discussion
GEEW	Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
GEM	Gender Equality Marker
GFJTU	General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Agency for International Cooperation)
GRES	Gender Result Effectiveness Scale
HR	Human Resources
ILO	International Labour Organization
ILS	International Labour Standards
ITCILO	International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization
JCC	Jordan Chamber of Commerce
JCI	Jordan Chamber of Industry
JNCW	Jordanian National Commission for Women
KG	Kindergarten
KII	Key Informant Interview
LLWB	Lebanese League for Women in Business

M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
NCPE	National Committee for Pay Equity
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OECD	Organization for the Economic Cooperation and Development
OPT	Occupied Palestinian Territory
OPD	Organization of Persons with Disabilities
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
P&B	Programme and Budget
PGA	Participatory Gender Audit
PGFTU	Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions
RBSA	Regular Budget Supplementary Account
ROAS	Regional Office for Arab States
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SSC	Social Security Corporation
TL	Team Leader
ToC	Theory of Change
ToT	Training of Trainers
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNCT	United Nations Country Team
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNSDCF	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework
W4W	Work for Women
WE Care	Women's Empowerment in the Context of the Care Economy
WEP	Women's Empowerment Principle
WIMIN	Women in Management Initiative

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The evaluation's main purpose has been to comprehensively examine the ILO's current efforts in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the Arab States, in order to inform how future strategies should be designed and implemented in the region.

The evaluation has focused on the ILO-UN Women Joint Programme “Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women in Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine,” funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and executed between 2019 and 2024, and on five other interventions, either active during 2024 or recently finished, implemented in three countries: Jordan, Lebanon, and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT).

The evaluation used purposive sampling to select five additional interventions by assessing 24 interventions with a Gender Equality Marker (GEM) 2 or 3 against six criteria, including implementation and evaluation status, GEM scores, geographical and P&B outcome coverage, and inclusion in the previous Gender Synthesis Review. The sampled interventions have been: ‘The Advancing Decent Work for Women to Achieve Economic Development (DW4W) project and the ‘Climate change, disability inclusion and intersectionality multi-country programme’ in Jordan; the ‘Women in Management Initiative (WIMIN)’ and the ‘Women's empowerment in the context of the care economy, WE-Care’ projects in Lebanon and the ‘Strengthening labour market governance project’ in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). In addition, the evaluation included the review of 19 other active or recently completed ILO gender-focused interventions - 18 with gender as a cross-cutting priority and one with gender as a primary focus.

METHODOLOGICAL STRATEGIES

The six OECD DAC criteria guided the evaluation, which combined qualitative and quantitative methods and used a grounded theory approach in data analysis to respond to the 12 main evaluation questions and the five sub-questions. Qualitative data has provided additional hypotheses of inquiry, explanations and nuances, while quantitative data has helped identify broader trends and patterns. The main methods used were document review, key informant interviews (KII), group discussions, and an online survey of ILO staff. A total of 79 stakeholders were contacted for interviews or participated in group discussions, while the online survey was responded to by 20 ILO ROAS staff. Main evaluation limitations relate to its reliance on qualitative methods, as KIIs and Group Discussions reflect personal views and are limited in representativeness, all of which can introduce bias.

MAIN FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

RELEVANCE

The ILO's Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (GEEW) work in the Arab States has shown relevance to the needs of its tripartite constituents—national governments, employers and trade unions— which has been achieved by ongoing dialogue and engagement. The priorities of these stakeholders are clearly reflected in the assessed interventions. However, evidence of regular engagement of end beneficiaries in the design phase of all projects is limited, with consultations mainly occurring during project

implementation, often focusing on gathering feedback on specific project activities. Neither the evaluation has found enough evidence that gender-responsive situation analysis is systematically done prior to the project design phase in all the revised projects, nor was it reflected in several of the available evaluation reports.

The ILO's GEEW work is well aligned with national commitments to gender equality. However, entrenched gender norms in Arab states continue to hinder the translation of these national policies into concrete action. The priority given to gender equality by national constituencies remains uneven. Governments' commitment may be driven by some senior leaders who are committed to gender equality, but also by external pressures such as international reputation or the obligation to report on specific conventions that a country has ratified, demonstrating tangible action or progress. For employers, the focus on gender equality is often driven by economic or commercial interests rather than a genuine interest in investing in women's careers. Although challenged by various pressures, trade unions tend to be more progressive on gender equality; the fact that some of them already have some active women in their ranks and the need for unions to expand their membership by attracting more women workers also helps their responsiveness.

The analysed ILO's GEEW interventions in the Arab region reflect global frameworks and principles of decent work and have focused on key areas like pay equity, care work, and violence and harassment. However, the ILO GEEW work has been shaped largely by donor priorities and local contexts rather than purely by ILO's planning frameworks. Initial approaches to issues like equal pay and, later, to the care economy have been adjusted to better align with regional realities and stakeholders' receptiveness, underscoring both the need for and the capacity of ILO to navigate complex socio-cultural and political contexts such as those of the Arab region.

COHERENCE

At the global level, the ILO's gender-focused initiatives in the Arab States have aligned with and contributed to some of the global intergovernmental processes in which the ILO participates or leads, notably the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) initiative and, also, on the care economy as some of the assessed interventions, notably, the Joint Programme and the DW4W project have supported the development of specific policies and infrastructure on care.

At the regional level, synergies between ILO's GEEW interventions have been limited, with the Joint Programme, the most prominent regional initiative, not fulfilling its role of promoting cross-learning between ILO country offices. At the country level, the main synergies existed primarily by involving national stakeholders and between the Joint Programme, the DW4W project in Jordan. There is a consensus within the ILO that greater efforts are needed to promote complementarity, harmonization, and coordination with other agencies to achieve better results.

SIDA is a key partner of the ILO in promoting the decent work agenda. Together, they focus on strategic cross-cutting areas such as gender equality and non-discrimination, where there is a strong alignment between SIDA's priorities and the ILO's mandate and comparative advantages. In addition to women's economic empowerment and skills development, there are other opportunities for the ILO to contribute to SIDA's priorities, such as leveraging the

ILO's experience in the OPT where the ILO is supporting decent work and social justice with a gender approach.

EFFECTIVENESS

Overall, the ILO's work in the region has made significant progress through its interventions. Through the Joint Programme, the ILO, in collaboration with other actors and building on existing efforts, contributed to several policy and legislative reforms in the areas of maternity protection, equal pay provisions, violence and harassment, and care policies, with Jordan standing out with 13 policy and legislative changes related to gender equality over a total of 23 normative and legislative amendments. These legal reforms have been a crucial foundation for further policy improvements. As a result, and with the contribution of the Advancing Decent Work for Women project, workplace policies in sectors with high female employment, such as education and childcare, have improved, benefiting many women across the region, particularly in Jordan. These achievements have largely been facilitated through the ILO's ability to convene social dialogue among key stakeholders, including government agencies, private sector representatives, trade unions, and, in some cases, civil society organizations.

ILO has also successfully raised awareness among its constituents and strengthened its capacity to address women's practical and strategic needs. Trade unions, in particular, have received support through gender participatory audits, training, and coaching to become more gender-sensitive, empowering women trade unionists to have a stronger voice both within their organizations and externally. Less progress has been made, however, with employers and their representatives. The WIMIN project succeeded in getting Lebanese business associations and national and sectoral trade unions to review their internal policies and practices from a gender perspective, develop action plans, and support key soft skills for 75 women in technical positions in Lebanese industry. While these are early signs of awareness about gender and equality issues, tangible results in revising internal policies, supporting women's career development, and increasing women's participation and representation at the board level remain limited.

The ILO's distinctive advantage is largely attributed to its standard-setting nature, tripartite system, and capacity for social dialogue on labour issues, including GEEW. Overall, the technical expertise provided by the ILO in reviewing labour laws from a gender perspective, the use of tripartite social dialogue to agree on proposed changes, and the investment in building quality evidence are key elements contributing to these results.

Finally, one factor that has emerged as influencing the ILO's ability to promote GEEW, and on which there are divergent views within ILO ROAS, is whether to broaden the range of actors with whom the ILO engages beyond its traditional constituencies, for example, sectoral trade unions or business associations that do not have formal representative positions in the tripartite structures, but also non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations.

EFFICIENCY

The ILO ROAS team, although small, has demonstrated strong commitment and high performance and has been able to operate as a network. However, current staffing levels leave many country offices without in-country specialist staff. This might partially explain the

limited internal coordination among different projects, which needs enhancement to create synergies and improve the overall effectiveness of GEEW interventions as siloed approaches continue to challenge collaboration. While some projects demonstrate good practices in gender mainstreaming, many of the non-sampled GEEW interventions lack comprehensive gender analyses and gender-sensitive results and indicators, which hampers the effectiveness of GEEW-focused initiatives. Moreover, the sampled interventions would have benefited from more robust monitoring frameworks and better-designed data collection systems.

In terms of achieving results within the intended timeframe, most of the interventions reviewed faced delays, often resulting in no-cost extensions. Additionally, the systematic application of logical frameworks and/or Theory of Change remains a work in progress. Some interventions were ambitious in scope and based on assumptions that were not thoroughly tested or confirmed. A limited number of gender-responsive initiatives show gender-sensitive budgets, incorporating activities specifically targeting women or addressing gender gaps. Gender-sensitive budgeting is inherently linked to the broader process of gender mainstreaming. Hence, successfully implementing gender-sensitive budgeting relies on integrating the gender equality objective into every stage of the program cycle.

ORIENTATION TO IMPACT

ILO interventions have made a tangible impact by enhancing the legal, policy, and institutional frameworks that support gender equality across the region. These reforms have contributed to concrete advancements in labour rights, such as equal pay, maternity protection, and safeguards against violence and harassment, which led to improved working conditions in highly feminized sectors like childcare and education, particularly in Jordan.

Additionally, ILO efforts to promote gender equality have influenced workplace dynamics by encouraging greater representation of women in decision-making positions, albeit with modest results, and, above all, by strengthening the capacity of trade unions for gender equality, especially among female cadres. This has strengthened the meaningful engagement of trade unions in social dialogue and collective bargaining, laying the groundwork for long-term improvements in workers' rights.

SUSTAINABILITY

None of the assessed interventions had an explicit sustainability or transition strategy in place. However, the Joint Programme and the DW4W project contributed indirectly to sustainability by focusing on legal reforms aligned with the ILO's normative function and by supporting coalition-building with government, civil society, and key stakeholders on pay equity, private sector education workers' rights, or legal reform of the Labor Law in the OPT, all of which have laid the groundwork for continued advocacy for reforms. The WIMIN project's sustainability strategy relied on employers and business membership organisations creating their own plans. While the project demonstrated the value of supporting women's careers, employers didn't commit to funding the initiative allegedly due to financial limitations. All interventions aimed to build institutional capacity for sustainability. Long-term success depends on creating supportive environments for applying new skills and knowledge.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Strategic advocacy for gender priorities. The ILO ROAS might pursue incremental change and adapt its approaches by adopting more culturally sensitive strategies that foster greater social acceptance in close cooperation with like-minded partners at the government, employer and trade union levels, while promoting women's employment opportunities within the private sector.
2. Strengthening internal and external coherence for GEEW. ILO ROAS could adopt a more integrated and cohesive strategy across its various GEEW-oriented projects at the country and regional levels by promoting information sharing and learning between projects. Externally, it should identify current and potential GEEW-oriented partners in each country and at a regional level, and expand its collaboration with other stakeholders involved in GEEW beyond its traditional tripartite constituencies
3. Engender the ILO's operational model. Strengthening gender mainstreaming in project design, implementation, and budgeting is crucial to fully leverage opportunities to advance gender equality priorities. The ILO ROAS should: identify key moments during the preparatory phase when GEEW input, advice, or guidance is essential; make gender assessments mandatory ensuring consultation with final beneficiaries; validate assumptions to inform the intervention's theories of change or gendered results frameworks and budget for the resources needed to achieve the expected gender outcomes.
4. Mobilise funding for GEEW. The ILO ROAS should aim to secure multi-annual funding to ensure that gender transformative outcomes are both achieved and sustained. It could do this by developing a resource mobilisation strategy and a corresponding multi-annual resource mobilisation plan; exploring opportunities for triangular cooperation among Arab States; promoting multi-annual funding from current ILO partners such as SIDA; and prioritising GEEW-focused or GEEW-aligned interventions for RBSA funding.
5. Strengthen the communication function. ILO ROAS should position itself as a knowledge bridge or facilitator by translating complex labour issues into understandable and actionable insights. It could segment audience profiles and tailor messages accordingly, using different strategies to demonstrate the positive economic and social impact of reforms, including on everyday life.

LESSONS LEARNED

- Professionalizing female-dominated occupations such as education by improving legislation, policies, and working conditions might serve as an entry point for expanding gender equality across other employment sectors like childcare.
- Future joint programmes between ILO and other UN organizations should adopt a harmonized implementation approach based on continuous communication and collaboration and mutual accountability

EMERGING BEST PRACTICES

- Empowering female teachers for Decent Work: The 'Stand Up with the Teacher' Campaign in Jordan
- A cross-cutting coalition of Palestinian trade unions and social organizations for a gender-responsive labour law.
- Strengthening gender-sensitive labour inspection in Egypt.

1. BACKGROUND AND EVALUATION OBJECT

1.1. Introduction

The Arab region faces persistent socio-economic challenges, compounded by political instability, social conservatism, and economic difficulties. Conflict, particularly the ongoing war in Gaza, the more recent escalations in Lebanon, and the humanitarian situation in Yemen, reduces economic stability, intensifies displacement, and increases vulnerability. Women's labour force participation in the Arab States remains among the lowest in the world, with only 19.8% of women participating compared to 74% of men¹. Women are often concentrated in low-wage, informal jobs that lack protection and benefits, making them particularly vulnerable to the economic fluctuations of the labour market. Several factors influence this limited participation, including restrictive gender norms, limited access to quality jobs, unequal distribution of unpaid care work, and a lack of supportive infrastructure such as affordable childcare and safe transportation.

Some laws also hinder women's economic participation, especially those related to working hours, parental benefits, or the prohibition of night work for women. In many countries, social norms prioritize men as primary earners, restricting women's employment opportunities and career advancement.

Advancing gender equality and enhancing women's participation in the labour force will require comprehensive measures across various sectors complemented by systemic changes that address the underlying structural barriers and ensure women can access decent work opportunities.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has been carrying out initiatives in the Arab States to promote gender equality and women's empowerment in the labour market through both targeted gender equality initiatives and the integration of gender considerations into other projects. Consequently, the Regional Office for Arab States (ROAS) has planned to undertake a thematic evaluation of the gender work conducted in the region, focusing particularly on relevant initiatives with a clear GEEW focus. As an initial step towards preparing for a gender thematic evaluation in the Arab States region, the ILO has recently conducted a "Synthesis Review of ILO Gender Initiatives in the Arab States between 2018-2023". The synthesis review produced findings related to the OECD-DAC criteria of ILO's work on gender in ROAS, as documented and analysed in project-level evaluations of Technical/Development cooperation projects. The design of this thematic evaluation is built on and reflects the findings, practices, and recommendations contained in the synthesis report.

1.2. The evaluation object

The object of the evaluation focused on the ILO ROAS work on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEEW) in Arab states. In terms of portfolio coverage, the evaluation has focused on the ILO UN Women Joint Programme "Promoting Productive

¹ ILO (2024): Arab States Employment and Social Outlook – Trends 2024. ILO

Employment and Decent Work for Women in Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine”, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and on five other interventions, either active during 2024 or recently finished, implemented in Jordan, Lebanon, and the Occupied Palestinian Territory. (OPT). A sampling process was performed during the inception phase of the evaluation to select the interventions and confirm the three country case studies that have informed the evaluation results. The sampled interventions have been:

The ILO UN Joint Programme Women ‘Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine”

The Joint Programme was a four-year (2019-2022) multi-country initiative developed by ILO and UN Women planned to promote decent employment opportunities for women in Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine by addressing the structural causes of inequalities women face in the region. The Programme aimed to address barriers through a comprehensive approach that worked at the macro, meso, and micro levels, aimed at enhancing productive employment and decent work for women in the region by promoting equitable laws and policies, engaging the public, private, and community actors; and reducing the uneven burden of unpaid care work. Initially started as an intervention of 48 months (from January 2019 to December 2022), it received an extension until August 2024, with new activities and targets summing 68 months. The total budget of the Joint Programme was US\$ 13.1 million, funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). Total budget managed by ILO has been US\$ 5.03 million. The Joint Programme had a regional management structure operating from the UN Women Regional Office in Cairo with coordinating focal points for ILO and UN Women in each country. Within ILO, a regional manager, supported by an administrative assistant, has supervised overall ILO’s participation from Amman (Jordan).

The Advancing Decent Work for Women to Achieve Economic Development (DW4W) project in Jordan

The DW4W project was a 12-month project developed by the ILO Jordan office and oriented to improve work conditions for working women, especially in highly feminized sectors such as education and childcare, by awareness raising, providing specific support to implement national policies on care and promoting equal pay in the education sector. The project's total budget has been US\$440.000, financed by the government of Norway. Initially started as an intervention of 12 months (from December 2021 to November 2022), it received two extensions, with new outputs and targets, until January 2024, summing 26 months.

The Climate Change, disability inclusion and intersectionality multi-country programme in Jordan

It is a multicountry initiative of 24-month duration (September 2023-July 2025) developed by ILO, UNDP, and OHCHR and implemented in Jordan, Somalia, and South Africa, aimed to strengthen the climate resilience of persons with disabilities. Specifically, in the case of Jordan, ILO’s purpose is to lead the development of a guidance note on strengthening the inclusion of persons with disabilities using an inclusive and intersectional approach to just transition policies and processes at the national level. Its budget is US\$199.000 and is managed from the ILO office in Jordan.

The Women's empowerment in the context of the care economy, WE-Care project in Lebanon

The WE-Care project was an 18-month project (April 2023 to September 2024) developed by ILO ROAS aimed at structuring a response to care work needs in Lebanon, paving the way to professionalize the sector through greater formalization and regulation of care services in line with decent work principles, and by exploring cooperatives and small enterprises as an entry point. Its budget of US\$ 600.00 was funded by the ILO RBSA (Regular Budget Supplementary Account) and managed by the ILO Regional Office. Upon the start of implementation, the Ministry of Labour shifted priorities, and despite efforts to engage partners, the proposal was cancelled.

The Women in Management Initiative (WIMIN) in Lebanon

The WIMIN project was a 17-month initiative (September 2021 to January 2023) -later extended to six months- developed by ILO ROAS to foster the participation of Lebanese women in management and leadership positions in Employers and Business Membership Organizations (EBMO), firms, and trade unions. Its budget of \$400.00 was funded by the ILO RBSA (Regular Budget Supplementary Account) and managed by the Lebanon country office.

The Strengthening labour market governance project in the OPT

This unearmarked contribution from the Government of Kuwait has been part of the ongoing support for the ILO's Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) since 2009. The contribution has not been allocated to a specific project. It has been used flexibly by the ILO Country Office to support various interventions and activities independently or in collaboration with other donors. These efforts align with the three pillars of the 2023–2025 DWCP and, since October 2023, with the Emergency Response Plan developed by the ILO.

In addition, the evaluation included the review of 19 other active or recently completed ILO GEEW interventions - 8 with gender as a cross-cutting priority and 1 with GEEW as a primary focus. These programmes and projects cover a range of policy outcomes, including the promotion of social dialogue, intensive employment initiatives, job creation and enterprise development, improvement of the working environment through the strengthening of workers and trade unions, and support for more inclusive social protection systems including for migrants and refugees. These projects have been implemented in Jordan, Lebanon, the OPT, and Yemen through stand-alone ILO projects, some in cooperation with other UN agencies and with funding from several international donors. The list of projects can be found in Annex 7.

2. PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION

2.1. Purposes and objectives

The evaluation has two complementary purposes. First, it has a forward-looking, improvement-oriented focus on maximizing the capacity of existing GEEW-focused projects to contribute to their expected outcomes. Second, it has an accountability purpose, focusing mainly on the joint ILO-UN Women's programme, which ended in August 2024. The following specific objectives are the focus of the evaluation:

- Assess the overall work of the ILO ROAS on GEEW (including GEEW for women with disabilities) based on the sampled scope of projects with gender focus, with particular attention to the ILO-joint project as a case study within the broader context of ILO's gender work in the region.
- Understand to what extent ILO policy and technical work on GEEW are followed/utilized to advance GEEW in designing, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating progress on GEEW.
- Review ILO's comparative advantages on GEEW work and the level of complementarities and coherence sought with other relevant players and donors working on gender equality-related initiatives within the UN system and beyond.
- Provide recommendations on strengthening existing gender equality and mainstreaming efforts and how future strategies should be designed and implemented in the region.

3. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Overall approach

The evaluation has been guided by the OECD DAC criteria, which serve as the normative framework for making evaluative judgments and have been applied in a participatory, gender, and human rights-sensitive manner. Six criteria have been considered for the analysis: relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, orientation to impact, and sustainability. The assignment was oriented by 12 main evaluation questions, complemented by five sub-questions (Table 1).

Table 1. Evaluation questions

RELEVANCE
1. To what extent is the ILO GEEW work in the Arab States responding to the stated needs of ILO's constituencies and the specific needs of the affected population in the countries where GEEW-oriented initiatives are implemented? Are gender and inclusion issues/challenges in the world of work recognized at the national level and by ILO constituents as areas requiring action?
2. To what extent is the ILO GEEW work in the region aligned with internal ILO GEEW frameworks and policies, and to what extent are those frameworks and policies relevant in the Arab States region?
3. To what extent is the design of the sampled projects relevant to achieve expected results and to meaningfully contribute to GEEW goals?
COHERENCE
4. To what extent do the ILO gender-focused projects in the Arab States work in synergy with other relevant ILO interventions at the global, regional and country levels?
5. To what extent does the ILO's work on GEEW complement other regional and national efforts in the Arab States to promote gender equality?
6. To what extent does the ILO work on GEEW complement SIDA's broad approach to gender equality and employment /decent work? What opportunities lie in maximising the contribution to this global framework?

EFFECTIVENESS

7. What measurable results has ILO achieved in its gender focus areas either intended or unintended? What is the comparative advantage of ILO's work on GEEW, and how has it been considered more effective in achieving GEEW results in the Arab States?
8. What are the main internal and external factors influencing ILO's ability to make progress towards GEEW results during the period under review?

EFFICIENCY

9. To what extent and how is the ILO ensuring that projects /programmes are designed and delivered cost-efficiently? What processes are working well and why? To what extent is gender-sensitive budgeting considered and implemented in relevant GEEW initiatives?

ORIENTATION TO IMPACT

10. How do the ILO GEEW-related interventions contribute to fostering long-term positive impacts in the Arab States? What are the key progress /achievements so far on gender equality, non-discrimination and inclusion, as perceived/expressed by ILO constituents?
11. To what extent have the project's outcomes contributed to advancing sustainable development objectives (as per UNSDCFs, similar UN programming frameworks, national sustainable development plans, and SDGs)?

SUSTAINABILITY

12. What measures have been taken or are expected to be taken by the ILO at global, regional and national levels to ensure the sustainability of GEEW-related outcomes beyond the projects' lifespan in the region?

During the inception phase, an evaluation matrix was developed for each suggested evaluation question, accompanied by a set of evaluation indicators to help measure and assess the specific aspects being addressed. *The evaluation matrix is attached in Annex 1.*

3.2. Methodological strategies

The evaluation combined qualitative and quantitative methods and used a grounded theory approach in data analysis. Qualitative data provided additional hypotheses of inquiry, explanations, and nuances, while quantitative data has helped identify broader trends and patterns. This grounded approach was useful for evaluation with a broad scope because it allowed new areas to materialize that might not necessarily directly fit the proscribed evaluation questions but emerge as relevant and important for ILO staff and their tripartite constituents.

Methods

Document review. The evaluation gathered and reviewed over 120 documents, several provided by ILO ROAS. Document data sources include:

- Project documents include final and mid-term evaluations, projects periodic reports, lesson-learned reports, MoUs, budgets and other financial information, studies, reports, and other material produced under the examined interventions.
- ILO and ILO ROAS regional and sectoral reports.
- P&B 2022-2023 and 2024-2025.
- SIDA's policy frameworks.

- United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF).
- Decent Work Agenda documents and annual UN Country Team (UNCT) reports.
- Academic and research papers.

Relevant information from project documents was extracted and recorded in a template for document review, organized by evaluation topics. *References and bibliography are provided in Annex 5.*

Key Informant Interviews (KII). During the inception and data-collection phase, the evaluation team conducted semi-structured KIIs with individuals and small groups with first-hand knowledge of the ILO's programme of work on GEEW in Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and the OPT and in the Arab States more broadly. The ILO ROAS evaluation manager helped the evaluation team identify key representatives from ILO ROAS, while other ILO staff members helped contact national stakeholders and final beneficiaries. Participants were ensured that no quotations would be directly attributed, and that strict anonymity would be maintained. Any recordings of interviews were viewed only by the evaluation team. Informed consent was taken during the interviews.

Interviews in person and remotely were conducted mostly conversationally and structured around an interview guide (*Protocols for interviews and Group discussions can be found in Annex 8*). However, deviations were positively received, given the broad scope of the evaluation. KIIs were carried out with the following:

- ILO ROAS staff (regional and country-based specialists; Country Office programme management team members and ILO project management teams).
- ILO tripartite constituents in Jordan, OPT, Lebanon and Egypt.
- ILO implementing partners.
- UN and other national and international organizations in the target countries, with which the ILO collaborated in Jordan and regionally.
- Donor representatives.

Seven interviews were conducted in the inception phase, and 46 additional interviews were held during the data collection phase between August and September, totalling 53 interviews. A number of individuals were interviewed on more than one occasion. This was either to inform the selection of the sampling frame, during the inception phase of the evaluation, or because they were responsible for more than one intervention. (Table 2). *The list of consulted stakeholders is found in Annex 2.*

Group Discussions (GD) served as the primary method for data collection from stakeholders benefitted from ILO GEEW work. Seven group discussions were conducted, involving a total of 24 participants. Five of these discussions included mixed-gender groups, while two were exclusively for women. Groups Discussions in Jordan (18 participants) and Egypt (2 participants) were held physically while in the OPT was online (4 participants).

Table 2. Number of stakeholders contacted by location

	Regional	Jordan	Lebanon	OPT	Egypt	Other Arab countries	Total
Total stakeholders	12	39	9	8	8	3	79
Female	8	28	7	3	5	1	52
Male	4	11	2	5	3	2	27

An online survey to obtain feedback and/or information from ILO technical staff at the regional level was developed and validated with the ILO evaluation manager before launching. Two reminders were sent. As 20 responses were received, the survey is not to be considered representative². Instead, it provided an additional anonymous forum for comment on ILO GEEW work and served to triangulate key assumptions from findings. Relevant comments have been included within the report.

Analysis and triangulation

All primary qualitative data received from KII and GD was coded, refined, analysed, mapped against the analysis matrix, and anonymized to ensure confidentiality. A grounded theory approach was used in data analysis to locate emerging themes *within* raw data rather than impose a pre-existing assumption or hypothesis³. Dedoose – a qualitative data package that allows for rapid and cost-effective data coding- enhanced that process.

For quantitative data, a basic descriptive analysis (frequencies) was performed. Data sources, data collection tools, and data analysis triangulation were used to ensure the validity of findings. Opinions and experiences were compared across stakeholder groups and assessed for consistency or divergence.

Sampling strategy

The evaluation used a purposive sampling technique to select the country's case studies and interventions to be analysed in-depth. Only projects implemented in ROAS with Gender marker of 2 and 3 were considered in the initial sampling. A total of 24 pre-selected interventions were reviewed against six criteria: implementation status, geographical coverage, Gender Equality Marker (GEM) scores, evaluation status, P&B outcomes/outputs 2023-2024, and coverage in the Gender Synthesis Review.

Applying the agreed criteria resulted in selecting five interventions as the focus of the three-country case studies and the ILO-UN Women Joint Programme as a thematic case study. The 19 non-sampled interventions were included in the evaluation and have informed, at least, six evaluation questions (*Annex 6. Sampled interventions' selection process*).

² The gender of respondents was 45% (n=9) female and 55% (n=11) male. 25% (n=5) of respondents held positions as technical specialists; 25% (n=5) as programme officers, 20% (n=4) as country representatives, 15% (n=3) as programme managers, 5% (n=1) as technical advisors; 5% (n=1) analysts and 5% (n=1) other positions.

³ Grounded theory approach to data is an orientation to data analysis that encourages researchers to avoid bias by viewing data through a specific hypothesis and by, instead, coding observations using a series of tags, which are progressively refined and grouped as the coding process continues. See Whiteside, Mary, Mills, J. and Janya McCalman, 'Using Secondary Data for Grounded Theory Analysis', Australian Social Work 65, no. 4 (2012): 504–16.

3.3. Limitations

Table 3. Limitations and mitigations strategies

LIMITATIONS	EXPLANATION	MITIGATING STRATEGY
Qualitative data bias	First, key informant interviews (KIs) and group discussions (GDs) reflect personal views, which can introduce bias. Second, because of the small sample size and potential bias, the findings may not represent all contexts within the selected countries or the Arab Region. The interviewees' opinions may not capture the broader reality. Third, some individuals may feel pressured to give socially acceptable answers or push their own agendas. Lastly, beneficiaries may have hesitated to share negative feedback, leading to more positive responses.	The team addressed these limitations using several research strategies. First, they treated qualitative data as interpretative, acknowledging that it reflects specific views rather than absolute truths. Second, they reminded participants of the evaluation's independent and confidential nature, and no ILO staff or partners were present during the beneficiaries' or constituencies' interviews. Finally, the team triangulated and verified findings during data analysis by cross-checking with documents and consulting other individuals where necessary.
Data gaps	While the evaluation's scope included the Arab States, primary data collection only took place physically in Jordan and Egypt, while in Lebanon, the OPT was online. The main data gap relates to the feedback from government representatives in Lebanon who were nonresponsive to the evaluation contacts. Also, due to the evaluation timeframe, data collection was scheduled for August, a period when many ILO staff and personnel from other agencies were on annual leave.	The initial data collection plans and the sequence of the interviews had to be adjusted. Several interviews were rescheduled, and data collection was extended until the second week of September.

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

4.1. RELEVANCE

This section explores the extent to which the ILO's work on GEEW is connected to the needs in the Arab States – from the perspective of ILO staff, tripartite constituencies, and beneficiaries- as well as how this work is aligned with internal ILO GEEW frameworks and policies. Following the evaluation questions, it does so by examining how the ILO (a) is responding to the stated needs and how these needs are perceived or elaborated by the constituencies; (b) has adapted its GEEW policies to the nationals' contexts and c) designed the sample interventions in a manner relevant to the broader national and regional settings.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Through its continuous engagement and ongoing dialogue with tripartite constituents, ILO's GEEW work has responded well to the stated needs of national governments, employers, and trade unions, and their priorities are reflected in the assessed interventions. However, consultations with end beneficiaries are less consistent than with tripartite constituents. Evidence of regular engagement of beneficiaries in the design phase of several projects is limited, with consultations mainly occurring during project implementation, often focusing on gathering feedback on specific project activities. The evaluation has not found enough evidence that gender-responsive situation analysis is systematically done before the project design phase in all the revised projects, nor was it reflected in the available evaluation reports.
2. DWCPs are designed to align closely with national government priorities and can serve as a crucial tool for integrating gender considerations in the agreed outcomes. The current DWCP in OPT demonstrates this. However, in other cases, such as the previous DWCP with Iraq, no CPO for gender was included.
3. As some stakeholders perceive it, regional constituencies give the ILO's gender equality goals a low priority. Governments' commitments to advancing the gender agenda would be driven by three main factors: senior leadership pushing gender mainstreaming within key ministries, obligations to address rights violations or report on ratified conventions, and international pressure to meet global standards or improve reputation.
4. Regarding the level of commitment of employers, it was mentioned that the key actions taken to support women would often be driven by economic or commercial interests, as women's inclusion was seen more as an obligation than an investment. Despite facing several challenges in the region, trade unions are more open to addressing gender equality due to their progressive background, active women within the movement, and the need to expand their membership base by incorporating women workers.
5. ILO GEEW work in the Arab States strongly aligns with the ILO global GEEW development frameworks, decent work principles, and P&Bs. Key focus areas include pay equity, care work, and violence and harassment. However, donor priorities and the specific context of countries, rather than P&B outcomes and outputs, have shaped the ILO GEEW programme in the Arab region.

6. ILO GEEW-oriented interventions are found to be relevant and aligned with the national commitments and priorities of the region's governments. Although public policies in most Arab States support discussions about gender equality, implementing these discussions into real actions is challenging. This difficulty arises from deeply rooted beliefs about gender roles, which obstruct advocacy efforts and make certain topics and terms difficult to tackle.
7. Some of the initial approaches adopted by the ILO to address equal pay and the care economy that advocated, or implicitly aimed to address, some of the most progressive elements of this agenda, such as 'equal pay for equal work' or the gendered nature of unpaid care at the household are being adjusted in response to the challenges encountered to better align with the regional context and the receptiveness of various stakeholders.
8. The ILO GEEW sampled interventions have aimed to use causal pathways, but the systematic application of logical frameworks and/or Theories of Change (ToC) remains a work in progress. Some interventions were ambitious in scope, indicators were too generic or difficult to measure, and some were based on assumptions that were not thoroughly tested or confirmed.

Q.1. To what extent is the ILO GEEW work in the Arab States responding to the stated needs of ILO's constituencies and the specific needs of the affected population in the countries where GEEW-oriented initiatives are implemented?

The ILO's work GEEW in the Arab States responds directly to the stated needs of its constituents, including governments, employers, and workers. ILO consistently engages in ongoing dialogue with governments and other tripartite existing representative bodies, even if no current projects are ongoing. According to the interviews, the ILO works with tripartite partners to conduct needs assessments and contextual analysis at the outset of the intervention design process, which helps them prioritize their needs. Discussions typically involve consultations at the design phase that lead to specific outcomes and introducing new initiatives to address prioritized gaps.

The Joint Programme was developed based on previous work in the region by the ILO and UN Women and through consultations with public representatives. In Jordan, interviewed government representatives confirmed initial consultations and noted that ILO's work through the Joint Programme and the DW4W project has been very responsive to the requests and needs of governments and of some end beneficiaries. Examples of this are the ongoing consultations with the Stand up with Teachers' campaign or with women owners of kindergarteners. In OPT, consultations with public representatives were held, though reportedly only in the implementation phase. Other stakeholders, such as those from Egypt, indicated that consultations were made separately with each constituency. This was also mentioned for the WE-Care project in Lebanon, where bilateral initial validation workshops were held with each identified stakeholder.

Ongoing dialogue, particularly with tripartite institutions, has facilitated the ILO work in GEEW to adapt to the changing context and specific constituencies' needs. For example, in the OPT,

respondents highlighted the ILO's efforts to adjust and respond to needs that emerged after the outbreak of the crisis.

The Joint Programme focused some of its support on monitoring and analyzing how the conflict affected the labour market. It ensured that data collection and analysis incorporated gender mainstreaming to address the needs of both women and men.

The desk review of available evaluations and monitoring reports of the non-sampled projects further confirms that the ILO work in the Arab States strongly aligns with the needs of its constituencies and, to a lesser extent, the affected populations. Most projects featured consultations with key national bodies, including government ministries, local authorities, and social partners.

While there are clear procedures for consultation and accountability with constituencies as main partners, the evaluation has not identified a common approach for consultations to end beneficiaries. According to some interviewed stakeholders', consultations with final beneficiaries in ILO projects primarily occur through their representative constituencies - trade unions and Employers' and Business Member Organizations (EMBOs)- and occasionally through civil society organizations. These indirect methods aim to ensure that beneficiary needs are considered when designing and implementing ILO interventions. However, the beneficiaries themselves are not always directly involved in project design.

Sometimes, the consultation process takes place after the initiation of the intervention, such as in the Disability-Inclusive Climate Action project with Organizations of People with Disabilities (OPDs). The desk review of the non-selected GEEW-focused project portfolio shows that engagement with beneficiaries was mostly conducted during or after implementation. Most projects also incorporate mechanisms to collect beneficiary feedback through monitoring visits, focus groups, workshops, activities, project coordination committees with beneficiaries, post-training evaluation forms, and group discussions, providing opportunities for beneficiaries to offer input on ILO. However, while these mechanisms are effective for gathering feedback, there is potential for ILO to enhance direct engagement with beneficiaries, particularly with women, and during the project design phase to further ensure their needs and priorities are integrated from the outset.

As a related issue, the evaluation has not found enough evidence that gender-responsive situation analysis, as stated in the ILO internal manual, is systematically done prior to the project design phase in all the revised projects. Only a handful of the non-sampled GEEW-focused interventions had evidence of gender analysis conducted at the outset of the intervention involving beneficiaries proactively in the early stages of project design. This was also mentioned in the evaluation reports. In several of the mid-term or final evaluations, recommendations are made to improve gender incorporation.

Q.1.1. Are gender equality issues/challenges in the world of work, including for women with disabilities, recognized as areas for action at the national level and by ILO constituents?

The needs of ILO's constituents and the ultimate beneficiaries cannot be understood in isolation as they are shaped by each country's unique social, economic, and political contexts in the Arab region. In this environment, deeply ingrained cultural norms, gender roles, and structural barriers often influence how gender equality and women's empowerment initiatives are received and implemented. In this complex context, the ILO's work on GEEW in the Arab States aims to address the specific needs of its constituencies. At the same time, it acknowledges the broader, often unstated challenges affecting gender equality in the region. **The ILO strives to advance the conversation by helping its constituents and partners recognize and tackle systemic barriers to gender equality progress.**

One key mechanism through which the ILO negotiates and agrees on priorities with its constituencies, thereby enhancing its relevance and responsiveness to their needs, is the Decent Work Country Programs (DWCP). Currently, the OPT is the only territory in the region with an active DWCP, while Lebanon, and Yemen do not have one in place. In Jordan, the previous DWCP 2018-2022 priorities provided coverage and support to the ILO's interventions to promote decent work for women. New DWCPs are being developed for Jordan and Iraq.

DWCPs, when in place, are closely aligned with national government priorities and can serve as a crucial tool for integrating gender considerations into the agreed outcomes. A significant example of advancing gender equality through DWCPs is the programme implemented in the OPT (2023-25). This programme, agreed upon by the government, employers, workers, and the ILO, incorporates gender equality across its outcomes and outputs informed by a gender review of all labour-related legislations in the OPT. The gender review identified the lack of a maternity insurance scheme as a significant barrier to female labour market participation. The only provision currently available is that set out in the labour law, namely three months of maternity leave. However, the financial burden is borne exclusively by the employer, which effectively constitutes a discriminatory preference in favour of hiring men over women due to the associated costs of providing maternity protection and addressing childbearing responsibilities. Considering the shortcomings mentioned above in the labour legislation, the ILO OPT team identified the necessity for introducing social security legislation, with the implementation of a maternity insurance scheme representing a pivotal objective. This collaborative framework has enabled targeted efforts to improve legal and policy frameworks, ensuring gender compliance and guiding capacity-building initiatives and other interventions specifically aimed at end beneficiaries.

However, there is no unanimity among ILO staff on the merits of having a DWCP signed, especially if, as it sometimes happens, they don't cover all areas where ILO works or aims to do so. Gender, as a sectorial priority, is often a difficult area to agree on and prioritize as constituencies do not typically prioritize it. This was evident, for example, in the past Iraq DWCP, which did not include a Country Programme Objective (CPO) on gender as it was not considered a priority by constituencies at the time of its negotiation. As a result, when there are no specific mentions of gender actions or objectives, ILO's scope for work on this topic may be more limited. Conversely, where a DWCP has not been signed, there might be more space to work on ILO's priority issues, including gender.

From the perspective of ILO staff, priority given by regional constituencies to ILO GEEW objectives is low. Survey results from ILO ROAS staff reflect this trend, with 40% of respondents indicating that gender equality is 'somewhat of a priority' and 25% 'not a priority' for governments. For employers, percentages fall to 35% and 25%, respectively. The assessment of workers' organizations' gender responsiveness was more positive, with 55% of respondents believing that gender equality was 'somewhat of a priority.' However, 25% said that trade unions did not consider it a priority either.

According to some interviewed ILO staff, there would be three primary drivers at the government level for advancing gender equality. The first approach is a top-down strategy where senior leadership in the Ministry of Labour drives gender priorities. In this model, a high-ranking official with a strong awareness of gender sensitivity and the importance of gender mainstreaming actively advocates for integrating gender considerations into policy and practice. This leadership promotes an institutional focus on advancing gender priorities. For example, some of the progress in the OPT or Jordan would have been supported by more progressive government staff or 'gender champions' in key positions in the relevant public organizations.

A second driver would be the need for government actors to act on specific situations of apparent rights violation or to report on specific conventions that a country has ratified, demonstrating tangible action or progress. For example, some interviewees noted that Iraq's recent commitment to ratify Convention 190 on Violence and Harassment⁴ may have been in response to highly discriminatory practices against women and incidents of harassment and violence against trade union representatives⁵.

It's important to note that the adoption of key basic labour rights and standards relevant to women's rights and gender equality in the workplace is, overall, low. While all States, except Oman, have ratified the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) has not been adopted in Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar. Other key standards, such as the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), have not been adopted by any country in the region, with countries showing varying maternity leave periods, different schemes to cover the cost of maternity leave, and vulnerable and informal women workers not covered. Nor has the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) been ratified by any country yet.

Finally, a third driver is international pressure to meet emerging global standards and overcome negative reputations. Saudi Arabia's gender reforms to increase women's participation in the workforce would be the most prominent example⁶. These reforms would

⁴ Convention 190, is the first international treaty to recognize the right of everyone to a world of work free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment.

⁵ The Iraqi government recognized the need to ratify Convention 190 due to discriminatory practices that hindered women's access to the labour market. Additionally, experts raised concerns about cases of harassment and violence against Iraqi trade union representatives, including a woman who faced significant abuse. The government initially dismissed these incidents as isolated, not state-driven, but the pressure to ratify the Convention grew to demonstrate that they did condone such actions.

⁶ Following its national strategy 'Vision 2030', Saudi Arabia has recently embarked on a series of policy and legislative reforms to increase women's labour force participation and female leadership. At the government's

coexist with other traditional norms in the labour market towards women, though they might reflect a genuine shift towards gender equality that might have already started.

Concerning employers, KIIs with some ILO staff, noted a low level of commitment to women's rights at work. Actions taken to support women were often driven by economic or commercial interests, where women's inclusion was seen more as an obligation than an investment. This perception was echoed by staff involved in the WIMIN project in Lebanon, who noted that the role of women in employers' associations and, more generally, in the private sector remained marginal. Women's participation in institutional decision-making processes, such as at companies' boards, tended to be more superficial than executives. This was also noted during data collection in Lebanon as, according to some beneficiaries of the WIMIN project, even those employers who are more open to the idea of gender equality would be reluctant to employ more women in the workplace or place them in positions of greater responsibility. ILO staff in the OPT also emphasized the private sector's reluctance, as advances in women's rights at work are often perceived as contrary to their interests.

ILO staff perceptions of workers' associations' involvement with the gender equality agenda reflect a mixed picture with some signs of positive development. Trade unions in the Arab countries face obstacles, including a restrictive legal environment that limits unionization and collective bargaining in several countries⁷. Other challenges include limited space for independent trade unions and free association, fragmented labour movements, government-dominated consultative bodies, and the preponderance of informal employment, notably reducing the base of possible affiliates. The evaluation observed some of these deficits directly during data collection, particularly in Lebanon. In addition, some key ILO regional staff noted that several organizations still display 'very archaic, paternalistic and patriarchal ways of working'.

Despite these challenges, there is a general agreement that workers' organizations are becoming more receptive to gender equality for several reasons. Some of these organizations originate from progressive and egalitarian backgrounds. Secondly, many women who are members of trade unions have already surmounted significant barriers to entering the labour market and becoming active participants in these organizations. Consequently, they are eager to voice their concerns and assert their influence within these unions. Furthermore, the necessity for a more pertinent agenda that addresses the specific needs of women is driven by trade unions' reliance on continuous growth in their membership base, including that of women. This dynamic suggests that it is in the unions' self-interest to promote women's membership and align their agenda with the concerns of women. This was mentioned, for example, during an interview with the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFJTU), which highlighted a keen interest in attending challenges

request, the ILO provided technical support for developing the National Policy on Equal Opportunities and Equal Treatment, which aims to end discrimination in employment and promote a more inclusive labour market in the Kingdom. The country has taken advantage of a large number of highly educated women to encourage their participation in prominent positions in both the government and the private sector.

⁷ There are restrictions to unionization for some workers -for example civil servants in Lebanon, workers working in the Special Zones in Jordan- while in other countries such Syria or Iraq, civil servants are organized, but workers in the private sector are not.

identified by the gender audit by, for example, expanding women's membership in trade unions and providing legal assistance to women facing work-related violations.

Q.2. To what extent is the ILO GEEW work in the region aligned with internal ILO GEEW frameworks and policies, and to what extent are those frameworks and policies relevant in the Arab States region?

ILO GEEW work in the Arab states shows strong alignment to ILO global GEEW development frameworks, decent work principles, and ILO's P&Bs. GEEW work has been guided by the 1999 ILO gender equality and mainstreaming policy, the ILO's ToC towards a transformative agenda for gender equality in the world of work⁸ and, above all, by key International Labour Standards (ILS) particularly the conventions and standards on equal pay, discrimination, maternity protection and violence and harassment amongst others⁹.

The ILO GEEW work is further aligned with the policy outcomes established by the biannual Programme and Budgets 2022-2023 and 2024-25, particularly those on equality and non-discrimination, which are also informed by the key gender-related conventions¹⁰. Key focus areas have included pay equity, maternity protection, care work, and violence and harassment; the latter is supported by the recent global adoption of Convention 190 - an issue that all governments recognize as requiring action. These four themes have been incorporated into social dialogue with constituencies across all countries in the region, with varying degrees of progress. These priorities have also been addressed, to a greater or lesser extent, in the interventions implemented over the last five years, as noted in the recent Synthesis Review of the ILO gender initiatives between 2018-2023¹¹.

However, it has also been noted the P&Bs serve primarily as a global work plan, stating the priority areas where ILO aims to advance. In practice, donor priorities and the specific context of countries, rather than P&B's outcomes and outputs, have significantly shaped ILO GEEW programme in the Arab region. Regarding donors' commitment to advancing the ILO gender

⁸ Main priorities stated in the ToC are: a) women's access to, and progress in, labour markets; b) the just valuation of women's work and reduction of the gender pay gap; c) support for a more even distribution of unpaid care work between families and the State and between men and women and d) the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work.

<https://www.ilo.org/resource/brief/theory-change-towards-transformative-agenda-gender-equality-world-work>

⁹ The four key gender equality standards are the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), both of which are fundamental Conventions, and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) and the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183). More recent and relevant standards include the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189); the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and the Safe and Healthy Working Environment Convention, 2023 (No. 191).

¹⁰ For the biennium 2024-25 P&B outputs for Outcome 5: *Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all are, in addition to the ratification of key international labour standards relevant to equality and non-discrimination* are: 5.1. to increase capacity of member states to strengthening legal, policy and institutional frameworks to implement a transformative gender equality agenda; 5.2. the promotion of investments and decent work in the care economy and 5.3. the prevention and discrimination-based violence and harassment at work.

¹¹ As noted in the recent Synthesis Review of the ILO gender initiatives between 2018-2023, during the past five years the ILO ROAS has been supporting policy and legal reforms aimed at establishing a supportive framework for gender equality in the workplace, gender-responsive labour market governance and fair workplace practices together with prioritizing skill development for empowering women.

equality priorities, aside from the strong commitment of a few donors, such as the governments of Sweden and Norway, the ILO had not yet fully leveraged sufficient financial support for gender-focused projects. Donors tend to have specific areas of interest, and the chances of translating the ILO's gender priorities into action depend very much on the degree to which a strong gender mainstreaming process is achieved throughout the intervention cycle.

Country-specific factors, including government policies, variations in government capacity, political orientation, and sensitivity towards the ILO's global gender agenda, have influenced programme design and, sometimes, established the boundaries and scope of the GEEW work.

Overall, the review of the sample and not sampled projects provides evidence that ILO interventions are relevant and aligned with the commitments and priorities expressed by the governments of Arab States, particularly those for Jordan, Lebanon, and the OPT in their policies¹². In Jordan, ILO's gender-focused interventions have been aligned with the Jordan 2025- A National Vision and Strategy and its related Women's Economic Empowerment National Action Plan and the National Strategy for Women (2020-2025). In Lebanon, ILO's efforts were consistent with the National Women Strategy (2011-2022) and also with the more recent one for 2022-2030. In OPT, the Joint Programme supported the National Employment Strategy (2021–2025), the Social Development Sector Strategy (SDSS), and the DWCP.

While public policies in most Arab States provide an acceptable framework for discussing gender equality, turning these discussions into tangible commitments and actions is not a straightforward process. According to several ILO staff, discussing 'gender' with constituencies can be challenging as entrenched beliefs about gender roles in the Arab States can hinder advocacy efforts. Constraints made themselves evident in the difficulties of advocating for some themes that may be unwelcomed or misunderstood.

For example, this issue has surfaced in the efforts towards the ratification of Convention 190, which addresses the sensitive concept of 'violence and harassment', including gender-based violence. Reportedly, the Convention would face resistance, partly due to the misunderstanding that it 'would frame all men as potential harassers.' Certain terminology such as 'sex-gender' and, particularly, 'LGTBIQ' have been mentioned as highly problematic, eliciting strong rejection across almost all countries. Less apparently conflictive terms such as 'social protection' have faced resistance in Yemen. Other themes such as pay equity, particularly the concept of 'equal pay for work of equal value'¹³ – which draws attention to the value of work that is mostly done by women but is poorly paid compared to similar work done by men - were reportedly not well understood in the region. Some government

¹² In Egypt, the Joint Programme was well aligned with and contributed towards the Government of Egypt's Sustainable Development Strategy/Vision 2030 and the National Women's Strategy 2030.

¹³ The definition of equal pay for 'work of equal value' guarantees greater equality because they account for types of jobs that are mostly done by women and which historically have been poorly paid. Factors that can be considered to determine if the work is of equal value include the level of skill, effort and responsibility required by the job and the working conditions provided to employees. There are technical difficulties in operationalizing the concept.

representatives dismissed the gender pay gap as a non-issue or as part of a 'Western agenda.' As a result, ILO's work complemented this approach with a second one, more acceptable to its audiences, which promotes more basic concepts such as "equal work, equal pay," thus redirecting the focus to the factors that explain why a woman doing the same work is paid less than a man.

Similarly, the early termination of the WE-Care project highlights the complexities of addressing other ILO priorities, such as the care economy¹⁴. Strong resistance from the Lebanese Ministry of Labour to the concept of 'unpaid care work in the home', combined with a change in internal priorities, reportedly led to the project's cancellation. According to interviewed staff, care economy is a complex issue to work with, as it is a result of the convergence of several issues in the Arab States: it's a mix of patriarchy, as it points to the very fixed and persisting gendered roles, but it could also be a mixed mix of racism as an important part of care work is provided by women migrant workers. Class dynamics also play a role, further complicating the possible interventions. From other perspectives, addressing the care economy requires public investment, which is difficult to secure in countries with limited fiscal capacity, which are affected by multiple crises. Due to the challenges faced, recent approaches have shifted to broaden the scope. Instead of concentrating on the care economy in terms of who provides domestic services and how, the focus is now shifting away from household gender inequality toward institutional solutions, such as improving care services for the elderly and children.

Finally, when gender power dynamics intersect with other identity markers, such as migrant or refugee status, ethnic origin, or disabilities, unique and specific experiences of vulnerability and disadvantage emerge. Although several national policies explicitly include provisions with coverage of refugee and migrant women within their framework¹⁵, **interviews revealed additional challenges in advocating for under-represented and marginalized groups, such as migrant domestic workers or migrants working in garment factories. These groups' needs and priorities are more prone to be overlooked or dismissed.**

On a more positive note, and concerning persons with disabilities, the evaluation found that in Jordan, for example, there are legal requirements for companies with 25 or more employees to employ people with disabilities¹⁶. According to interviews, this has already led to some changes in the garment sector to better accommodate workers with disabilities in factories.

¹⁴ ILO's work on the care economy is encapsulated on the 5R Framework for Decent Care Work: Recognize, Reduce and Redistribute unpaid care work; Reward paid care work by promoting more and decent work for care workers; and guarantee care workers' Representation, social dialogue and collective bargaining.

¹⁵ For example, the National Strategy for Women and the Women's Economic Empowerment National Action Plan in Jordan and the National Women Strategy (2021–2025) in Lebanon.

¹⁶ According to the Law on the Rights of People with Disabilities (2017) those companies with 25 and 50 workers have to employ one person at least with a disability. If the number of workers exceeds 50 workers in any of them, a percentage of 4% of posts shall be allocated for persons with disabilities

Q.3. To what extent is the design of the sampled projects relevant to achieve expected results and to meaningfully contribute to GEEW goals?

The ILO GEEW sampled interventions have aimed to use causal pathways, but the systematic application of logical frameworks and/or the Theory of Change remains a work in progress. Some interventions are ambitious in scope or based on assumptions that were not thoroughly tested or confirmed.

The Joint Programme was a comprehensive intervention technically designed to address key drivers of inequality in women's labour market participation. The intervention logic was organized around three interrelated outcomes aiming to increase employment and decent work opportunities for women through advancing gender-responsive laws and policies at the policy/legislation level and supporting the private sector stakeholders and trade unions to create a gender-responsive environment that attracts, retains and promote women while, at the same time, raising awareness and challenging stereotypes about women and men's responsibilities on unpaid care and household work at the individual and community level.

While its theory of change remained broadly valid, as pointed out in the programme midterm evaluation, there were also some limitations. Firstly, the programme's design was broad, with numerous components and country-specific outputs, especially in the outcome 2 (*A gender-responsive private sector that attracts, retains and promotes women is supported*), which included a variety of private-sector-focused interventions of varying ambition. Secondly, its implementation strategy could have benefited from a more integrated approach, as assigning the lead for each of the outputs to one of the two agencies resulted in each organization executing activities mostly autonomously. Finally, the regional approach - aimed at strengthening regional partnerships, facilitating cross-country programme learning and acting as a knowledge hub - was not adequately captured in the accountability framework, limiting the ability to know how the programme performed at this level.

The objective of the DW4W project was to improve the working conditions of women employed in highly feminized sectors such as education and care. The rationale behind the project was that by raising awareness among legislators, decision-makers, and the general public about the value of women's economic participation and by establishing supportive institutional and policy frameworks, the working conditions for women in highly feminized sectors such as education and childcare could be improved. The approach also emphasized empowering workers in partnership with sectoral organizations. The project's objectives were ambitious given the timeframe, which, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, led to the project's no-cost and cost extensions. Additionally, a more structured logical framework could have helped clarify the connections between inputs, activities, and expected results, enhancing measurement and verification of outcomes.

The Disability-Inclusive climate action project, forms part of the Global Communities programme and is aimed at building capacities of policy makers and relevant organizations representing PwD to support intersectional policy making. Its logic could be summarized as follows: 'Capacitated and informed policymakers facilitate the participation of persons with disabilities in decision-making processes to mainstream an intersectional approach in the design of policies and programs to tackle the climate crisis and, as a result, specific barriers faced by PwD are reduced, and social justice and just transition is strengthened.' The project

reflects a well-structured logical framework that outlines the project's vertical and horizontal logic, and there is a clear articulation of inputs, activities, outputs, and outcomes.

The two sample projects in Lebanon were funded through the RBSA. The Women in Management Initiative (WIMIN) was a short-term intervention (16 months), later extended, organized around three outcomes aimed at improving knowledge and structures within Employer and Business Membership Organizations (EBMOs) and trade unions to promote gender equality, thereby creating conditions for more women to enter, remain and re-enter the labour force in management positions and to improve their representation in both EMBO and trade unions. The intervention, also ambitious for the initial timeframe, relied on some assumptions that required further validation - particularly the willingness of private companies to hire new female workers and, above all, to financially contribute to their professional progression, and, in the case of trade unions, their readiness to set aside longstanding disputes to collaborate on gender equality initiatives. The evaluation highlighted that the logical framework, detailing the project's vertical and horizontal logic, was underdeveloped. Additionally, the monitoring framework was inadequate as it lacked specific project indicators. Instead, it relied on the P&B 2022-2023 output indicators to measure and report the results of the intervention.

The WE-Care project was piloted in response to discussions with the Lebanese Ministry of Labour and based on previous ILO technical work and advocacy for a revised standard unified contract for the employment of migrant domestic workers. It aimed to create decent working conditions in the care sector while focusing on unpaid care work within households under a women's empowerment approach. The intervention logic was based on the premise that organizing care sector workers under a care cooperative model of service delivery; improving the regulatory framework and perceptions about home-based care workers; and fostering coordination among care sector stakeholders, including trade unions, around grievance mechanisms related to home-based care workers, would lead to workers becoming more empowered. The evaluation found the intervention model to be generally ambitious for the time allocated and the many partners involved.

In addition, the project would have benefited from a more thorough contextual analysis as it was based on a series of assumptions about the readiness of various stakeholders that were not adequately tested. The project assumed that constituents in Lebanon could view the crisis as an opportunity to shift perceptions around care work and integrate protection measures into employment frameworks, something that had previously been difficult to achieve. However, given the severe economic and political crisis that Lebanon has been grappling with since the 2020 Beirut blast, this assumption was unrealistic. The country's socio-political instability, compounded by hyperinflation, widespread unemployment, and deteriorating public services, meant that policymakers and the public immediately focused on survival and crisis management. Under such conditions, prioritizing structural changes to care work or implementing new employment protection schemes became secondary concerns. The overwhelming need to address urgent economic issues left little space for pursuing broader social reforms.

In OPT, the Strengthening Labour Market Governance project, funded by the Government of Kuwait is part of the ongoing support to the DWCP since 2009¹⁷. As such, the project was not formally designed, and the funds were used by the country office to support interventions and activities either alone or through cost-sharing with other donors around the three pillars of the DWCP 2023-25 and, since October 2023, the Emergency Response Plan design by ILO. While the late concept note mentions gender as a priority, the extent and specifics of its gender-responsive elements remain unclear.

4.2. COHERENCE

This subsection answers the questions of coherence, that is, the extent to which the ILO's sampled GEEW interventions show internal and external synergies. Internal coherence explores the interactions and overlaps between programmes, and external coherence pinpoints how the ILO interacts with other agencies to promote complementarity, harmonization, and coordination. Finally, it explored how the ILO GEEW work complements SIDA's broad approach to gender equality and employment.

KEY FINDINGS

1. At the global level, the main ILO international initiative to which ROAS programmes have contributed is the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) initiative, primarily through actions undertaken as part of the Joint Programme. Concerted efforts through the Joint Programme have contributed to Egypt's accession to the initiative.
2. Synergies at the regional level have been limited to occasional learning exchanges between some countries but with low partner involvement. The Joint Programme, the most prominent regional initiative, has not fulfilled its role of promoting cross-learning between ILO country offices
3. At the country level, synergies in the ILO's GEEW work have been achieved by leveraging existing partnerships with stakeholders, involving them in implementing initiatives, and occasionally through cost-sharing of activities and internal coordination with other projects, leading to some efficiency gains. Main synergies existed primarily between the Joint Programme and the Advancing Decent Work for Women
4. The ILO has made some efforts to coordinate with other actors and UN agencies, with the most notable example being its partnership with UN Women through the Joint Programme. Cooperation with other agencies is currently limited, with only occasional initiatives involving organizations such as GIZ. Within the ILO, it is recognized that there is untapped potential to work collaboratively and develop initiatives with other agencies.
5. The ILO and SIDA have developed a strong collaborative relationship in supporting gender equality and decent work, amongst other areas, due to the strong alignment between SIDA's priorities and the ILO's mandate and comparative advantages. In addition to economic empowerment and skills development for women, there are further

¹⁷ The flexible support to DWCPs modality offers the greatest focus on country level action. Funding is provided to a selection of DWCP Outcomes with the ILO allocating resources to the other priorities at country level, or funding is provided to the DWCP without further earmarking. This approach enables strategic management of country-level resources and helps leverage additional funding. Resources are managed by the responsible country offices, with the objective of supporting their contribution to the overall results framework of the ILO.

opportunities for the ILO to contribute to SIDA's priorities, such as leveraging the ILO's experience in conflict and recovery contexts like in the OPT, focusing on decent work and social justice with a gender approach.

Q.4. To what extent do the ILO gender-focused projects in the Arab States work in synergy with other relevant ILO interventions at the global, regional, and country levels?

ILO gender-focused projects in the Arab States have aligned with and contributed to some global intergovernmental processes, working groups, action coalitions, and other mechanisms in which the ILO participates or leads, with key areas including equal pay and the care economy.

For instance, under the Joint Programme, several initiatives have supported advancing equal pay, in line with the global efforts that ILO leads in coalition with UN Women and the OECD in the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) Initiative. Concerted efforts have contributed to Egypt joining the EPIC and securing a position on its steering committee. In Jordan, the ILO continued its support for the National Committee for Pay Equity (NCPE), established through ILO support in 2011. In the OPT, the Programme efforts helped the National Coalition of Pay Equity of the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), established in 2020-21, advance their understanding and promotion of equal pay principles by producing two policy documents on childcare services and pay equity. In Egypt, the ILO supported the introduction of some provisions for more gender-responsive legislation about equal pay and has technically contributed to generating new evidence on the gender wage gap in the country¹⁸. The Joint Programme has also capitalized on Jordan's longstanding membership in the EPIC since its launch in 2017 and the progress achieved in the country, to facilitate cross-country collaboration and learning, particularly between Jordan and the OPT.

Another area where synergies with global frameworks have been sought is the care economy. The ILO is a member of the Global Alliance for Care and has actively contributed to global knowledge on care by providing tools, knowledge, and technical assistance to invest in care services and to ensure that these investments provide decent work for care workers and contribute to gender equality in the distribution of paid and unpaid care work¹⁹. This commitment has translated at the country level by, for example, supporting, through the Joint Programme, health and childcare infrastructure by establishing nurseries within the Jordanian MoL and the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) and pilot projects with sectoral trade unions in the OPT. Additionally, legislative changes promoting work-life balance in Jordan, such as flexible work arrangements and enhanced maternity protection, further reflect this synergy. Also, under the DW4W intervention efforts in Jordan, the framework for operating the National Framework for Childcare Services has been improved.

Synergies at the regional level have been more limited. Globally, the Joint Programme has supported cross-learning between countries through studies, other publications, and some workshops, but this work was not substantial. During interviews, Joint Programme partners

¹⁸ <https://www.ilo.org/publications/gender-wage-gap-egypt>

¹⁹ <https://www.ilo.org/publications/major-publications/care-work-and-care-jobs-future-decent-work>

in Egypt, Jordan, and the OPT were generally aware of its regional scope and overarching goals. Still, they lacked insight into the specific operations or achievements of the Joint Programme in other countries. Contacted partners noted that no joint activities were conducted with similar constituencies or organizations across countries, nor was there any sharing of lessons learned or knowledge resources between the countries within the regional program. On the other hand, the capacity building provided to middle management women in Lebanon under the WIMIN project was used as a showcase in some other projects out of the region (Tunisia).

At the country level, the ILO seeks to ensure that each intervention works in synergy with existing partnerships and complements other ILO activities. The ILO's synergies with GEEW have mainly been achieved through the involvement of institutional partners and other entities in designing and implementing the interventions. In Jordan, for example, the ILO gender team has partnered with several national institutions, including government agencies -the Ministry of Labour (MoL); Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW); the National Committee for Pay Equity (NCPE); the Social Security Corporation (SSC); the Ministry of Social Development (MoSD) and the Ministry of Youth (MoY)-; with workers' organizations, particularly the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFJTU) and with the Jordan Chamber of Industry (JCI), the Jordan Chamber of Commerce (JCC) and with the 'Women on Boards'. The ILO GEEW team also established relations with the Central Bank of Jordan (CBJ) and the Association of Banks in Jordan (ABJ). In OPT, the Joint Programme relied on the ongoing collaboration and support with the MoL, particularly with the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) and the Federation of Palestinian Chambers (FPC). In Lebanon, in addition to the MoL and other line ministries, the ILO has well-established links with the worker's associations such as the General Confederation of Lebanese Workers (CGTL) and FENASOL and with the EBMO such as the Association of Lebanese Industrialists (ALI).

The evaluation noted some synergies between the ILO GEEW-focused interventions and other projects. For example, in the OPT, synergies have been established to improve internal coherence in support of the broader agenda and framework of the DWCP. The Joint Programme and the Kuwaiti-funded initiative contributed to the Social Dialogue for Formalization and Employability in the Southern Neighbourhood Region (SOLIFEM) project. The Joint Programme contributed to building the capacities of social partners on collective and individual bargaining and negotiation skills, on bipartite and tripartite dialogue concepts, and on dispute prevention and resolution tools and techniques from a gender perspective. The Kuwait funds supported ILO's efforts to enhance livelihoods for the Jordan Valley's agricultural workers, including women and youth.

In Jordan, some of the achievements under the Joint Programme and the DW4W project capitalized on the previous groundwork developed by the ILO. Also, several synergies were established between both interventions through cost sharing of activities to expand work with the private health and education sector. While this collaboration was beneficial, there were challenges in clearly attributing results to their respective funding streams. Improved reporting on these distinctions would enhance accountability and provide clearer insights into the specific contributions of each funding source. Moreover, some activities were implemented with financial and technical support from like-minded agencies such as GIZ and

SADAQA, the latter also being a partner in the Norwegian-funded project. The Joint Programme in Jordan has also leveraged the Better Work programme to train Jordanian MoL inspectors on gender equality, violence, and harassment, which has been integrated into standard occupation safety and health (OSH) training.

Synergies were also identified between the DW4W project in Jordan and the work carried out in the OPT under the Joint Programme. In line with the Jordanian experience, the Joint Programme conducted in the OPT an awareness campaign aimed at informing workers in the private education sector about the provisions of the labour law and minimum wage legislation, as well as orienting them on the main ILO gender-related conventions.

In Egypt, the ILO secured additional funding from the RBSA ILO project “Promoting care economy to support women economic empowerment in Egypt.” This funding was used to complement Joint Programme activities related to social dialogue and knowledge sharing related to the childcare economy. Some collaboration between the Joint Programme and the ILO’s Decent Work for Women in Egypt and Tunisia project has also been reported.

Q.5. To what extent does the ILO's work on GEEW complement other regional and national efforts in the Arab States to promote gender equality?

Both the previous P&B 2022-2023 and the current P&B 2024-25 strongly emphasize the importance of proactively identifying potential synergies with development partners. They also highlight the need to leverage resources with other UN agencies and partners to achieve transformational results for gender equality and women’s empowerment at global, regional, and country levels.

At the regional level, the partnering between the ILO and UN Women through the Joint Programme has been the main initiative supporting decent work for women in the region. The Joint Programme design effectively combined the strengths of both UN Women and ILO, leveraging their complementary expertise. While both agencies have contributed to its successful execution, as it has already been noted, the implementation could have been better integrated to facilitate greater cross-learning between both agencies. Despite this, the evaluation noted mutual benefits. According to some interviews and based on UN Women’s own assessments²⁰, drawing on the ILO’s economic and technical expertise, knowledge, and networks has enhanced UN Women’s efficiency. For ILO, staff noted that joint work with UN Women has contributed to a closer connection with national women’s machinery and civil society organizations, particularly women’s organizations.

In a broader sense, the ILO ROAS team has also sought to expand regional dialogue around gender issues. For example, ILO and UN Women collaborated with ESCWA on several dialogues on care in the region based on some research reports produced under the Joint Programme²¹. In addition, the ILO ROAS Gender Team has sought to collaborate and engage with actors beyond the ILO, including UN Women, the World Bank and interested donors, to

²⁰ UN WOMEN (2023): *Corporate Evaluation of Un Women’s Contribution to Women’s Economic Empowerment by Advancing Gender-Responsive Laws, Frameworks, Policies and Partnerships*.

²¹ Report: Progress of Women in the Arab States 2020: the role of the care economy in promoting gender equality, which has been produced under the UN Women-ILO joint programme.

develop a theory of change for care work in the region, to ensure that it not only reflects the ILO's contribution, but also provides space for other stakeholders to align their efforts over a five-year timeframe to achieve tangible progress on care in the region. According to ILO staff interviews, this engagement was not just aimed at securing financial resources but rather at influencing how these organizations perceive and prioritize care work in their agendas.

ILO country offices participated in and coordinated with other international partners, UN agencies, and other international actors in GEEW through the UN Country Team (UNCT) system. In Jordan, for example, the ILO has coordinated with the World Bank through knowledge sharing with the Mashreq Gender Facility Technical Committee, and synergies are ongoing with GIZ. In the OPT, the ILO office sits on several UN committees, working groups coordination mechanisms, and co-leads with UNDP, the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) employment and economic sector working group. In Lebanon, the ILO team coordinated the 'Kafala Working Group' established by the MoL on migration and domestic work, and joint work was reported with the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs and UNFPA on revising the strategy for elderly care.

However, the evaluation notes that generally, ILO staff felt that *"We could do more and better in working with UN agencies whether in GEEW but in other themes as well"*. Similar perceptions are reflected in the ILO staff survey results when asked how effectively ILO ROAS work on GEEW complements efforts made by other partners. Complementing efforts with UN agencies are assessed as 'partially effective' by 50% of respondents and 'mostly effective' by 40%, while when asked about complementarities with International Financial Institutions, 45% found them 'partially effective'; 30% 'mostly effective' and 20% 'no effective' (Table 4.) Interviewees also noted that working within joint or multi-agency programs can be more demanding and requires commitment and coordination at all levels, including at the UN country level, to prevent competition and foster collaboration. A shared understanding of how to advance gender equality, along with well-structured teams and effective management, should also be essential for success.

Table 4. Staff perceptions on how effectively ILO ROAS is complementing other partners' efforts on GEEW

	UN Agencies	IFI
None effectively		20%
Partly effectively	50%	45%
Mostly effectively	40%	30%
Very effectively	10%	5%

Q.6. To what extent does the ILO work on GEEW complement SIDA's broad approach to gender equality and employment/decent work?

Q.6.1. What opportunities lie in maximizing the contribution to this global framework?

Sweden is a leading global player in gender equality and has a high level of credibility and a long-standing commitment to decent work and social justice. SIDA's broad approach to gender equality and employment/decent work is encapsulated in its Strategy (2022-2026) on

Global Gender Equality and Women's Rights²² which focuses on implementing, strengthening and defending global normative frameworks for gender equality; combating discrimination and gender-stereotypical norms, attitudes and behaviours; addressing gender-based violence and strengthening methodological and capacity development for gender equality work. This strategic focus aligns with ILO's gender priorities creating a foundation for complementarity between the two agencies. SIDA's Strategy for Sweden's Global Development Cooperation on Sustainable Economic Development (2022-2026) further aligns with ILO's mission by setting goals around productive employment, women's economic empowerment, sustainable market conditions and private sector development.

As a long-standing partner since 2006, Sweden is one of ILO's most reliable and like-minded donors of ILO. The current Partnership Agreement (2022-2025) commits SIDA to support four strategic, cross-cutting areas: gender equality and non-discrimination; just transition and environmental sustainability; conflict-sensitive approaches; and market systems development²³.

In the area of gender equality, SIDA's commitment has been reflected in several ILO's interventions at the global, regional and country level.

Globally, SIDA has contributed to the ILO Global care policy portal which is a knowledge hub to disseminate data and resources on care leave policies and services. Also, SIDA is currently financing a 'learning from evaluation initiative' expected to produce pertinent global normative policy developments and products across the four strategic areas.

Regionally, in addition to financing the Joint Programme to ILO and UN Women, SIDA is also collaborating with ILO across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus with a particular focus on Yemen and OPT. For example, in Yemen, SIDA cofinances the Multiagency Enhancing Rural Resilience in Yemen Phase III (ERRY III) programme and, in Lebanon, SIDA supports refugees and host communities' participation in the horticulture sector under the Market System Development approach promoted by SIDA²⁴.

ILO staff consulted recognise SIDA as a significant ILO partner. In some cases, their relationship is motivated by oversight of some of the projects SIDA funds in the Arab States and in other cases by dialogue on possible joint work proposals. Overall, ILO ROAS staff's perception of ILO-SIDA cooperation is very positive. According to interviews, SIDA's priorities are not overly prescriptive and are broad enough to allow the ILO meaningful consultation, enabling ILO to align its mandate effectively. For example, some interviewees noted that the Joint Programme was designed in close alignment with SIDA's priorities on women's economic empowerment, while remaining sufficiently flexible to accommodate specific mandates of both ILO's and UN Women.

²² MFA 2022-2026 Strategy for Sweden's development cooperation for global gender equality and women's and girl's rights (in Swedish only). Translation from the authors.

²³ <https://www.ilo.org/sweden-ilo-partnership>

²⁴This approach (<https://www.sida.se/en/for-partners/methods-materials/market-systems-development-toolbox>) is currently implemented in the project (LBN/23/01/SWE) Promoting decent jobs for Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees.

In early 2024, Sweden published its regional development cooperation strategy with the Middle East and North Africa 2024–2027, which aims to increase: (i) economic development and job creation, mainly through the private sector development and support to vocational training; (ii) strengthen gender equality and the economic empowerment of women and young people; (iii) enhance the partner countries' capacity for migration management and combating irregular migration; (iv) the promoting of freedom and democratic development in the region to support human rights defenders, civil society and media to operate safely and (v) conflict prevention and work on peace with a particular focus on Yemen and Palestine.

There are opportunities to deepen the ILO-SIDA collaboration by leveraging shared strategic interests, including private sector development, innovation, entrepreneurship, green transition, and economic empowerment and skills development for women. The ILO's long-term commitment to OPT, which has built a robust country programme with gender equality as a cross-cutting outcome, could provide valuable lessons for SIDA, particularly in its efforts on conflict prevention and promoting stability through economic development. Finally, the ILO intervention model in 'recovery' contexts implemented in countries such as Yemen, which are neither purely humanitarian emergencies nor traditional development contexts, provides insights on promoting decent work and social justice that can be relevant to SIDA's efforts.

At an operational level, consulted stakeholders suggested that the partnership between the ILO and SIDA could be strengthened through more continuous and in-depth communication from the ILO side, allowing SIDA to better understand how the ILO substantiates its work on GEEW. Additionally, **deeper and more technical communication around GEEW and labour issues could help both partners fine-tune their strategies** and actions, resulting in mutual benefits.

4.3. EFFECTIVENESS

This section explores the extent to which the GEEW interventions are effective and, thus, the extent to which they have met its gender equality results. It responds to the following evaluation questions: (a) the measurable outcomes ILO GEEW sampled programs have achieved in its gender focus areas, either intended or unintended; (b) the comparative advantage of ILO's work and how it has been considered more effective and (c) the main internal and external factors influencing IO's ability to promote GEEW during the period under review.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Through the Joint Programme, the ILO, in collaboration with other actors and building on existing efforts, contributed to several policy and legislative reforms in the areas of maternity protection, equal pay provisions, violence and harassment, and care policies, with Jordan standing out with 13 policy and legislative changes related to gender equality.
2. The ILO's technical expertise in revising labour laws from a gender perspective, the use of social dialogue with the tripartite to agree on proposed changes, and the investment in building quality evidence together with UN Women have all contributed to this

outcome. In particular, several stakeholders highlighted the ability of the ILO national teams to leverage political support and commitment, especially in Jordan.

3. Progress has also been made in building the capacity of trade unions, particularly in the OPT, resulting in better skills for negotiating collective agreements, establishing a complaints system with a focus on violence and harassment, and launching joint campaigns with NGOs lobbying for labour law reform. In Egypt, the ILO's achievements revolve around its partnership with the private sector, particularly in supporting the reform of companies' human resources policies in favour of gender equality.
4. The most significant achievements of the DW4W project have been updating the National Framework for Childcare Services 2023-25 action plan to ensure that childcare services are accessible and affordable for all working parents and launching and activating the electronic single employment contract platform for workers in private schools and kindergartens in Jordan. This latter achievement, together with the pilot of digitizing the payment of salaries for private teachers, supported through the Joint Programme, are interesting innovations to increase transparency in the care sector.
5. The WIMIN project succeeded in getting Lebanese business associations and national and sectoral trade unions to review their internal policies and practices from a gender perspective, develop action plans, and support key soft skills for 75 women in technical positions in Lebanese industry. Less progress has been made in establishing a women's fund to support women's careers and employability in the private sector and establishing a joint trade union platform to advocate for gender equality.
6. Part of the ILO's comparative advantage stems from its tripartite nature and from its normative mandate, which strengthens its position as a standard-setting organization and enables it to maintain an ongoing social dialogue with its constituents on labour issues from a gender perspective. Its reputation as a competent technical agency, its knowledge production, and its pragmatic and flexible approach to the workplace in advancing the gender equality agenda are some of the valuable features of the ILO in GEEW.
7. One issue on which there are divergent views within ILO ROAS is whether to broaden the range of actors with whom they work beyond their traditional constituencies, with business associations or sectoral trade unions that do not have formal representative positions in the tripartite structures, but also with non-governmental organizations or civil society organizations.

Q.7. What measurable outcomes has ILO achieved in its GEEW work,-either intended or unintended?

The evaluation found that the Joint Programme and the other selected interventions achieved several significant results²⁵.

²⁵ At the time of this evaluation, the Disability-Inclusive Climate Action project was just in its initial stages, so there is no report on results.

The Joint Programme

The Joint Programme's great success is due to normative changes. According to programme monitoring data, the Programme contributed to 23 normative policy and legislative amendments on gender equality between 2019 and 2023 in the three countries (including laws, articles, decisions, and decrees)—13 in Jordan, nine in Egypt, and one in the OPT—surpassing the overall planned target of achieving 12 normative changes at the end of 2023.

In Jordan, the Maternity Social Protection regulation under the Social Security Law, which enables working mothers to return to work while securing childcare for their children either at a childcare facility or at home, stands out as one of the key normative changes facilitated by the Programme and has been widely acknowledged²⁶. Other related normative changes are expanding maternity protection to cover maternity insurance, increasing maternity leave from 70 to 98 days, three-day paternity leave for private sector workers, and regulation and instructions for flexible work arrangements. Under the work on Convention 190, three new provisions were enacted to protect formal private sector employees from sexual harassment - Articles 29 and 69 of the Labour Law.

In Egypt, stakeholders mentioned the Ministerial Decrees (No. 43 and 44) issued by the Egyptian Ministry of Manpower, providing women with the right to work in any job or profession regardless of gender. The OPT efforts aimed to influence, from a gender equality perspective, relevant policy processes identified under the DWCP, particularly the development of the National Employment Strategy (2021-25) that started in 2021 and the reform of the national labour and social security laws, particularly, on the end-of-service indemnity, maternity protection, and work injury insurance. It is also worth mentioning the training provided by the ILO to the MoL labour inspectors cadres in Jordan and Egypt to conduct gender-sensitive labour inspections.

As highlighted in the midterm evaluation of the Programme, several approaches have contributed to these results, including the convening capacity of both ILO and UN Women; the technical expertise provided by the ILO for the revision of the labour laws from a gender perspective, the use of social dialogue with the tripartite to agree on proposed changes or the investment in building quality evidence. The ability of the national teams to leverage political support and commitments, particularly in Jordan, has been highlighted by several stakeholders. It should be noted, however, that the Joint Programme also built on some ongoing interventions of other ILO and UN Women programmes. While this is a good practice in terms of efficiency and sustainability and reflects the ILO's understanding of the long pathway to normative reform, it also makes it difficult to identify the specific contribution of the Joint Programme - and the ILO- vis a vis other interventions and actors.

There have also been several achievements in support of a more gender-responsive private sector (Joint Programme Outcome 2), as expressed by different stakeholders. In Jordan, the Joint Programme reinforced trade union members, particularly the GFJTU, to raise awareness and provide legal counsel through the establishment of a 'legal clinic' and to enhance their skills through tailored training for the inclusion of gender-sensitive provisions when

²⁶ ILO Jordan (2023): Decent Work for Women Country Programme. Biannual Report 2022-2023.

negotiating collective bargain agreements; in addition, in 2023 a Gender Participatory Audit (GAP) was done to advance in mainstreaming gender within the organization.

Support for the formation of the National Coalition 'Together on Boards'²⁷ led to a new amendment of the Companies Law to ensure women's representation on corporate boards, and, in collaboration with UN Women, a Financial Inclusion Awareness Promotion Platform was launched. Also, in support of the care economy, a business clinic was established in collaboration with the Association of Banks of Jordan (ABJ) to enhance access to credit schemes benefitting 24 kindergartens owned by women. Some innovations have also been implemented, such as digitalizing the payment of salaries for private teachers to increase transparency in wage structures in the private sector by piloting a digital tool (Logib) in coordination with GIZ. Training was also provided to women members of trade unions, including women with disability, to enhance their participation in collective bargain negotiations and to advance in identified gender priorities.

In the OPT, a substantive part of the achievements was gained by building the capacities of the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU), which developed a five-year gender equality strategy focused on strengthening the role of women trade unionists in the trade union operations and decision-making process. Building on the ILO-PGFTU's previous work for improving working conditions for women in an economic sector with high female participation, the Joint Programme contributed towards two sectoral negotiation committees, one to lead negotiation and collective bargaining in the private schools and kindergarten sector and another to work in the administrative occupations sub-sector²⁸. In 2023, the PGFTU's gender unit launched a complaints system through a free hotline aimed at receiving and documenting workplace violations and complaints, with a focus on cases of violence and harassment. This system consists of 14 complaint units located across the West Bank and managed by 14 women trade unionists. The launch was conducted with cost-sharing from the Joint Programme, and by June 2024, it had already received 828 complaints, successfully resolved 320 cases, and provided 985 legal consultations.

The Joint Programme also nurtured advocacy work, particularly by supporting the transversal national coalition to reform the Labour Law and others formed to raise awareness among workers in the private education sector about their rights. This mirrors previous work supported by the ILO in Jordan through the Stand Up with Teachers Campaign. On violence and harassment, the Joint Programme supported 2023 training on Conventions 190 and C-100 delivered by the Gender Academy of ILO's International Training Centre in Turin and a national legal expert.

In Egypt, the Joint Programme built on the existing partnership with the Human Resources (HR) gender academy of the Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI) to support the reform of corporate HR policies in favour of gender equality, surpassing the target of 10 companies to 54 in 2023, and provided capacity development for 14 companies that graduated from the

²⁷ The National Coalition "Together on Boards" emerged as a collaborative effort among the JNCW, the Jordan Forum for Business and Professional Women, the Business and Professional Women's Association, Women on Boards Jordan, and the ILO.

²⁸ Blended trainings were conducted to enhance its cadre capacities in various areas, including women's leadership, social dialogue, communication skills, collective bargaining, and trade union work.

HR gender academy training programme. However, the evaluation noted that other interventions have not gotten off the ground, particularly those aimed at supporting investment in child-care facilities in the workplace. Efforts to get companies to adopt formal codes of conduct on workplace violence and harassment failed, though the ILO made some advances in raising awareness within contacted companies.

Finally, the ILO has produced around 18 evidence-based knowledge products to inform and influence relevant policies and programmes, including policy analysis, briefs, manuals, and research and study reports, out of 50 products jointly produced under the Joint Programme. The evaluation notes the lack of a clear strategy for communicating and disseminating these knowledge products to target audiences such as national stakeholders, ILO staff, and other agencies and partners. Additionally, there was an absence of consistent branding for the products, sometimes making it challenging to identify their connection to the Joint Programme.

The Advancing Decent Work for Women to Achieve Economic Development (DW4W) Project – Jordan

The most significant achievements of the project, which focused on improving the national childcare system and protection of worker's rights in the private education sector, have been the actualization of the National Framework for Childcare Services 2023-25 action plan to ensure daycare facilities are both accessible and affordable for all working parents and the advocacy, capacity building and awareness raising activities around it. Another outcome gained through a collective bargaining agreement was introducing and activating the electronic unified work contract platform for workers in private schools and kindergartens in Jordan, which extended contract durations and mandated electronic wage transfers that have contributed to ensuring transparency, providing job security, and enhancing wage protection.

The ILO in Jordan has effectively created synergies between this project and the Joint Programme to enable a more sustainable implementation model. However, it is not always easy to identify which activity was supported by each intervention.

The Disability Inclusive Climate Action Project

While making progress, the project has encountered some delays and remains in its early implementation stages. An inception workshop has been held to raise awareness, gather insights, update participants on the project's scope and objectives, and consolidate input from key stakeholders, potential beneficiaries, and collaborators. Attendees included representatives from governmental bodies, disability advocates, specialists in gender and climate action, policy organizations, and environmental agencies.

At the time of the evaluation, an external consultant is conducting a desk review of existing policies on disability inclusion, climate change, and related areas. This review is complemented by ongoing discussions and interviews with identified stakeholders to pinpoint gaps in current disability inclusion practices, especially about climate action.

The WIMIN project

The WIMIN project in Lebanon succeeded in improving the structures and mechanisms of intermediary business associations and national trade unions to promote gender equality. Limited progress has been achieved in the other two expected outcomes, which were too ambitious for the project duration.

The two targeted employers' organizations -the Association of Lebanese Industrialists (ALI) and the Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB) and two workers organizations (CGTL and FENASOL) - reviewed their internal policies and practices through a Participatory Gender Audit (PGA) which resulted in action plan for each organization to advance gender equality. LLWB replicated the PGA exercise in three of its membership companies, and according to the evaluation interviews, the organization is ready to continue replicating the PGA in other companies. In the case of ALI, the association managed to conduct a gender mapping survey amongst its 800 members to assess the status of women across the hierarchy of the companies. Based on the results of the gender mapping and the gender audit, a women's task force was formed within ALI, though there has been some turnover among chosen members, hampering advancement. Additionally, 75 women from ALI member companies improved their skills by receiving mediation training, industrial dispute resolution, management, marketing, social media, and communications to better prepare them for promotion to senior positions within their companies. However, no progress was made in establishing a women's fund within ALI to support women employees to progress toward leadership roles and engendering companies' policies and practices.

Regarding the supported trade unions, an interviewed representative from FENASOL confirmed during KII that they are now better prepared to work on gender issues internally. However, the project's expected output to establish a 'Gender Equality in Trade Unions Advisory Network' advocating for better representation of women and gender equality within trade unions was not achieved as joint work between the supported trade unions was revealed to be challenging.

The WE-Care project

The early termination of the project only allowed the achievement of a small number of the planned outputs, mainly an assessment of the feasibility of care cooperatives and social solidarity enterprises and a mapping report on existing programs relevant to skills development in the context of household care. Though the project's immediate effect on ILO's work in Lebanon's care sector might be limited as the project did not continue, the experience might inform future work in ROAS on gender equality and cooperatives and on the skills development landscape in the context of the care economy.

The Strengthening Labour Market Governance project

As mentioned, the Kuwait-funded programme is a non-earmarked contribution oriented to directly support the ILO Decent Work Agenda in the OPT or through cost-sharing with other donor-funded activities²⁹. In the previous year, funds were allocated to support the labour

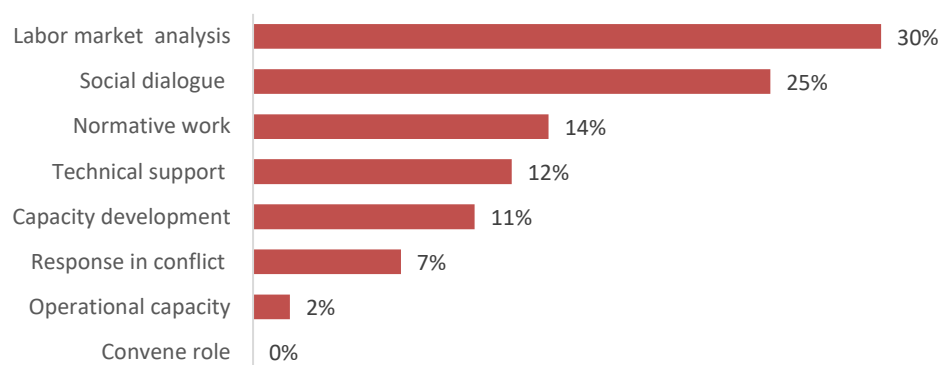
²⁹ One major initiative under the DWCP is a gender review of all labour-related legislation, which identified gaps that hinder female labour market participation. For instance, the lack of maternity insurance—where employers

law reform, with specific activities oriented to the gender outcomes established in the DWCP. Since October 2023 and the ensuing escalation of hostilities across Gaza and the West Bank, funding from Kuwait was reallocated to support emergency response efforts.

Q.7.1. What is the comparative advantage of ILO's work on GEEW, and how has it been considered more effective in achieving GEEW results in the Arab States?

The ILO is a development agency with distinctive characteristics that stem from its nature and mandate³⁰. These characteristics are the foundation of some of its comparative advantages and added value. There was an evident synergy amongst different stakeholders on the ILO's comparative advantages and added value in its work on GEEW, both from interviews with key stakeholders and survey results to ILO staff (Figure 1).

Figure 1. ILO's comparative advantages to advance GEEW as perceived by surveyed ILO staff



Firstly, consulted internal stakeholders consider the **ILO's labour standard-setting nature** a key strength. The ILO has a unique position as a global authority on labour standards, especially as they emanate from the consensus of ILO's constituencies. They serve as the measure for assessing countries' efforts to promote opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security, and dignity.

Together with this strong normative function, the ILO's **tripartite structure** and social dialogue are among its strongest assets and a comparative strength amongst all other international agencies. The ILO's approach to working with employers' and workers' representatives and governments through continuous engagement and social dialogue is perceived as an effective means to address gender equality sustainably and women's concerns in the Arab States and to overcome entrenched resistance.

bear the full cost of maternity leave—creates a preference for hiring men, leading to discriminatory practices. Based on these findings, the DWCP has propelled efforts to amend social security legislation, including maternity insurance, and improve pension systems to foster greater gender equality in the workplace.

³⁰ The ILO has a normative function that is expressed through the setting, adoption, promotion, ratification, supervision and implementation of international labour standards (Conventions, Recommendations and Protocols). This along with the non-normative functions of the ILO relate to the range of activities – including programmes and projects, as well as dialogue, research, communication and coordination – which seek to promote the implementation of the Decent Work Agenda, grounded in international labour standards, assisting constituents to make this concept a reality.

As repeatedly stated in interviews, the ILO is not a service provider and does not aim to replace partners. Instead, its goal is to support governments, employers, and trade unions to embed gender equality principles and priorities in their structures, policies, and practices. According to some ILO staff, this model is effective because it leverages social dialogue on gender equality, engaging its tripartite members, each with an equal voice from their respective perspectives. In this regard, 55% of respondents to the survey consider that the ILO ROAS is using 'mostly effectively' its tripartite structure to put gender equality on national labour agendas; 30% consider they are doing it 'partly effectively,' 10% 'none effectively,' and 5% 'very effectively.'

The ILO also has a strong regional reputation as a **competent technical agency**, and this expertise was widely considered an entry point for building relationships and tackling difficult issues around gender equality and women's rights at work. This expertise, particularly on labour issues, would also be a distinguishing feature of the ILO, as many other agencies and partners touch on areas covered by the ILO's mandate. For example, one senior official highlighted that what sets the ILO apart in 'the crowded field of care work' is its unique focus on the labour perspective of care work, a viewpoint that, according to the official, is frequently absent from the discussions and approaches of other agencies.

Some ILO staff have also suggested that the Organization's more **pragmatic and flexible approach to examining the workplace** and identifying opportunities to move forward on the gender agenda is a unique competitive advantage. While other agencies may focus on calling for general improvements on issues such as gender, migration, disability, compensation, or social protection, the ILO can take a more flexible approach, looking for specific and feasible solutions that are easier to apply and operationalize within given labour relations or working conditions.

Finally, some stakeholders highlighted the ILO's **knowledge products** as another organizational strength, noting they are widely utilized by governments, constituents, and other stakeholders and have informed and influenced both international and national agendas and policy recommendations. The International Training Centre of the ILO (ITCILO) was also recognized for offering valuable learning, knowledge-sharing, and institutional capacity-building programs for constituents and development partners.

Q.8. What are the main internal and external factors influencing ILO's ability to promote GEEW during the period under review?

The evaluation examined inhibiting and enabling factors through an integrated analysis of evaluation questions and triangulated the information with perceptions collected during KIIs and the ILO staff survey. These factors were further categorized into external versus internal factors and summarized in Table 5.

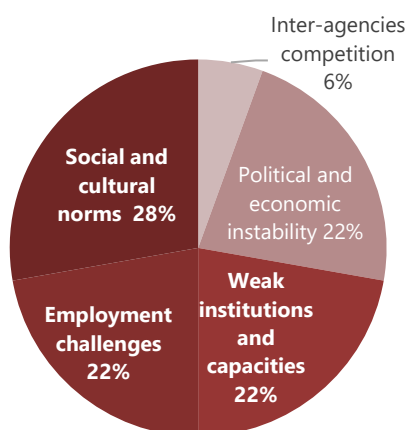
Table 5. Enabling and inhibiting internal and external factors

External factors – inhibiting	External factors – enabling
- Resistance to gender equality due to entrenched discriminatory social and gender norms. - Political, economic and humanitarian crises in some countries. - Weak institutions and low political will to advance on GEEW. - Severe employment challenges. - Lack of donor prioritization for GEEW - Weak trade union movement.	- Legitimacy because of the independent nature of the International Labour Standards. - High acceptability of technical support amongst ILO constituencies. - Ongoing support of some key donors to gender interventions. - National gender policies and machineries in some countries.
Internal factors – inhibiting	Internal factors – enabling
- Short term nature of projects. - Small number of staff with gender expertise both in countries and at regional office. - Insufficient data and gender analysis. - Inadequate communication strategy to put in value some achievements.	- Adaptive management capacity and dedicated ILO staff. - Strong technical capacity of teams to dialogue, from a technical point of view, on several aspects of the world of work and to mobilize expertise. - Growing internal priority to gender at policy and within own budget resources. - Enlargement of partnerships.

As noted in the relevance section, among the external barriers, stakeholders placed the greatest emphasis on social and gender norms and stereotypes about women's and men's roles that discriminate against women's access to employment and their ability to remain and progress in the labour market, followed by the context-specific challenges faced by several countries in the region. KIs and survey results frequently cited political and economic instability as another major impediment to progress on decent work for women. The region's ongoing conflicts, coupled with economic crises in countries like Lebanon and the OPT, create an environment where gender equality is often deprioritized in favour of immediate crisis response. While each country has its context-specific challenges, ILO staff highlighted the link between the political and economic instability across the region and the limited progress on decent work for women (Figure 2).

As for external enabling factors, some ILO staff highlighted the legitimacy of ILO's reliance on the ILS. Since ILS are established through a consensual process involving all member states, they are perceived as globally accepted rather than a 'Western agenda.' The acceptance of the ILO's support when needed by governments, employers, and workers to make the actionable and the sustained support received from key donors are some factors cited contributing to the ILO's ability to promote GEEW.

Figure 2. Main factors limiting ILO ROAS's ability to achieve its GEEW goals



Regarding internal factors hindering progress, some interviewees highlighted that the reduced duration of projects does not align well with the time needed to bring about lasting institutional and societal changes on gender. Some staff also mentioned limited gender mainstreaming in projects, from appraisal to implementation. Communication deficits within ILO ROAS were also raised, particularly when conveying complex issues - such as the dimensions of the gender pay gap - and effectively presenting progress. Conversely, the adaptive management capacity of ILO staff and the strong technical expertise of the teams are seen as significant internal progress enablers. Some of these issues are discussed in more detail in the efficiency section.

Finally, interviews with various ILO staff revealed diverging views on the effectiveness of the partnership with constituencies to advance gender equality and the pertinence of expanding partnerships beyond its traditional constituencies for advancing transformative gender practices. The evaluation noted an ongoing debate regarding collaboration with non-traditional partners, such as sector-specific business associations, small women's organizations, and smaller or specialized trade unions or workers' groups. While these groups may not hold formal representation or play major roles in tripartite dialogue, some staff believe they could serve as more effective and committed allies in advancing the gender equality agenda. This debate also extends to the suitability of working with nonprofit organizations or NGOs.

Regarding the work with trade unions, some staff believe that expanding partnerships to include new groups could divert resources away from traditional trade unions, urgently needing support to undergo deep reforms to make unions more democratic, professional, better organized, and gender-sensitive. According to this view, for the ILO's support to be effective and sustainable, it should focus on helping trade unions restructure their organizational frameworks—amending bylaws, strategies, and operational practices to promote gender equality—before considering broader partnerships.

On the other hand, some staff highlighted the limitations of working exclusively with established trade unions that hold formal representation within the tripartite system at the country level. They argue that these unions may not adequately represent the broader needs of workers, as they can become detached from their constituencies, co-opted by political or economic interests, or simply inefficient. While in Jordan, wider partnerships have already

been formed under the Joint Programme and the DW4W project, in other countries, such as Yemen and Lebanon, the evaluation gathered opinions pointing to the perceived ineffectiveness of some of these unions and calls for engaging more directly with smaller or sectoral unions—such as those representing nursery workers or teachers—that may be more responsive to grassroots needs. Proponents of this approach suggest that these smaller organizations could, sometimes, offer more effective pathways for promoting gender equality and other social objectives.

While the ILO has globally committed to diversifying its partnerships³¹ -collaborating more with NGOs, the private sector, and other stakeholders beyond its traditional tripartite constituents-there seems to be less consensus in the Arab States office. The evaluation also observed differing views on the perceived role of non-profit organizations and NGOs in advancing GEEW. For example, ILO ROAS has partnered with SADAQA since 2016 under the DW4W project, and the partnership continues today³². The Disability-Inclusive Climate Action project is also working with national non-profits such as Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs). However, the evaluation found that several ILO staff view NGOs in the Arab States primarily as service providers and question the sustainability of relying on them. According to these staff members, working with NGOs may not be a viable long-term strategy, as the work developed through these partnerships often lacks lasting impact.

4.4. EFFICIENCY

This section assesses the degree to which the ILO ROAS efficiently uses its resources. It explores how well the ILO ensures that GEEW-focused projects and programmes are designed and delivered cost-efficiently, which processes are working well, and why. The section ends by analysing the extent to which gender-sensitive budgeting is considered and implemented in relevant GEEW-oriented initiatives.

KEY FINDINGS

1. The review of project documentation shows that some good practices are applied in terms of gender mainstreaming in the design of sampled and non-sampled projects and programmes. However, several of the interventions reviewed lacked a comprehensive gender analysis and gender results and indicators.
2. The ILO ROAS gender team, although small, has demonstrated strong commitment and high performance and has been able to operate as a network. However, current staffing levels leave many country offices without in-country specialist staff.
3. Internal coordination between different projects was identified as an area for improvement to increase synergies between projects. In terms of achieving results within the intended timeframe, most of the interventions reviewed faced delays in project start, often resulting in no-cost extensions.

³¹ <https://www.ilo.org/partnering-development/civil-society-ilo-partnership/relations-ngos>

³² <https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/sadaqa-ilo-launch-initiative-advance-gender-equality-workplace-jordan>

4. Overall, the sampled interventions would have benefited from more robust monitoring frameworks and better-designed data collection systems to establish baselines and monitor performance. Lack of data and statistics on both the supply and demand side in the region is widespread, but more evident in the care economy.
5. Communication between the ILO and UN Women improved in the last phase of implementation of the Joint Programme leading to more collaboration in all the territories. However, these efforts came late and were not enough to overcome the siloed nature and functioning of the partnership.
6. Almost sixty percent of the interventions that identified gender as a cross-cutting priority, and for which sufficient budgetary information was available, allocated between 3% and 14% of their total budget to activities specifically targeting women or addressing gender gaps. However, the budget for gender-specific actions should not be viewed in isolation. It must be assessed within the broader context of gender mainstreaming and evaluated based on the actual results of promoting gender equality through the intervention.
7. Cost-sharing across projects, staff cost thresholds, and joint contract revision by different departments are among the main strategies identified that contributed to cost efficiency. Still, the evaluation could not identify any specific alternative strategy for implementing the activities of the sampled projects that would have been more cost-effective while achieving similar results.

Q.9. To what extent and how is the ILO ensuring that GEEW-focused projects/programmes are designed and delivered cost-efficiently to achieve GEEW results?

Q.9.1. What processes are working well and why?

Design of projects

Concerning the design of projects, the review of project documentation reveals that some good practices are being applied in mainstreaming gender equality across the design of sampled and non-sampled GEEW-oriented projects and programmes. For example, the SIDA-funded project in Lebanon, 'Promoting decent jobs for Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees' which has gender as a cross-cutting priority, has transitioned from a standalone generic gender analysis to integrating gender considerations into the analyses and strategies of different project components to ensuring that gender considerations were integrated from sector selection to activity implementation and has also planned for building the capacities of partners and for gender mainstreaming the project monitoring tools.

Another good example is the Multi-agency Programme 'Supporting Resilient Livelihoods, Food Security and Climate Adaptation Joint Programme (ERRY III)', also with a GEM value 2, that has developed a gender strategy with a gender action plan. The design of activities has been informed by gender analysis to better respond to the challenges that women face. The programme has adopted actions to sensitize and train partners in gender-sensitive monitoring and set specific targets that emphasize women's economic and social, and

decision-making empowerment, leading to some gender-sensitive and transformative results³³.

However, **gender mainstreaming is not widespread**, as it has already been raised in previous evaluations³⁴. As noted in the relevance section, a closer review of the portfolio of GEEW-oriented interventions with GEM marker 2 reveals that several lack a comprehensive gender analysis, and gender-sensitive results and indicators are missing beyond basic gender target disaggregation. In this regard, one interviewed ILO staff member noted that while there are requirements at the HQ level, they are not strongly enforced. Consequently, gender considerations in project proposals are often included superficially rather than thoroughly integrated at the results, indicator, target, and data disaggregation levels.

Within the ILO project cycle, the appraisal of project proposals, including the assessment of the gender dimension, is carried out by several staff based on an appraisal checklist. This process ensures that the project meets high design and technical standards and aligns with ILO's objectives and priorities before submission to a funding partner³⁵. At this stage, the gender marker code provided by the proposal author is checked. However, according to a few staff members, this stage is perceived as a final step and given the large number of proposals and the limited time available, it can be challenging to provide adequate guidance. Furthermore, it is unclear what the outcome is for proposals that do not meet the required gender criteria³⁶. This was also echoed by staff who corroborate that projects often reach this phase after negotiations between ILO departments and the government or social partners have already been completed. If gender is not identified as a priority by the ILO department, government or project promoters at this stage, it may be omitted or only mentioned in passing in the relevant gender section.

Human resources

In terms of human resources available, the evaluation noted the significant efforts, high level of output, and strong engagement demonstrated by the dedicated ILO ROAS gender team, indicating that the ILO GEEW work has been efficient. It must be noted that the **ILO ROAS gender team is small**. At the regional level, the Senior Gender Regional advisor post was vacant for over a year, during which the GEDI department at HQ provided expertise and support. At the country level, the ILO office in Jordan is the most well-staffed, with one senior gender expert supported by two technical staff members. This office is not only responsible for implementing the country's gender portfolio but has also served as regional coordinator of the ILO's overall implementation of the Joint Programme. In Lebanon, there was, until early 2024, a gender and migration specialist in addition to the project manager responsible for the WIMIN project, while the OPT CO has benefitted from the former regional gender advisor taking on the role of OPT Country coordinator.

³³ UNDP Yemen (2024) Mid Term Review Supporting Resilient Livelihoods, Food Security, and Climate Adaptation in Yemen (ERRY III). Draft version August 2024.

³⁴ See ILO (2021): High-level independent evaluation of ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts, 2016–21. And also, MOPAN (2021): MOPAN Assessment Report International Labour Organization. 2020 Assessment Cycle.

³⁵ ILO (2021): Development Cooperation: Internal Governance Manual.

³⁶ ILO (2022): ILO High Level Gender thematic evaluation 2016-2021.

The ROAS gender team has shown adaptive management capacity and has operated as a network to prioritize gender equality in these countries and foster cross-country learning. However, some team members often have other work areas and responsibilities, and the current approach has limited in-country expertise to a few offices. Countries like Iraq, Yemen, Syria, and the Gulf states lack dedicated gender technical resources aside from the support the regional specialist can provide.

Some in-country staff noted that the limited availability of ROAS technical support staff impacted timely assistance, not only for gender-specific needs. The review of the 19 non-sampled projects further confirms this, as it showed that at least three projects in Lebanon had to budget for external gender support, either in the form of consultancy or temporary support for the project duration³⁷.

Planning and implementation

At the operational level, some interviewed ILO staff suggested **the need for greater coordination and collaboration between different projects** to assess policy options and adopt common approaches, thereby increasing synergies between projects. With regards to the Joint Programme, and, the ILO's Regional coordinator, based in the Amman office, did not have direct oversight over the program managers in OPT and Egypt due to the internal reporting structure within the ILO. While collaboration and coordination occurred regularly, formal decision-making remained within the respective country offices.

ILO's interventions in-countries often address similar issues—such as working hours, wages, or maternity leave, for example—yet they often operate in specific contexts not necessarily connected. It was noted that there is a tendency to "start initiatives from scratch" rather than building on previous efforts. Some interviewed staff emphasized the need to evaluate past progress, assess the current situation, and explore future possibilities while also recognizing the unique strengths of different projects in addressing specific areas. For example, the Joint Programme in Jordan has facilitated progressive regulations related to childcare access and services for both men and women. However, due to some loopholes in the new regulations, some economic sectors, such as the garment industry, would have exploited them to their advantage to reduce childcare benefits for their workers. Broader participation during discussions would have helped identify and address these issues, particularly given the tendency of employers to minimize workers' benefits. Such involvement contributed to a more balanced outcome of the legislative changes.

When looking at the extent of the results achieved in the intended timeframe, **most of the reviewed interventions experienced delays in the project's start, often leading to no-cost extensions**. The most cited typical reasons for project delays have been slow internal procedures. The additional preparatory work and coordination that entails multiagency initiatives has also been mentioned as a factor for the Joint Programme and for the Disability-Inclusive Climate Action project. However, it can also be related to the extent to which set timeframes, at least for some projects such as the WE-Care or WIMIN, are realistic given the ambition of the expected changes and the fact that external factors and changes are quite

³⁷ The identified projects are: 'The Intensive Infrastructure Programme Phase V project'; 'the Promotion of Decent Jobs for Lebanese Host Communities and Syrian Refugees' project and the 'Promoting decent jobs for Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees' project.

likely. In conflict-affected countries such as Yemen, contracting, insurance, and security issues were mentioned as contributing to project delays.

In terms of internal efficiency, internal coordination was identified as the top area needing improvement in the survey results, with 19% of respondents highlighting it as a priority. This is closely followed by strategic planning and managing partnerships, each at 17%. In-house technical expertise and financial resources were also notable areas of concern, each cited by 15% of respondents, reflecting a need for more specialized knowledge and funding to effectively support GEEW initiatives (Figure 3).

Figure 3. Areas the ILO ROAS needs to improve the most for implementing ILO's GEEW policy



Monitoring procedures

Some of the analysed interventions would have benefitted from more rigorous monitoring and risk management, as was referred to in the relevance section. **The analysis of the sampled interventions shows different levels of monitoring systems for tracking progress on gender outputs and outcomes**, as follows:

- The Joint Programme deployed a comprehensive performance framework that was externally developed and supported by monitoring personnel throughout the implementation. However, as raised by the midterm evaluation, it presented some limitations, such as too many indicators at the output level and missing baseline and outcome-level data for two of the six outcome indicators.
- The DW4W project set a monitoring framework with some baseline values, though indicators were defined at the activity level, and no indicators were proposed at the output or outcome level, making it more difficult to assess the extent to which results have been achieved as initially expected. The project team has submitted progress reports being the progress data mainly self-reported, while connection to the established monitoring framework could have been made more explicit.
- Both the WIMIN and the WE-Care projects lacked a well-developed monitoring framework. The WIMIN project did not include indicators or a baseline. The WE-Care project included targets, but several were formulated too vaguely, making it difficult

to measure or unrealistic to achieve in the given time frame³⁸. In the case of WIMIN, however, all stakeholders consulted highlighted the continuous follow-up provided by the ILO team to project implementation -for example, to cascading training- and from technical experts from ROAS.

- There is no direct monitoring of the Strengthening Labour Market Governance project in the OPT, but it is part of the DWCP monitoring framework. Conversely, the Disability-Inclusive Climate Action project developed a comprehensive monitoring framework with specific metrics to monitor the project progress in the three countries. Though it is unclear to what extent a gender analysis has informed the project design, some gender-sensitive indicators and the use of sex-disaggregated data are included in the project's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework to measure progress.

Reporting procedures

Concerning reporting, the Joint Programme has been submitting annual reports. At the same time, for the two RBSA interventions in Lebanon and the Norwegian project in Jordan, the evaluation has had access to the final reports and some evidence – such as the Gender Participatory Audits (GAP), studies, and other means of verification. However, the evaluation has not identified within ILO ROAS an established process for data collection, validation, reporting, and storage for the mentioned interventions.

It is low the availability of up-to-date gender disaggregated labour market data and statistics including on both the supply and demand sides of the labour market to inform project design better³⁹. According to interviews with ILO staff, many countries do not have adequate gender-disaggregated data, or data is collected infrequently, particularly in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, Iraq, and the OPT, due to operational difficulties and limited governmental priority⁴⁰. **Lack of data and statistics on both the supply and demand side is widespread but more evident in the care economy**, where, for example, the social and economic value of unpaid care work performed by women is not formally recognized in official statistics⁴¹.

Operationalization of partnerships

Regarding the operationalization of partnerships with other agencies, and according to interviews with different stakeholders, **collaboration between the ILO and UN Women improved in the last phase of implementation of the Joint Programme with more**

³⁸ For example, one of the two indicators for the outcome 1 of the WE-Care project stands as “An increase in decent work on the care sector through the direct and indirect jobs created by the care cooperative or other organizations linked to the solidarity economy” while others from outcome 2 were ‘Changes to policies on care work and cooperatives through policy inputs provided by organized care workers focus on working conditions in the care sector challenging the exploitation in home based care work and stigma around domestic work’.

³⁹ ILO (2024): Arab States Employment and Social Outlook – Trends 2024.

⁴⁰ A study by World Bank in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq pointed to the difficulties in monitoring basic data related to key outcomes such as the female labour participation and others on participation of females as micro entrepreneurs related to informal a microenterprise sector in these three countries on a regular basis was not possible. World Bank (2020): Women's economic participation in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon. *Report n=0 AUS0001349 State of the Mashreq Women Flagship program 1*.

⁴¹ In Mashreq countries, the social and economic value of unpaid care work performed by women is not recognized formally in official statistics. World Bank -IFC (2023): *Who Cares? Care work and Women's Labor Market Outcomes in Iraq, Jordan and Lebanon*. Mashreq Gender Facility (MGF).

communication and physical meetings and briefings between the partners taking place. However, there is insufficient evidence to suggest that the Programme effectively addressed the compartmentalized way the partnership was designed and functioned, as previously mentioned and highlighted by the midterm evaluation of the Programme. With regards to the Disability-Inclusive Climate Action project, while the project is in its early stages, interviews revealed that some partners were eager for the ILO's full involvement to orient the project's approach to just transition and support for inclusive job creation in the green economy for people with disabilities, as planned.

Nonetheless, partnering with other organizations has proven a good strategy for ensuring gender mainstreaming in other endeavours. In Yemen, where ILO has joint efforts with FAO, UNDP, and WFP to implement the ERRY III programme, close collaboration has facilitated the leverage of the different additional values of each partner agency. For example, ILO conducted ToT to provide skills to women business owners for improving their business. UNDP also supported by providing access to grants or, in coordination with FAO, led the implementation of the ILO's gender-sensitive methodology for a value chain development assessment.

At the global level, the ILO has prioritized strengthening the communication function, adopting a more strategic approach, and improving its visibility. Yet, some interviewed staff expressed the need to reinforce external communication at ILO ROAS. It is perceived as weak and would not sufficiently highlight or adequately explain some of the outputs achieved—research, project, or programme achievements—to its audiences.

Economic efficiency

The evaluation could not identify any specific alternative strategy for implementing the activities of the sampled projects that would have been more cost-effective while achieving results. Interviews with some ILO staff revealed several internal control mechanisms - such as the review of contracts by all departments involved - to increase expenditure efficiency. For the sampled interventions, the cost-sharing of some activities between the Joint Programme and the DW4W for supporting the private sector in health and education resulted in some efficiency gains. For RBSA-funded projects, such as the WIMIN and WE-Care, the threshold for internal staff costs is 30% of the total budget to further contribute to efficiency, though in the case of the WE-Care, this threshold was surpassed.

Q.9.2. To what extent is gender-sensitive budgeting considered and implemented in relevant GEEW initiatives?

Gender-sensitive budgeting is inherently linked to the broader gender mainstreaming process, as it cannot be fully understood or effectively implemented in isolation. While a complete assessment of the extent to which gender-sensitive budgeting is considered and implemented in relevant GEEW initiatives is beyond the scope of the evaluation, the evaluation has aimed to track financial support for gender equality by exploring the extent to which women and/or gender-oriented activities have been included in the budgets of both sampled and non-sampled interventions that have a GEM value of 2.

The evaluation performed a document review of the budgetary information of the two sampled interventions and the 18 non-sampled projects coded with a GEM marker 2. Regarding the sampled projects, the review did not find a specific budget or gender-related activity in the Disability Inclusive Climate Action project budget, nor was it possible to conduct an analysis for the non-earmarked Kuwaiti contribution to the OPT.

Six of the non-sampled projects have not been feasible to conduct a budget gender sensitivity analysis⁴². For four projects, the available budgetary information only provided data on operational expenses, including salaries of ILO staff, other services provided by consultancies, utilities, materials, and overhead costs. Regarding the two projects, the budget included only the broad objectives as line items.

For the other 12 interventions, the available financial programming information was presented according to expenditure by activities linked to expected outputs and outcomes, allowing for a review of the extent to which the budget includes women-targeted and/or gender-sensitive costed actions. Seven out of 12 projects (58% of the interventions providing sufficient budget information) have some costed activities specifically oriented to fill identified gender gaps such as unequal access of women to skills development or provision of tailored short-term employment opportunities and, hence, costing training sessions, financial literacy programs, and business support services amongst others. The evaluation team reviewed the budget by identifying specific budget lines for gender-focused activities and estimated the percentage of the total budget dedicated to gender-sensitive initiatives. **Overall, the percentage of the total budget targeting women or gender equality-oriented measures in the interventions ranges between 3% and 14% of the total budget.**

These figures, however, cannot be interpreted in isolation but as part of a broader analysis that should address the extent to which gender analysis has been used to identify inequalities, how this analysis has informed the design of objectives and results, and whether these have been translated into costed interventions, and, ultimately, whether the intervention has reduced, exacerbated or left gender inequalities unchanged.

4.5. ORIENTATION TO IMPACT

This section explores the contribution of the GEEW work in the Arab States to long-term positive impacts, specifically focusing on the sampled interventions. The section also responds to the evaluation questions concerning how ILO constituencies perceived achievements and the extent to which ILO GEEW work has contributed to advancing sustainable development objectives in the three country case studies.

⁴² Projects that do not provide enough budgetary information for performing a gender analysis of the budget are: (JOR/17/02/IBR) Support to the MSSRP to assess, monitor and increase the labour-intensity of its capital investments; (JOR/19/04/UNE) Decent Jobs for Cultural Heritage; (JOR/20/04/MUL) Estima++ Fund – Formalization and Extension of Coverage; (JOR/22/03/DEU) Employment through Labour Intensive Infrastructure Programme in Jordan - Phase VI; (JOR/23/54/NLD) PROSPECTS – Improving Prospects for Host Communities and Forcibly Displaced Persons in Jordan (Phase 2) and (LBN/20/03/DEU) Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme in Lebanon - Phase IV.

KEY FINDINGS

1. The ILO's interventions have contributed to strengthening the region's legal, policy, and institutional framework on gender equality and work, particularly in Jordan and the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT). This contribution reflects the ILO's normative agenda. Significant reforms, amendments, and new legislation or measures have been made on various issues, including equal pay, maternity protection, childcare, protection from violence, and sexual harassment. Therefore, the ILO's primary impact is its emphasis on structural reforms and policies related to decent work. However, assessing the long-term gender impact of these measures will require a more extended time frame as they pertain to labour markets, labour rights, and ultimately changes in gender norms.
2. Some legal provisions have been translated into tangible improvements in working conditions and labour rights for women, especially in feminized sectors like childcare and education. The promotion of more gender-equal workplaces has also been supported by efforts to achieve a more balanced representation of women in decision-making bodies in the private sector, although the results have been modest. More significant progress has been achieved in mainstreaming gender in trade unions in the OPT, Jordan, and Lebanon, and particularly in building the capacities of women unionists to participate in social dialogue.
3. In the care economy, alongside the legal reforms, there have been some achievements in improving the conditions under which care services operate and in expanding the availability of these services in countries such as Jordan.

Q.10 How do the ILO GEEW-related interventions contribute to fostering long-term positive impacts in the Arab States? Q.10.1 What are the key progress or achievements on gender equality, discrimination, and inclusion, as perceived or expressed by ILO constituencies?

Overall, the ILO ROAS, through its gender-focused interventions, has achieved gender-responsive and gender-transformative outcomes, fostering opportunities for long-term impact. On the one hand, gender-responsive results have ensured that some labour legislation and policies are more inclusive and sensitive to the specific needs of women, addressing workforce disparities and improving conditions for women within existing systems. On the other hand, some interventions have led to gender-transformative outcomes, promoting more equitable participation of women in leadership roles, strengthening labour rights, and creating more inclusive work environments by challenging deep-rooted gender norms and power dynamics.

Policy development and law reform

As a key player in the world of work, the ILO's primary contribution to advance the GEEW agenda should be understood in terms of its emphasis on structural reforms and policies related to decent work. In this regard, the Joint Programme has contributed to strengthening the legal, policy, and institutional framework in favour of women's rights in the three countries where it has been implemented, reflecting ILO's normative agenda. There have been reforms, amendments, and new legislation or measures on equal pay, maternity protection, childcare, and protection from violence and sexual harassment. In KIIIs with

various government partners in both Jordan and the OPT, there was a strong appreciation of the Programme's contribution to improving significant aspects of the labour legislation.

According to consulted stakeholders, several of these legal and policy reforms facilitated by the Programme can contribute to change on a national scale. The evaluation notes, however, that while certain effects can be measured relatively quickly, such as the number of policies formally adopted, evaluating the long-term gender impact of these measures will require a more extended time frame as they pertain to labour markets, labour rights, and ultimately changes in gender norms.

Also, in the realm of preventing violence and harassment, ILO support has brought Iraqi workplace policies up to Convention 190 standards. Government commitment to its ratification provides a solid basis for wider impact. Whether this law has an on-the-ground impact remains to be seen, and improving tripartite ownership and awareness of the reform will be essential to driving the impact.

Advancing workers' rights

The Joint Programme and the DW4W project have contributed to addressing some women's practical needs by improving better working conditions and labour rights for women, focusing on highly feminized sectors such as childcare and education through the work on equal pay. Structural change has been promoted by pushing for a more balanced representation of women in decision-making bodies in the private sector – in alliance with Women Boards in Jordan, for example- and, above all, supporting women participating in social dialogue: women's political voice within trade unions have improved as they have taken more leadership roles and gender equality concerns are better placed now on the trade unions agenda in some countries of the region. In the OPT, for example, the Joint Programme contributed to the establishment of a quota of 30% for women in leadership positions in the trade union movement. There was optimism amongst partners that this ILO support would lead to a significant impact in the future.

The Joint Programme has promoted some innovations, such as the 'Women in sports' intervention in Jordan, which aimed to tackle gender employment segregation⁴³. Though limited in numbers, the project has impacted the establishment of new role models and networks by removing the stigma associated with women's participation in a non-traditional sector and particularly by enlarging trainees' aspirations regarding their choice of employment and future roles as professionals.

Outside the sample interventions, some of the work developed around the Better Work programme in Jordan has brought some innovation by raising awareness and placing the accessibility of mental health services for workers in Jordan's garment sector, mostly young migrant women, in the agenda related to workplace conditions. The project design responds to challenges that women face in their mental wellbeing – that led to an increased number of suicides of workers within the industry- and as such, is gender-responsive. However, it

⁴³ Implemented over three years by a private organization (Mudarrib) with support from ILO through the Joint Programme and the Ministry of Youth, the intervention was aimed at improving the professional qualifications of graduated women in the sports field by specialized training and international certification and supporting their employability through internships and coaching with the sports industry in the country

does not specifically aim to transform unequal gender relations. According to ILO staff involved in the project, the most significant change has been the legal inclusion of mental health issues in the workplace and the recognition of psychosocial hazards as a risk factor in industrial sectors, including the garment one.

A second intervention, also aligned with the Better Work program, is already raising women's workers' awareness of gender-based violence and available grievance redress mechanisms⁴⁶ Raising women's voices at the factory and trade union level can lead to gender-transformative outcomes, and the development of a grievance procedure might have a lasting impact on improving workplace practices.

ILO ROAS has also focused on driving transformational change to advance some GEEW priorities, such as promoting women's leadership, increasing women's representation and participation in workers and professional associations, and protecting, recognizing, and rewarding care work. This approach has taken the form of small-scale, or pilot projects financed by ILO's financial resources designed to demonstrate proof of concept or test new approaches. The RBSA-funded interventions in Lebanon (WIMIN and WE Care) are examples of this approach. These projects did not aim to reach large numbers but to serve as a foundation for broader change and enable other development actors to replicate and achieve larger-scale impact.

The WIMIN project has contributed to raising awareness of the need to increase women's representation at senior and executive management levels in both the private sectors and trade unions, setting the framework, through gender audits and action plans- for challenging the 'glass ceiling' that limit women's representation in decision-making positions. However, the project's transformative impact has been identified mostly at the individual level. Interviews with women who were training beneficiaries allowed them to appreciate how the capacity-building program has increased their confidence and assertiveness in relating to male employers by fostering their socio-emotional skills to negotiate existing gender norms within their companies.

Gender-responsive labour market governance

Capacity building of constituents is a core component in the ILO's GEEW objectives and interventions. All sampled interventions demonstrate ILO's work with tripartite partners to build capacity at the institutional level. For example, under the Joint Programme, gender-sensitive training provided to MoL labour inspectors' cadres in both Jordan and Egypt can improve working conditions by ensuring that inspectors recognize and address gender-specific issues like discrimination, harassment, and unequal pay, fostering a more inclusive and fairer workplace. In Egypt, capacity-building efforts were supported by the participatory development of a new tool. Also, gender participatory audits and tailored training have benefited women and men cadres within trade unions and federations in Jordan, Lebanon, and OPT. Also, the knowledge, expertise, and tools to establish gender-responsive policies at work transferred by the Programme to the Human Resources Academy hosted by the Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI) might ensure the continuation of intervention.

Skill Development in the Care Economy

As mentioned, the ILO ROAS work on the care economy needs further consideration as care work is a complex concept within the region, and the approach pursued by the WE-Care project by promoting the value of women domestic workers' care work and equal and collective sharing of unpaid care and household, though gender transformative, have resulted somewhat ahead of context. Other actions implemented, such as the establishment of nurseries in private and public organizations under the Joint Programme in Jordan and the OPT, and the work developed to improve the working conditions of care workers in the education and health sectors without fundamentally changing gender norms, are gender-responsive measures that address women's practical needs and are a more acceptable place to begin to change knowledge, attitudes, behaviour or social norms around care work.

Finally, the desk review of the six available midterm reviews or evaluation reports of the 18 non-sampled interventions with a GEM marker 2 shows mixed results. Four of the five evaluated initiatives were oriented to provide both women and men with short-term training and employment opportunities. A substantial portion of the results of the interventions focused on meeting or exceeding the target of 30% of women benefiting from the interventions. As such, several results have been 'gender targeted,' and interventions might have had some impact on providing women with employment opportunities.

Some programs have been more responsive to the specific needs of women, emphasizing the need to be fair and equitable in both process and outcomes⁴⁴. In Jordan, the project 'Towards an inclusive national social protection system and accelerating decent job opportunities for Syrians and vulnerable Jordanians' used female outreach officers to help bridge cultural gaps with Syrian refugees and also implemented measures to address practical barriers like transportation and, childcare and the project. Also in Jordan, the project 'Support to the MSSRP to assess, monitor and increase the labour intensity of its capital investments' included equal pay for men, women, PwD, and Syrian refugees; advocated for increased protection of female workers through family care provision; and included gender experts from municipalities in project orientation sessions. In Lebanon, the project 'Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme in Lebanon- Phase V' evaluation mentioned the development of a gender strategy following ILO guidelines for gender-responsive EIIPs works.

However, as raised by some of the evaluations, the limited budget allocation, the absence of a comprehensive gender strategy, and inconsistent feedback mechanisms hindered their ability to fully achieve transformative gender outcomes. The projects focused more on participation and access rather than transforming gender roles and addressing deeper structural issues that affect women's empowerment in the workforce.

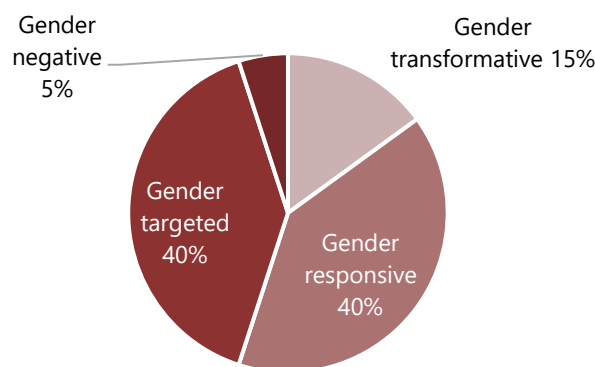
However, some interventions contribute to a more lasting and transformational impact. The EERRY III Project in Yemen has demonstrated gender-transformative outcomes in certain areas, such as women's engagement in solar energy technologies and participation in

⁴⁴ Some of the identified projects are JOR/20/01/EUR 'Towards an inclusive national social protection system and accelerating decent job opportunities for Syrians and vulnerable Jordanians' and LBN/22/03/DEU 'Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme in Lebanon- Phase V' and JOR/17/02/IBR Support to the MSSRP to assess, monitor and increase the labour-intensity of its capital investments

community dialogues for conflict resolution⁴⁵. According to the programme midterm report, women have been pioneers in promoting solar energy in some locations, showing their ability to manage solar systems as successful businesses. Both male and female mediators have been trained to resolve conflicts in the local community, and women have been influential in the community dialogues, being treated with respect.

Overall, the above-mentioned results are broadly reflected in the ILO staff perception of the type of results achieved by ILO ROAS in GEEW: 40% of respondents consider them to be either responsive or targeted; 15% were gender transformative, while 5% pointed out that ILO's results had a negative outcome (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Perceived type of GEEW results achieved by ILO ROAS



Q.11. To what extent have the project outcomes contributed to advancing sustainable development objectives (as per UNSDCF, similar UN programming frameworks, national sustainable development plans, and SDGs)?

Overall, the programme and projects outcomes have contributed to advancing sustainable development objectives, particularly in alignment with UNSDCF and national development plans in all countries. By promoting gender equality and enhancing workers' rights, the interventions have contributed to key SDG targets related to decent work (SDG 8), particularly Target 8.5 "Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men with equal pay and equal value" and Target 8.8 "Protect labour rights and secure working environments for all workers" and to gender equality (SDG 5) target 5.4 which calls for "recognizing and valuing unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of different services and promote different measures."

In Jordan, the Joint Programme and the DW4W project have contributed to UNSDCF (2023-2027) priority 1 on inclusive green growth and decent work, the Jordan National Economic Modernisation Vision 2022, and the National Strategy for Women (2020-2025) through their support of more equitable legal and policy reforms.

⁴⁵ YEM/21/01/UNDP Enhancing Rural Resilience in Yemen Phase III (ERRY III): Supporting Resilient Livelihoods and Food Security in Yemen

In the OPT, the Joint Programme and the Labour Market Strengthening project have supported the UNSDCF 2023-2025, which prioritizes inclusive economic opportunities and social services for vulnerable groups through proposed amendments to the Palestinian Labour Law and gender-sensitive analysis as well as through the strengthening of social dialogue. Both interventions have also contributed to the ILO's efforts since November 2023 to mitigate the impact of the Gaza crisis on the economy, labour market and workers, particularly in the West Bank.

In Egypt, the ILO contributed through the Joint Programme to the UNSDCF (2023-2025) Outcome 2, which prioritizes inclusive economic opportunities and sustainable economic development by reforming the legal framework to increase women's employability and by building the capacities for a gender-responsive labour inspection.

In Lebanon, the WIMIN project, with its focus on improving women's leadership and employability, has supported the UNSDCF's (2023-2025) priorities, particularly its objective to achieve a resilient and competitive productive sector for improved and inclusive income and livelihood opportunities.

4.6. SUSTAINABILITY

This section explores the extent to which the ILO's work on GEEW is sustainable and, specifically, the extent to which measures have been considered to ensure the sustainability of the sampled GEEW-related intervention outcomes.

KEY FINDINGS

1. Neither the Joint Programme nor the DW4W project had an explicit sustainability/transition strategy. However, their strong emphasis on legal reform linked to the ILO's normative function has contributed to sustainability by establishing a policy framework for future interventions. Furthermore, incorporating some of their actions into the national planning frameworks in Jordan would facilitate ownership of the proposed reforms.
2. The ILO's approach to coalition-building with governmental and civil society actors enhances the sustainability of achieved results. Both the Joint Programme and the DW4W project have fostered national coalitions, such as the National Committees for Pay Equity and the Technical Committee for Automation of the unified contract for workers in the private education sector.
3. Some initiatives, such as the Logib tool or the unified contract system for teachers in the private sector, offer scalability and/or transfer opportunities to other sectors. On the other hand, some initiatives implemented under the Joint Programme, such as skills building for women in sports or the business clinic supporting female kindergarten owners, face sustainability challenges if they are not institutionalized.
4. The predictability of commitments over time is a key element in ensuring the long-term success of initiatives. The Norwegian government's sustained commitment through the

DW4W project has played a key role in supporting reforming workplace policies in the health and education sectors.

5. The WIMIN project sustainability strategy revolved around the supported employers and business membership organizations that would establish their sustainability strategy. However, while the project demonstrated the benefits of supporting women's advancement in the workplace—such as enhanced skills, satisfaction, and leadership potential—employers did not commit to financially supporting the fund, allegedly because of financial constraints.
6. All assessed interventions have focused on building capacity at the institutional level. This approach inherently includes a sustainability strategy, as strengthening institutions can lead to long-term improvements. However, appropriate and supportive environments are essential for these efforts to have a meaningful and lasting impact.

Q12. What measures have been taken or are expected by the ILO at global, regional, and national levels to ensure the sustainability of GEEW-related outcomes beyond the projects' lifespan in the region?

As seen in the sampled initiatives, the ILO's GEEW interventions' design included limited and varying statements on measures to ensure sustainability. However, these statements often lack concrete references to the institutional framework, the resources, and the human capacity needed to sustain the benefits post-implementation. Nevertheless, as it has been raised in other evaluations⁴⁶, the institutional strengths of the ILO, such as its role in promoting positive legislative changes through the application of the ILS, the capacity building to its constituencies, and quality technical support reflected in their knowledge products are all factors contributing to sustainability.

Neither the Joint Programme nor the DW4W project had an explicit sustainability/transition strategy, so it is not possible to estimate whether the timeframe foreseen was adequate to ensure the continuity of the actions and their benefits at the regional and national levels. However, their strong emphasis on legal reform linked to the ILO's normative function has contributed to sustainability by establishing a policy framework for future interventions. Sustainability is, however, dependent on national ownership and the institutional capacities of constituents to adopt and implement these policies effectively. Regarding ownership, some positive signals are, for example, that in Jordan, some of the actions of the Joint Programme and DW4W project have already been included in the National Women's Strategy Workplan and the Modernization Vision.

As mentioned in the previous section, the capacity building of constituents is a core component of the ILO's GEEW objectives and interventions. All sampled interventions demonstrate the ILO's work with tripartite partners to build capacity at the institutional level. Nevertheless, appropriate and supportive environments are essential to ensure effective transfer of learning into the workplace; this includes management backing, clear policies, and a culture that encourages applying new skills. Without these, even well-designed training can

⁴⁶ ILO (2020) High-level evaluations of strategies and Decent Work Country Programmes 2019.

fail to have a lasting impact. Providing feedback, resources, and opportunities for ongoing learning helps ensure that new knowledge is applied and sustained, leading to meaningful and lasting improvements.

The ILO's approach to coalition-building with governmental and civil society actors enhances the sustainability of achieved results. The Joint Programme and the DW4W project have fostered national coalitions, such as the National Committee for Pay Equity and the Technical Committee for Automation of the unified contract for workers in the private education sector in coalition with the 'Stand up with the Teachers' Campaign'. These coalitions include a broad spectrum of public and private organizations and incorporate nontraditional ILO partners, such as the coalition of trade unions and civil society organizations, to lobby for labour law reforms. These collaborative relationships have opened new opportunities for cooperation and possible sources of support, increasing the likelihood that the results will endure beyond the projects' timelines. For example, the 'Stand Up with the Teachers' campaign is sustained by the involvement of entities that provide free services, such as legal support for teachers facing violations.

The predictability of commitments over time is a key element in ensuring the long-term success of initiatives. The Norwegian government's sustained commitment since 2014, through the DW4W project, has contributed to reforming specific workplace policies in the health and education sectors, enabling durable outcomes. However, the ILO could use the next phase of support, which has just started, to define a more robust sustainability strategy to ensure that the gains are sustained when the support ends.

Finally, some initiatives, such as the Logib tool or the unified contract system for teachers in the private sector, offer scalability and/or transfer opportunities to other sectors. The results of the pilot of the Logib tool have been independently assessed, and their feasibility for the Jordanian context, as well as their potential scalability, has been indicated. Efforts are currently underway to include this initiative in the 'Gender Seal' programme included in the Jordanian Modernisation Vision programmatic document. The success of enacting Jordanian legislation that requires schools to deposit teachers' salaries electronically (e-wallets/bank transfers) can be extended to benefit female teachers, childcare workers in kindergarteners, and nurseries in the private sector.

On the other hand, some initiatives implemented under the Joint Programme, such as the skills building for women in sports or the business clinic supporting female kindergarten owners, face challenges in terms of sustainability if they are not institutionalized. With regard to the 'Women in Sport initiative', its focus on developing individual skills may be more difficult to sustain after the end of the Joint Programme if institutionalization within the Ministry of Sports in Jordan is not ensured. The business clinic, launched to support women-owned kindergarten businesses facing debt challenges due to COVID-19 closures, has delivered promising results in aiding women-led small enterprises. To sustain this progress, further collaboration is essential among all involved partners— the Association of Banks in Jordan, the Association of Banking Experts, and the National Committee for the Kindergarten Sector. Ensuring financial and technical support lines remain open and accessible is crucial for achieving sustainability.

The WIMIN project did not develop a formal sustainability strategy but assumed that the supported employers and business membership organizations would create their own with the project's support. In the case of ALI, it was supposed to involve the creation of a Women's Fund intended to become financially self-sustaining through annual contributions from employers. However, while the project demonstrated the benefits of supporting women's advancement in the workplace—such as enhanced skills, satisfaction, and leadership potential—employers did not commit to financially supporting the fund, allegedly because of financial constraints. Nor did the ALI secretariat have enough personnel or expertise to handle the operational demands. Other initiatives within ALI, like establishing a women's task force, which could have elevated the priority of this issue within the association, were not fully realized. As a result, sustainability is compromised.

The results of the Lebanese League for Women in Business (LLWB) are more positive regarding sustainability. As its main objective is to support women's economic empowerment and rights, the association provides technical assistance to women-owned enterprises and other enterprises. The evaluation found evidence that the LLWB has already identified other organizations interested in a PGA and is working to make it a reality. They also planned to create a gender unit at the LLWB with internationally certified staff to provide this service regularly and a reduced version of the PGA to be offered as a standard service to their clients.

Finally, the Disability-Inclusive Climate Action project expects to establish the long-term foundations for more inclusive climate action in national policies by ensuring the guidance notes produced under the project are used in all future climate planning and by enhancing OPD's capacities to advocate for inclusion and participate in decision-making effectively. It is worth noting that the third Global Disability Summit will take place in 2025 in Jordan. This provides an ideal opportunity to reinforce the government's commitment and ownership of the guidance notes and enhance the advocacy capacity of the OPDs.

5. CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO RELEVANCE

Conclusion 1. The ILO's GEEW work in the Arab States has shown relevance to the needs of its tripartite constituents—national governments, employers, and trade unions—through ongoing dialogue and engagement. The priorities of these stakeholders are clearly reflected in the assessed interventions. However, there is a gap in the consistency of consultations with end beneficiaries, particularly in the design phase of projects.

Conclusion 2. The ILO's GEEW work is well aligned with national commitments to gender equality. However, entrenched gender norms in Arab states continue to hinder the translation of these national policies into concrete action. The priority given to gender equality by national constituencies remains uneven. Government commitment may be driven by some senior leaders committed to gender equality and external pressures such as international reputation or the obligation to address rights abuses. For employers, the focus on gender equality is often driven by economic or commercial interests rather than a genuine interest in investing in women's careers. Although challenged by various pressures, trade unions tend to be more progressive on gender equality; the fact that some of them already have some active women in their ranks and the need for unions to expand their membership by attracting more women workers also helps their responsiveness.

Conclusion 3. The analysed ILO's GEEW interventions in the Arab region reflect global frameworks and principles of decent work and have focused on key areas like pay equity, care work, and violence and harassment. However, the ILO GEEW work has been shaped largely by donor priorities and local contexts rather than by ILO's global planning frameworks. Initial approaches to issues like equal pay and, later, to the care economy have been adjusted to better align with regional realities and stakeholder receptiveness, underscoring both the need for and the capacity of ILO to navigate complex socio-cultural and political contexts such as the Arab region.

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO COHERENCE

Conclusion 4. At the global level, the ILO's gender-focused initiatives in the Arab States have aligned with and contributed to some of the global intergovernmental processes in which the ILO participates or leads, notably the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) initiative. At the regional level, synergies between ILO's GEEW interventions have been limited; the Joint Programme, the most prominent regional initiative, has not promoted cross-learning between ILO country offices. At the country level, main synergies existed primarily between the Joint Programme and the DW4W project in Jordan. Cooperation with other agencies is currently limited, with only occasional initiatives involving organizations such as GIZ. There is a consensus within the ILO that greater efforts are needed to promote complementarity, harmonization, and coordination to achieve better results with other partners.

Conclusion 5. SIDA is a key partner of the ILO in promoting the decent work agenda. Together, they focus on strategic cross-cutting areas such as gender equality and non-discrimination, where there is a strong alignment between SIDA's priorities and the ILO's mandate and comparative advantages. In addition to women's economic empowerment and

skills development, there are other opportunities for the ILO to contribute to SIDA's priorities, such as leveraging the ILO's experience in the OPT and supporting decent work and social justice with a gender approach.

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO EFFECTIVENESS

Conclusion 6. Overall, the ILO's interventions have achieved several of their intended results. Through the Joint Programme, the ILO, in collaboration with other actors and building on existing efforts, contributed to several policy and legislative reforms in the areas of maternity protection, equal pay provisions, violence and harassment, and care policies, with Jordan standing out with 13 policy and legislative changes related to gender equality over a total of 23 normative and legislative amendments in the three targeted countries. The DW4W project has also contributed to improving workplace policies in sectors with high female employment, such as education and childcare. These achievements have largely been facilitated through the ILO's ability to convene social dialogue among key stakeholders, including government agencies, private sector representatives, trade unions, and, in some cases, civil society organizations.

Conclusion 7. The Joint Programme and the WIMIN project have successfully raised awareness among its constituents and strengthened its capacity to address some women's practical and strategic needs. Trade unions, in particular, have received support through gender audits, training, and coaching to become more gender-sensitive, empowering women trade unionists to have a stronger voice both within their organizations and externally. However, less progress has been made with employers and their representatives. While there are early signs of certain awareness about gender and equality issues, tangible results in revising internal policies, supporting women's career development, and increasing women's participation and representation at the board level remain limited. Finally, through the Joint Programme, the ILO has contributed to some private sector development initiatives, mostly to expand women's enterprises or promote new employment opportunities for women. Still, many of these, while effective, have been modest, and overall efforts have been somewhat scattered.

Conclusion 8. The ILO's distinctive advantage is largely attributed to its standard-setting nature, tripartite system, and convening role in social dialogue on labour issues, including GEEW. Overall, the technical expertise provided by the ILO in reviewing labour laws from a gender perspective, the use of tripartite social dialogue to agree on proposed changes, and the investment in building quality evidence are factors contributing to these results.

One issue that has emerged as influencing the ILO's ability to promote GEEW, and on which there are divergent views, is whether to broaden the range of actors with whom the ILO ROAS engages beyond its traditional constituencies, for example, sectoral trade unions or business associations that do not have formal representative positions in the tripartite structures, but also non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations.

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO EFFICIENCY

Conclusion 9. The ILO ROAS team, although small, has demonstrated strong commitment and high performance and has been able to operate as a network. However, current staffing

levels leave many country offices without in-country specialist staff. This might partially explain the limited internal coordination among different projects, which needs enhancement to create synergies and improve the overall effectiveness of GEEW interventions as siloed approaches continue to challenge collaboration.

Conclusion 10. While some projects demonstrate good practices in gender mainstreaming, many of the non-sampled GEEW interventions lack comprehensive gender analyses or gender-responsive results and indicators, which hampers the effectiveness of GEEW-focused initiatives. Moreover, the sampled interventions would have benefited from more robust monitoring frameworks and better-designed data collection systems. In achieving results within the intended timeframe, most of the interventions reviewed faced delays, often resulting in no-cost extensions. Additionally, the systematic application of logical frameworks and/or Theory of Change remains a work in progress. Some interventions were ambitious in scope and based on assumptions that were not thoroughly tested or confirmed.

Conclusion 11. A limited number of gender-responsive initiatives show gender-sensitive budgets, incorporating activities specifically targeting women or addressing gender gaps. Gender-sensitive budgeting is inherently linked to the broader process of gender mainstreaming. Hence, successfully implementing gender-sensitive budgeting relies on integrating the gender equality objective into every stage of the program cycle.

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO ORIENTATION TO IMPACT

Conclusion 12. ILO interventions have made a tangible impact by enhancing the legal, policy, and institutional frameworks that support gender equality across the region. These reforms have contributed to concrete advancements in labour rights, such as equal pay, maternity protection, and safeguards against violence and harassment. These have led to improved working conditions in highly feminized sectors like childcare and education, particularly in Jordan. Additionally, ILO efforts to promote gender equality have influenced workplace dynamics by encouraging greater representation of women in decision-making positions, albeit with modest results, and, above all, by strengthening the capacity of trade unions on gender equality, especially among female cadres. This has enabled more meaningful engagement in social dialogue and collective bargaining, laying the groundwork for long-term improvements in gender equality within the labour market

CONCLUSIONS RELATED TO SUSTAINABILITY

Conclusion 13. None of the assessed interventions had an explicit sustainability or transition strategy in place. However, the Joint Programme and the DW4W project contributed indirectly to sustainability by focusing on legal reforms aligned with the ILO's normative function. Both interventions have also implemented measures to enhance sustainability through coalition building with government, civil society and key stakeholders on issues such as pay equity, workers' rights in the private education sector or legal reform of the labour law in the OPT. This approach has laid the groundwork for continued advocacy and reform.

The WIMIN project relied on the assumption that employers and business membership organizations would develop their sustainability strategies. However, despite the project demonstrating the benefits of supporting women's career advancement, employers did not

commit financially to sustaining these initiatives, citing financial constraints. This gap in securing employer buy-in and financial backing limited the long-term sustainability of the project's outcomes.

Conclusion 14. All assessed interventions have focused on capacity building at the institutional level, inherently aiming for sustainability. However, the sustainability of these efforts will also depend on creating supportive environments that enable the practical application of new skills and knowledge. While some initiatives, such as the Logib tool and the unified contract system for teachers, have demonstrated potential for scalability and cross-sector transfer, other interventions, like the business clinic for female kindergarten owners and skills-building for women in sports, faced challenges in sustainability.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1. Strategic advocacy for gender priorities. While maintaining its priorities, the ILO ROAS might seek incremental change and adjust its approaches by adopting more culturally sensitive strategies that foster greater social acceptance in close collaboration with like-minded partners. Thus:

- a. The ILO should adapt some approaches to address GEEW's key goals. For example, it should emphasize aspects of gender equality that resonate with traditional roles—establishing closer links between maternity protection and childcare and development or tackling gender-based violence and harassment at the workplace through occupational safety and health—and use language and narratives that, while respecting local traditions, highlight how gender equality supports social cohesion and economic progress.
- b. The ILO ROAS should identify influential government officials, policymakers, and key figures within employers and trade union organizations (champions of change) committed to gender equality and advocate for women's labour rights. It should then support them with high-quality technical input and appropriate networking at the regional and international levels.
- c. The ILO should implement various measures to promote women's participation in private sector employment. This includes supporting the establishment of clear targets (affirmative actions) for women's representation in leadership roles and decision-making positions, and their overall workforce participation within employers' organizations and member companies. Additionally, the ILO could facilitate training programs in high-demand areas -such as digital skills, STEM, and leadership- to equip women with relevant expertise and promote their continuous reskilling to prepare them for emerging industries. Furthermore, the ILO ROAS could collaborate with partners, including IFIs, to advocate for governments to use a combination of taxes, subsidies, incentives, and other economic tools to encourage the private sector to hire, retain, and promote women within companies (see recommendation 2.b).

- Address to: ILO ROAS, country offices and project management
- Priority: High
- Timing: Medium term
- Resources implication: low

Recommendation 2. Strengthen internal and external coherence for GEEW. The ILO ROAS should implement a more integrated and cohesive strategy across its various GEEW-oriented projects at the country and regional levels. Externally, it should strengthen and, when suitable, formalize existing partnerships, especially with UN agencies, and broaden its collaboration with other stakeholders involved in GEEW. Thus:

- a. ILO Country Offices should hold regular internal cross-project coordination meetings to discuss progress, share resources, adopt common approaches, and identify synergies or opportunities for collaboration for GEEW progress while promoting information sharing and learning between projects.
- b. The ILO ROAS could conduct a mapping exercise to identify current and potential GEEW-oriented partners in each country and at a regional level with whom it can partner more predictably. GEEW partnerships should be analysed using the parameters of context, comparative advantage, and capacity and categorized by primary function (fundraising, advocacy, implementing partner, policy, etc.).
- c. The ILO should discuss and reach a common agreement on how to broaden engagement on GEEW beyond its traditional tripartite constituencies with non-traditional actors—sectoral trade unions, small business associations, civil society organizations, or media and communication networks—to foster more comprehensive, innovative, and context-specific solutions to GEEW and decent work challenges.

- Address to: ILO ROAS, country offices and project management
- Priority: High
- Timing: Medium term
- Resources implication: low-medium

Recommendation 3. Engender ILO's operational model. Strengthening gender mainstreaming in project design, implementation, and budgeting is crucial to fully leverage opportunities for advancing gender equality priorities. While the ILO has developed a robust gender framework, there is still a need to enhance staff training and increase familiarity with the ILO's guidance and priorities. For this, the ILO ROAS should:

- a. The ILO ROAS Gender Technical Unit, in collaboration with Country Offices, could develop, based on ILO global GEDI tools, a dialogue process to systematically identify key moments during the project preparatory phase where GEEW input, advice, or orientation is essential. This tool could also assess staff needs regarding knowledge or training to integrate GEEW considerations.
- b. Project proposals must be designed based on gender assessments, either as a standalone exercise or integrated into the preparatory phase. They must also include a consultation process with end beneficiaries, especially women and other marginalized groups.
- c. Interventions should be based on well-tested assumptions and evidence to inform the intervention's theories of change on gender. This requires engaging stakeholders in validating assumptions and conducting scenario testing to identify potential risks and gaps early in the design phase.

- d. Results frameworks should be strengthened by clearly defining gender outcomes and indicators, including more ambitious ones that better capture shifts in social and gender norms. Performance frameworks must be designed accordingly, with sufficient baseline data and explicit data collection tools.
 - e. Interventions' budgets should be aligned with expected gender outcomes and necessary activities should be costed.
- Address to: ILO ROAS, country offices and project management
 - Priority: High
 - Timing: Medium term
 - Resources implication: Low

Recommendation 4. Mobilise funding for GEEW. While increasing domestic funding to expand women's employment opportunities and support the care economy is vital, it is unrealistic to expect governments in crisis-affected Arab countries to completely close the financing gap. Therefore, ILO ROAS should aim to secure multi-annual funding to ensure that gender-transformative outcomes are both achieved and sustained. ILO should:

- a. Develop a resource mobilization strategy and a corresponding multi-annual resource mobilization plan and strategy for expanding GEEW-focused interventions. (linked to Recommendation 2.b)
 - b. Explore opportunities for triangular cooperation between Arab States, particularly between the Gulf States and others such as Jordan, the OPT, Iraq, or Lebanon, where the ILO can play a convening and technical role in GEEW reforms. For example, the ILO could build on Saudi Arabia's achievements in developing the National Policy on Gender Equality in Employment and Occupation, which it has technically assisted, to partially replicate or inspire similar reforms in other regional countries, drawing on Saudi financial resources and expertise.
 - c. Continue to encourage multi-year fund commitments to support effective and sustainable GEEW results. Consider presenting the results of the synthesis review and this evaluation to ILO partner agencies already investing in GEEW in the region—SIDA, Government of Norway, and Global Affairs Canada—and other like-minded donors to secure support for resource mobilization.
 - d. The ILO's long-term commitment to the OPT offers valuable lessons for SIDA, particularly in conflict prevention and promoting stability through economic development. Additionally, the ILO's intervention model in 'recovery' contexts, like Yemen, provides insights relevant to SIDA's efforts in promoting decent work and social justice in complex environments.
 - e. Senior ILO ROAS staff should prioritize GEEW-focused interventions or interventions with strong gender mainstreaming design and budget to be eligible for RBSA funding. Based on lessons learned from past projects, new approaches should begin as pilots. They should avoid "one-size-fits-all" guidance and ensure that all projects can be adapted to each context.
- Address to: ILO ROAS, country offices
 - Priority: High
 - Timing: Medium term
 - Resources implication: Low

Recommendation 5. Strengthen ILO's communication function. ILO's communication strategy should be strengthened to ensure that the ILO is seen not only as an expert organization in labour issues and gender equality but also as a *knowledge bridge or mediator* that turns complex labour issues into actionable insights. While communicating technical matters in an attractive way can be challenging, there are opportunities to make complex reforms or specific advances on GEEW resonate with diverse audiences, from donors to governments, the public, and employers. For this:

- a. ILO ROAS could start defining key objectives and messages on GEEW by emphasizing the ILO's achievements and using a balanced mix of authority and accessibility. This would help the ILO remain credible while engaging both experts and general audiences.
- b. The ILO should segment audience profiles and tailor messages accordingly, using different strategies to showcase the positive economic and social impacts of reforms and their impact on daily life. With actual and potential donors, the focus might be on communicating outcomes and return on investment by producing accessible impact reports that include metrics that clearly illustrate how donor funds directly support these outcomes. The ILO could also promote deeper and more technical discussion around GEEW and labour issues, as this can help the ILO and partners fine-tune their strategies and actions, resulting in mutual benefits.
- c. With governments, it might be adequate to emphasize the ILO's research-based approach, case studies, and best practices that can be translated into policy. With employers, the focus might be on highlighting how GEEW measures are an investment that fuels sustainable economic development, while with the public and workers, the focus could be on how the ILO's work impacts everyday life, using stories from the field, real-life testimonials, and simplified messaging.

- Address to: ILO ROAS, country offices and project management
- Priority: Medium
- Timing: Medium term
- Resources implication: low

7. LESSONS LEARNED

1. Professionalizing female-dominated occupations such as education by improving legislation, policies, and working conditions might serve as an entry point for expanding gender equality across other employment sectors like childcare.

In conservative environments such as the Arab States, pushing for change within sectors where women already work is more likely to be accepted socially. Feminized sectors, such as education, childcare, healthcare or textiles, often provide significant employment opportunities for women. Improving conditions, wages, and protection in these sectors helps elevate women's economic status, which can have ripple effects on their social empowerment. Based on this premise, several ILO interventions in the region, including the Joint Programme, the DW4W project, and others such as the Better Work Mental Health project, have focused on advancing gender-responsive laws, policies, -including pay equality, social protection or labour rights. As women's roles in these sectors are strengthened, it can pave the way for broader gender equality measures in other, less feminized sectors over time. Demonstrating success in feminized sectors can provide a foundation for expanding gender equality efforts across the economy.

2. Future joint programmes between ILO and other UN organizations should adopt a harmonized implementation approach based on continuous communication and collaboration and mutual accountability

In the case of the Joint Programme, which aimed to leverage the expertise of ILO and UN Women to catalyze change in women's labour market participation across three countries, the implementation strategy fell short. By assigning separate outputs to each agency, the programme unintentionally created silos, where each organization executed activities largely independently, with limited communication and coordination. This lack of integration hindered the potential for synergy and collective impact.

Furthermore, the evaluation highlighted that national partners were unaware of related activities or achievements across the programme. This gap in communication between agencies and national stakeholders led to missed opportunities for knowledge sharing and collaboration at the country and regional levels, which could have strengthened horizontal learning and the programme's overall effectiveness.

8. GOOD PRACTICES

1. Empowering teachers for Decent Work: The 'Stand Up with the Teacher' Campaign in Jordan

The "Stand Up with the Teacher" campaign was launched in Irbid, Jordan, in 2015 with ILO support to address persistent labour rights violations affecting female teachers in the private education sector. The ILO's continued support facilitated the campaign's growth into a well-formed community advocacy group. This long-term commitment has enabled teachers to participate actively in policy discussions and to interact effectively with national bodies such as the Ministry of Labour and the Social Security Corporation.

Notably, the ILO's continued support of the bottom-up community organization model helped the campaign become both sustainable and active, continuing to expand with tangible results that further fuel its momentum. In recent years, the campaign, backed mainly by the ILO DW4W project, has achieved significant advances, including digital salary payments and a unified work contract ensuring fair wages and year-round teacher pay. By positioning teachers as essential agents of change, the initiative has established a model that is not only sustainable but also scalable. This approach could serve as a blueprint for similar campaigns across other sectors, such as for female workers in the childcare sector, leveraging grassroots advocacy to achieve labour rights and gender equality on a broader scale.

2. A cross-cutting coalition of Palestinian trade unions and social organizations for a gender-responsive law

The formation of a national coalition between the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) and 49 Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to advocate for a gender-responsive labour law is a positive joint collaborative effort undertaken by the ILO and UN Women in the OPT under the Joint Programme.

The PGFTU, with the support of the ILO and in close collaboration with UN Women, launched the National Coalition for Social Justice in 2021, an innovative initiative in the OPT bringing together national and sectoral trade unions, CSOs, youth groups, PwD organizations, human rights organizations, journalists and lawyers to advocate for gender-responsive Palestinian labour law. It aimed to increase the legitimacy of its demands by presenting a stronger unified voice. The coalition enabled the integration of different perspectives and approaches, allowing all parties to learn from each other's experiences. By working together, unions and NGOs also demonstrated that it is possible to develop more sustainable initiatives that address the root causes of problems rather than just the symptoms, leading to long-term change for workers and communities.

3. Strengthening of gender-sensitive labour inspection

As part of the Joint Programme, the ILO, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, developed a comprehensive labour inspection manual that provides uniform guidelines for labour inspection from a gender perspective, covering issues such as childcare support, combating violence and harassment against women in the workplace, and equal opportunities. The manual was launched through extensive workshops in 27 governorates,

and 82 inspectors - including key directors from the Gender Unit of the Ministry of Labour - were trained to operationalise it.

The creation of a manual ensures that labour inspections are conducted in a consistent manner, with a strong focus on addressing gender issues. Extensive training for inspectors with the participation of other departments is helping to create a more gender-responsive environment within the MoL, while nation-wide workshops ensure geographical reach and improve the consistency of labour inspections across the country.

This structured approach fosters cultural change within the MoL, setting the stage for sustainable, long-term change.

9. ANNEXES

ANNEX 1	EVALUATION MATRIX
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ANNEX 1. EVALUATION MATRIX

Evaluation Criteria /Questions	Questions' Coverage	Indicators	Data collection techniques and source of information	Data Analysis methods
RELEVANCE				
Q.1. To what extent is the ILO GEEW work in the Arab States responding to the stated needs of ILO's constituencies and the specific needs of the affected population in the countries where GEEW-oriented initiatives are implemented?	All projects	1.1. Perceptions of ILO staff and other key stakeholders ⁴⁷ (national constituencies - governments, employers, workers' organizations-, NGOs, UN, and other agencies) on the appropriateness of ILO GEEW work in the Arab States region to the national and regional contexts.	- Desk review of ILO document library (project proposals, progress reports, regional annual progress reports, evaluations, stakeholder consultation records; national legislation, strategies)	- Content analysis - Narrative Analysis - Descriptive statistics
Q.1.1. Are gender and inclusion issues /challenges in the world of work recognized at the national level and by ILO constituents as areas requiring action?	Sampled projects	1.2. Documented and reported the extent to which the ILO has engaged in a consultative process with constituencies/implementing partners during programme planning and implementation of sampled projects in defining objectives, activities, and follow-up mechanisms. 1.3. Documented extent to which the ILO consulted with final beneficiaries and /or established mechanisms to regularly collect and incorporate feedback from beneficiaries for sampled projects.	- KII with ILO staff at Global /ROAS level, UN Women, experts, and Donor - KII with constituencies from sample projects - Group Discussions (GD) with final beneficiaries from sample projects - Surveys	

⁴⁷ From now on, unless otherwise specified, the term "stakeholders" will be used to refer to ILO staff, implementing partners, constituents, other agencies and donors.

Evaluation Criteria /Questions	Questions' Coverage	Indicators	Data collection techniques and source of information	Data Analysis methods
		1.4. Number of core ILO Conventions in favor of gender equality ratified in Arab States as a consequence of ILO's actions. 1.5. Extent of recognition of gender and inclusion issues (i.e. explicit and detailed/ mentioned but not detailed or not mentioned) in key documents from national constituencies from country-case studies from the past two years.		
Q. 2. To what extent is the ILO GEEW work in the region aligned with internal ILO GEEW frameworks and policies, and to what extent are those frameworks and policies relevant in the Arab States region?	All projects	2.1. ILO staff's perceptions on the level of adequacy of ILO ROAS work on GEEW with ILO global frameworks and policies and priorities on GEEW (<i>ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022–25, P&B 2023-2024, ILO ToC on Gender</i>). 2.2. Coverage of ILO's priority programming areas for GEEW (<i>as articulated in the P&B 2023-24</i>) through active interventions at national and regional levels. 2.3. Degree to which GEEW projects in the Arab States region are aligned to national plans and strategies in GEEW. 2.4. Perceptions of key stakeholders on the strategic focus and comprehensiveness/ coverage of ILO ROAS GEEW work at the national and regional levels.	- Desk review of ILO document library - KII with ILO staff at Global /ROAS level, UN Women - KII with ILO staff from sample projects - KII with constituencies from sample projects - Survey to ILO staff	- Content analysis - Narrative Analysis - Descriptive statistics

Evaluation Criteria /Questions	Questions' Coverage	Indicators	Data collection techniques and source of information	Data Analysis methods
Q3. To what extent is the design of the sampled projects (e.g., vertical and horizontal logic) relevant to achieve expected results and to meaningfully contribute to GEEW goals?	Sampled projects	3.1. Documented extent on which a gender responsive situation analysis (stakeholders, target group, problem and institutional analysis) has been incorporated in sampled projects⁴⁸. 3.2. Extent to which the design of the sampled projects follows ILO standards procedures (i.e., as stated in ILO's Action Plan for Gender Equality and internal cooperation manual)⁴⁹. 3.3. Extent to which the Theory of Change and /or logic of the chain of results of sampled projects is sound towards achieving expected GEEW goals. 3.4. Extent to which the set of indicators at outcome and general objective level effectively measure the expected change and are gender sensitive (either responsive or transformative following the GRES scale).	- Desk review of ILO document library) for sampled projects. - KII with ILO staff from sampled projects - KII with constituencies from sampled projects	- Content analysis - Narrative Analysis

⁴⁸ As stated in the ILO internal cooperation Manual (page 50).

⁴⁹ Elements under consideration will be: i) well-structured logical framework that outlines the project's vertical and horizontal logic with clear articulation of inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impact; ii) A robust Theory of Change (ToC) that explains how project activities lead to desired outcomes and impacts and the identification of assumptions and risks that may affect the achievement of GEEW goals; iii) inclusion of gender-sensitive indicators in the project's M&E framework and iv) use of sex-disaggregated data to measure progress and outcomes.

Evaluation Criteria /Questions	Questions' Coverage	Indicators	Data collection techniques and source of information	Data Analysis methods
COHERENCE				
Q4. To what extent do the ILO gender-focused projects in the Arab States work in synergy with other relevant ILO interventions at the global, regional and country levels?	Sampled projects	4.1. Stakeholders' perceptions of the level of complementarity between different ILO GEEW programmes and projects implemented at national, regional and/or international level (e.g. <i>Equal Pay International Coalition</i>). 4.2. ILO staff perceptions of the level of connectedness /linkage between ILO GEEW-focused projects and other ILO interventions at national or regional levels. 4.3 Extent to which existing resources and capacities (human resources, organizational processes, technical expertise, institutional framework) at ILO ROAS country and regional levels are adequate to implement GEEW technical work in sampled projects. 4.4 Extent to which ILO GEEW focused projects share resources (financial, human, technical) with other ILO interventions at national and regional levels. 4.5 Number and scope of partnerships formed to leverage resources for GEEW responsive and transformative outcomes.	- Desk review of ILO document library for sampled projects - KII with ILO staff at Global /ROAS level, UN Women - KII with ILO staff from sampled projects - KII with constituencies from sampled project - Survey to ILO staff	- Content analysis - Narrative Analysis - Descriptive statistics

Evaluation Criteria /Questions	Questions' Coverage	Indicators	Data collection techniques and source of information	Data Analysis methods
Q5. To what extent does the ILO's work on GEEW complement other regional and national efforts in the Arab States to promote gender equality?	Sampled projects	5.1. Perceptions of ILO staff and other key stakeholders on how ILO's work fills gaps in regional and national efforts on GEEW and decent work. 5.2. Extent to which the ILO addresses and complements GEEW goals included in the UNSDCF in the sampled countries. 5.3. Extent to which ILO participates/leads multistakeholder partnerships and/or coordination mechanisms on GEEW in sampled countries.	- Desk review of ILO document library for sampled projects - KII with ILO staff at ROAS level, UN Women - KII with ILO staff from sampled projects - KII with constituencies from sampled project - Survey to ILO staff	- Content analysis - Narrative Analysis - Descriptive statistics
Q.6. To what extent does the ILO work on GEEW complement SIDA's broad approach to gender equality and employment/decent work?	All projects	6.1. Perceptions of ILO staff, donor and experts on how SIDA's broad approach to gender equality and employment/decent work is reflected in the ILO's work on GEEW support in the Arab states. 6.2. Level of alignment and complementarities between the ILO GEEW work in Arab States and SIDA's global framework on GEEW and on economic/decent work for Arab States/MENA region.	- Desk review of ILO document library for ALL projects - Desk review of SIDA's policies and priorities. - KII with SIDA staff, ILO staff at Global /ROAS level, UN Women, Donor - KII with ILO- UN Women staff from Joint Programme. - Survey to ILO staff	- Content analysis - Narrative Analysis - Descriptive statistics
Q.6.1. What opportunities lie in maximizing the contribution to this global framework?	All projects	6.3. Key stakeholders' perceptions on areas for improvement and potential future interventions in gender-related interventions in support of decent work within SIDA's gender and employment strategies for Arab countries.		

Evaluation Criteria /Questions	Questions' Coverage	Indicators	Data collection techniques and source of information	Data Analysis methods
		6.4. Documented opportunities and challenges towards maximizing the contribution of ILO GEEW work to SIDA's GEEW framework.		
EFFECTIVENESS				
Q.7. What measurable outcomes has ILO achieved in its gender focus areas, GEEW work-either intended or unintended?	Sampled projects	7.1. Analysis of actual achievements vs targets on key GEEW outcomes indicators in sampled projects.	- Desk review of ILO document library for sampled projects - KII with ILO staff at Global /ROAS level, UN Women - KII with ILO staff from sampled projects - KII with constituencies from sampled projects - Group Discussions (GD) - Survey to ILO staff - Survey to ILO-UN Women JP private sector	- Content analysis - Narrative Analysis - Descriptive statistics
Q 7.1. What is the comparative advantage of ILO's work on GEEW, and how has it been considered more effective in achieving GEEW results in the Arab States?	Sampled projects	7.2. Perceptions of ILO staff and key stakeholders on the comparative advantages of the ILO in the field of GEEW and decent work 7.3. Innovations on ILO's GEEW work as perceived by different stakeholders (by ILO staff, constituencies and other UN agencies)		
Q.8. What are the main internal and external factors influencing ILO's ability to promote GEEW during the period under review?	Sampled projects	8.1. Perceptions on challenges and opportunities related to the ILO's organizational systems, structures, practices, and culture to advance in transformative gender practices. 8.2. Experiences or perceptions of enabling or inhibiting factors are consistent or		

Evaluation Criteria /Questions	Questions' Coverage	Indicators	Data collection techniques and source of information	Data Analysis methods
		divergent between internal ILO stakeholders and external stakeholders. 8.3. Perceptions of opportunities related to the external environment, including political, normative, social and financial factors for advancing transformative gender practices.	- KII with ILO staff and constituencies from sampled projects - Group Discussion (GD) with final beneficiaries - Survey to ILO staff - Survey to ILO-UN Women JP private sector companies	
EFFICIENCY				
Q. 9. To what extent and how is the ILO ensuring that GEEW focused projects/ programmes are designed and delivered cost-efficiently to achieve GEEW results?	Sampled projects	9.1. ILO staff, UN Women and donor's perceptions on how well interventions were resourced, including by staff, external expertise, budget and time, to advance in a gender transformative agenda. 9.2. Extent to which ILO sampled projects made use of appropriate planning, implementing and monitoring systems for tracking progress on gender outputs and outcomes.	- Desk review of ILO document library for all projects - KII with ILO staff at Global /ROAS level, UN Women and selected Int. actors (UN members) - KII with ILO staff from sampled projects - Survey to ILO staff	- Content analysis - Narrative Analysis - Descriptive statistics
Q 9.1. What processes are working well and why?	Sampled projects	9.3. Identification of alternative strategies to implement the activities that would be more cost-effective while achieving the same results.		
Q.9.2. To what extent is gender-sensitive budgeting considered and	All projects	9.4. Stakeholders' perceptions on how well the ILO has used the resources at its disposal		

Evaluation Criteria /Questions	Questions' Coverage	Indicators	Data collection techniques and source of information	Data Analysis methods
implemented in relevant GEEW initiatives?		(including financial, human, physical, intellectual, organizational, political capital and partnerships) for achieving GEEW results 9.5. Extent to which a gender sensitive budgeting appraisal is implemented through all the project cycle. 9.6. Budget allocation for the GEEW strategy and comparison across sampled projects. 9.7. Main enabling and hindering internal and external factors for gender sensitive budgeting as perceived by ILO staff.		
ORIENTATION TO IMPACT				
Q. 10. How do the ILO GEEW related interventions contribute to fostering long-term positive impacts in the Arab States?	Sampled projects	10.1 . Documented evidence of positive contributions from ILO's sampled projects to changes in ILO programmatic outputs indicators (P&B 2024-25).	- Desk review of ILO document library of sampled projects	- Content analysis
Q.10.1 What are the key progress/achievements so far on gender equality, discrimination and inclusion, as perceived /expressed by ILO constituencies?	All projects	10.2 . Identification of the most significant changes achieved by ILO GEEW oriented projects, intended and unintended, as described by ILO staff, constituencies, other UN agencies and ultimate beneficiaries	- KII with ILO staff at Global /ROAS level, UNWOMEN	- Narrative Analysis
		10.3 . Key achievements/most significant changes and innovations on ILO's GEEW priorities <i>(on women's access to labour</i>	- Survey to ILO staff - KII with constituencies from sampled projects about ALL projects.	- Descriptive statistics

Evaluation Criteria /Questions	Questions' Coverage	Indicators	Data collection techniques and source of information	Data Analysis methods
		<i>markets; reduction of the gender pay gap; more even distribution of unpaid care work and the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work) as expressed by ILO's constituencies.</i> 10.4 . Key measures– e.g. <i>building capacities, strengthening legal, policy and/or institutional frameworks, technical assistance, research, piloting innovative solutions-</i> implemented by successful interventions.		
Q. 11. To what extent have the project's outcomes contributed to advancing sustainable development objectives (as per UNSDCF's, similar UN programming frameworks, national sustainable development plans, and SDGs)?	Sampled projects	11.1. Degree of alignment of key changes achieved by sampled projects with ILO P&B 2023-24 outcomes, UNSDCF and SDG 5 goal and sub-goals	- Desk review of ILO document library and international development cooperation and national's libraries /websites (UNSDCF, SDG reports, UN SWAPs, national development plans - KII with ILO staff at Global /ROAS level, UN Agencies, implementing partners, experts and Donor - KII with constituencies from sampled projects	- Content analysis - Narrative Analysis
SUSTAINABILITY				

Evaluation Criteria /Questions	Questions' Coverage	Indicators	Data collection techniques and source of information	Data Analysis methods
Q12. What measures have been taken or are expected to be taken by the ILO at global, regional and national levels to ensure the sustainability of GEEW-related outcomes beyond the projects' lifespan in the region?	Sampled projects	12.1. Existence of transfer/scalability strategies (sustainability plans) planned and applied by ILO country teams for GEEW-sampled interventions. 12.2. Evidence of agreements between the ILO and other development actors, including national governments or regional bodies to continue sampled GEEW initiatives beyond the projects period.	- Desk review of ILO document library - KII with ILO staff at Global /ROAS level, UN Agencies, implementing partners, experts and Donor - KII with constituencies from sampled projects - Group Discussions (GD) - Survey to ILO staff	- Content analysis - Narrative Analysis - Descriptive statistics

ANNEX 2. LIST OF CONSULTED STAKEHOLDERS

	REGIONAL
No.	Organization
	Donor
1.	SIDA MENA, Regional Program Manager
2.	Embassy of Sweden at Amman representatives
	ILO ROAS thematic experts and regional staff
3.	JP W4W- Regional Programme Coordinator
4.	Programme Analyst covering Lebanon, Oman, Qatar and Kuwait
5.	Programme Officer covering Jordan, Yemen, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, UAE and Bahrain
6.	Programme Officer covering OPT, Syria and Iraq
7.	ILO Representative in OPT; ex-ROAS Gender Equality specialist
8.	Ex-We CARE project manager and gender /migration expert
9.	Workers' activities specialist
10.	Private sector -employers specialist
11.	Gender Equality and Non-discrimination Specialist
	UN Women
12.	UN Women - ILO JP W4W general coordinator
	Bellwether
13. Nonresponsive	ESCWA Gender economist expert

Total stakeholders consulted (12): Female (8) -Male (4). KII (9).

	JORDAN
No.	Organization
	Governmental and public institutions
1.	Ministry of Labour, Director of the Women's Directorate
2.	Social Security Corporation (SSC). Deputy Director and two staff.
3.	Higher Council for the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (HCD), Head of the Equal Opportunity Unit
4.	Central Bank of Jordan (CGK), Head of Financial Inclusion Division
5. Nonresponsive	Interministerial Committee for Women's Empowerment (IMC)
6. Non responsive	National Jordanian Commission for Women (NJCW)
	Bellwethers / Partners

7.	UNDP, Global communities' coordinator
8.	OHCHR, Global communities' coordinator
	Private sector representatives' stakeholders
9.	Mudarrib (a local social enterprise), Project Manager
10.	Chamber of Industries, Female Future Program and Country Coordinator
11.	Women on Boards, Head of credit department in a private bank
12.	Women on Boards, Executive compliance Manager in a private bank
13.	Ahel, (NGO) president
	Workers' associations
14.	General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFJTU) President and project staff (2 persons)
15.	Trade Union of Workers in Food Industries, Head of Union
	ILO staff
16.	ILO JP W4W project manager of gender focused projects
17.	ILO CTO Jordan office
18.	Better Work Jordan Programme manager and programme officer
19.	ILO Canadian funded Jordan programme officer
20.	ILO Global Communities Project manager
21. Nonresponsive	UN Women JP W4W Programme officer
	Direct beneficiaries
22.	Members of the Women on Boards (3 persons) - Group Discussion
23.	Kindergarten owners (5 persons) – Group Discussion
24.	MoL technical staff (4 persons) Group Discussion
25.	HCD members (2 persons) Group Discussion / Multiple KII
26.	Members of the Trade Union for Workers in Food Industries (3 persons) – Group Discussion

Total stakeholders consulted (39). Female (28) -Male (11). KII (18); GD (5)

	LEBANON
No.	Organization
	Governmental and public institutions
1. Nonresponsive	MOL- Head of inspectors
	Private sector representatives
2.	Association of Lebanese Industrialists (ALI), general manager and projects manager
3.	Lebanese League of Women on Board (LLWB), Coordinator
	Workers' organizations
4.	FENASOL, General manager

5. Nonresponsive	General Confederation of Lebanese Workers (CGTL), president
	ILO staff
6.	Ex-WeCare project CTA
7.	ILO WIMIN programme officer
	Direct beneficiaries
8.	Polymer Eng. & Managing Director - WIMIN project beneficiary - KII and ALI project manager
9.	3MPlast Quality and safety manager- WIMIN project beneficiary - KII
10.	Arab Printing, HR and Quality Manager - WIMIN project beneficiary - KII

Total stakeholders consulted (9): Female (7)-Male (2). KII (8).

	OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES (OPT)
No.	Organization
	Governmental and public institutions stakeholders
1. Nonresponsive	Ministry of Economy, Director, manager, social responsible officer
2.	MOL, Head of Labour Policies and project focal point
	Workers' organizations
3. No show	Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) - Project Coordinator
	Private sector representatives' stakeholders
4.	General Secretary /Head of the Gender Unit at the Federation Chambers of commerce (FCC)
	ILO staff
5.	Deputy ILO representative ; Program Analyst
6.	ILO JP W4W OPT -Programme Officer / OPT Project manager
7. Nonresponsive	UN Women JP W4W Programme officer
	Direct Beneficiaries
8.	PGFTU members (3) and Project Coordinator Group Discussion

Total stakeholders consulted (8) Female (3) Male (5). KII (4); GD (1).

	EGYPT
No.	Organization
	Governmental and public institutions stakeholders
1	MoL, Technical Advisor for Minister and Central Gender Equality Unit Manager Head of International Cooperation
2 Nonresponsive	National Council for Women (NCW)
	Private sector representatives' stakeholders
3.	Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI) Head of Women Unit and one project staff
	ILO – UN Women Staff

4.	ILO JP W4W project manager
5. Nonresponsive	UN Women JP W4W project manager
	Direct Beneficiaries
6.	HR Academy (2 persons) Group Discussion

Total stakeholders consulted (8) Female (5) -Male (3) KII (3); GD (1)

	OTHER ARAB COUNTRIES
No.	Organization
	ILO Staff
1.	Skills Development Specialist – Saudi Arabia
2.	National programme coordinator Yemen
3.	Planning, Monitoring & Reporting Officer - Iraq
4. Nonresponsive	CTO Iraq

Total stakeholders consulted (3) Female (1) -Male (2) – KII (3)

ANNEX 3. LESSONS LEARNED

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT #1	Professionalizing female-dominated occupations such as education by improving legislation, policies, and working conditions might serve as an entry point for expanding gender equality across other employment sectors like childcare.
<i>Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)</i>	The ILO in Jordan, through ongoing contributions from the Norway funded Decent Work for Women Project, and in coalition with its national partners, the "Stand Up with the Teacher" campaign and the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Union (GFJTU), succeeded in the adoption of a Collective Bargain Agreement including a unified labour contract for workers in private education, mostly women workers, that aims to enhance the labour rights of workers in private educational institutions by extending the initial contract period from ten to twelve months. The new provisions also require all relevant parties to automate the unified contract, making it electronic to ensure the rights of the workforce in the private education sector and prevent any manipulation by certain entities. Based on this experience, the ILO Country Office in Jordan will extend this strategy along with the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Education and the Social Security Corporation to develop a digital system/platform to extend benefits to female teachers and childcare givers working in private kindergartens and nurseries in the private sector.
<i>Context and any related preconditions</i>	In conservative environments such as the Arab States, pushing for change within sectors where women already work is more likely to be accepted socially. Feminized sectors, such as education, childcare, healthcare or textiles often provide significant employment opportunities for women. Improving conditions, wages, and protection in these sectors helps elevate women's economic status, which can have ripple effects on their social empowerment.
<i>Targeted users / Beneficiaries</i>	Private school teachers in Jordan have benefited from a new CBA and the automatization of the unified contract. It is planned to extend the benefits of the automatized contract to female teachers and childcare givers working in private kindergartens and nurseries in the private sector
<i>Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors</i>	N/A
<i>Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors</i>	The CBA for private school teachers and the digitalization of its contract came as a result of the continuous efforts and support provided by ILO to its social partners particularly the "Stand Up with the Teacher" coalition. Specific campaigns, coaching to the network and capacity building to its members to gain negotiation and advocacy skills have been some of the initiatives promoted by the ILO through the DW4W

	project that have proven effective in achieving labour rights in the private education sector.
<i>ILO Administrative Issues</i>	N/A

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT #2	Future joint programmes between ILO and other UN organizations should adopt a harmonized implementation approach based on continuous communication and collaboration and mutual accountability
<i>Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)</i>	For joint programmes to drive change effectively, they need not only a cohesive strategic design but also well-structured and harmonized implementation mechanisms, anchored in a regular and systematic exchange between the partners to facilitate their involvement beyond their specific areas of responsibilities. This approach should allow participating agencies to contribute their expertise, leverage their unique strengths, and, through ongoing collaboration and communication, remain mutually accountable while working together to achieve the programme's results
<i>Context and any related preconditions</i>	The ILO–UN Women Joint Programme was jointly designed to leverage the expertise of ILO and UN Women to catalyze change in women's labour market participation across three countries. Despite its strategic approach the Joint Programme failed in developing a shared long-term vision on how both agencies were contributing to women's economic empowerment. Insufficient coordination and collaboration during implementation led to a compartmentalized implementation approach which also translated to relation with national partners that were not sufficiently aware of the overall scope of the program and of the partnership.
<i>Targeted users / Beneficiaries</i>	ILO ROAS staff, UN Women and future partners
<i>Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors</i>	By assigning separate outputs to each agency, the programme unintentionally created silos, where each organization executed activities largely independently, with limited communication and coordination. This lack of integration hindered the potential for synergy and collective impact of the programme and this was noticed as well when contacting national partners as they were unaware of related activities or achievements across the programme
<i>Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors</i>	
<i>ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)</i>	Future initiatives need to pay attention on how to strengthen inter-team coordination. Some possible measures might be monthly country calls; allowing coordination meetings to provide space to all teams to share regular updates and ongoing lessons learnt and possibly to consider having team retreats to foster team spirit,

ANNEX 4. EMERGING GOOD PRACTICES

EMERGING GOOD PRACTICE #1	Empowering Female Teachers for Decent Work: The 'Stand Up with the Teacher' Campaign in Jordan
<i>Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)</i>	Stand Up with the Teacher is a campaign designed to build the power of female teachers working at private schools to enable them to advocate for their labour rights. The ILO's continued support facilitated the campaign's growth into a well-formed community advocacy group. This long-term commitment has enabled female teachers to participate actively in policy discussions and to interact effectively with national bodies such as the Ministry of Labour and the Social Security Corporation in the defence of their labour rights.
<i>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</i>	Women comprise a large proportion of teachers and teaching represents a high percentage of women participating in the labour market generally. Launched in Irbid, Jordan, the National Committee for Pay Equity (NCPE) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) jointly created and supported this campaign. The ILO hired the Ahel organization to train and coach teachers, mostly female ones, to be able to defend their labour rights. In recent years, the campaign has been backed by the ILO DW4W project and the Joint Programme, amongst others.
<i>Establish a clear cause-effect relationship</i>	The ILO's continued support of the bottom-up community organization model helped the campaign become both sustainable and remain active, continuing to expand with tangible results that further fuel its momentum. By positioning female teachers as essential agents of change, the initiative has established a model that is not only sustainable but also scalable.
<i>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</i>	Most significant advances achieved in recent years have been the agreement for a unified work contract ensuring fair wages and year-round teacher pay and the establishment of a digital salary payments scheme to ensure transparency and pay equity. During the implementation of the DW4W project (Nov 2021-January 2024), the campaign received 2,026 complaints from female teachers working in the private education sector regarding violations of wage and leave rights. A total of 829 cases were directly resolved by the campaign and school owners without the need for formal complaints.
<i>Potential for replication and by whom</i>	This approach could serve as a blueprint for similar campaigns across other highly feminized sectors such as workers in nurseries, kindergartens, leveraging grassroots advocacy to achieve labour rights and gender equality on a broader scale.
<i>Upward links to higher ILO Goals</i>	Linked to P&B 2024-2025 Output 5.1. Increased capacity of Member States to design and implement a transformative agenda on gender equality, non-discrimination and inclusion

<i>Other documents or relevant comments</i>	Nisreen Haj Ahmad (2017): An Experience of Collective Voice In Irbid – Jordan January 2015 – December 2016, ILO ROAS.
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EMERGING GOOD PRACTICE # 2	A cross-cutting coalition of Palestinian trade unions and social organizations for a gender responsive labour law
<i>Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)</i>	The formation of a national coalition between the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) and 49 civil society organizations (CSOs) to advocate for a gender-responsive labour law allowed trade unions to amplify their voices and contribute to increase the legitimacy of its demands by presenting a stronger unified voice with other social actors. This achievement of creating one coalition between PGFTU and NGOs/CSOs meets the target set by the Joint Programme (<i>PAL 1.2.2 # of advocacy initiatives conducted on gender equality in labour legislation</i>)
<i>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</i>	The formation of a national coalition between the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions (PGFTU) and 49 civil society organizations (CSOs) to advocate for a gender-responsive labour law is a positive joint collaborative effort undertaken by the ILO and UN Women in the OPT under the Joint Programme. The PGFTU, with the support of the ILO and in close collaboration with UN Women, launched the National Coalition for Social Justice in 2021, an innovative initiative in the OPT bringing together national and sectoral trade unions, CSOs, youth groups, PwD organizations, human rights organizations and journalists and lawyers to advocate for a gender-responsive Palestinian labour law. Through several joint advocacy campaigns and the work of two sub-committees – the Advocacy and Communication Committee and the Legal Committee- the coalition demanded legislative reforms to end gender discrimination in the labour market and the alignment of the Palestinian labour law to international standards. The coalition functioned since 2021 until November 2023, when due to the outbreak of hostilities, discussions around the labour law reform were halted.
<i>Establish a clear cause-effect relationship</i>	There are several features that make this initiative good practice: . <i>Increased Legitimacy</i>: The coalition enhanced the legitimacy of both trade unions and NGOs by demonstrating a united front. . <i>Enhanced advocacy power</i>: By joining forces, trade unions and NGOs amplified their voices, increasing their influence on policy-making and social issues. This collective strength led to more effective advocacy for workers' rights, social justice, and gender equality.

	. <i>Broader reach and resources</i>: Collaborating allowed organizations to pool their resources, including funding, expertise, and networks. This enhanced their capacity to reach a wider audience and implement more comprehensive programs. . <i>Integrated Approaches</i>: The coalition enabled the integration of different perspectives and approaches - trade unions focus on labour rights and economic issues while NGOs put the attention on the social and human rights concerns. This combination can lead to more holistic solutions to complex problems. . <i>Shared Knowledge and Best Practices</i>: Collaboration fostered knowledge sharing, allowing both parties to learn from each other's experiences. . <i>Community engagement</i>: By involving a wide range of entities, the coalition also amplified grassroots voices that could be underrepresented in the traditional ILO tripartite model and enabled the integration of different perspectives and approaches
<i>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</i>	Targeted beneficiaries included Palestinian women in the workforce, trade union members, youth groups, and marginalized populations who stand to benefit from equitable and gender-sensitive labour laws.
<i>Potential for replication and by whom</i>	The initiative can be replicated in other countries in the region when advocating for complex problems that have impact on labour rights and social and human rights
<i>Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)</i>	Linked to P&B 2024-2025 Output 5.1. Increased capacity of Member States to design and implement a transformative agenda on gender equality, non-discrimination and inclusion
<i>Other documents or relevant comments</i>	N/A

EMERGING GOOD PRACTICE #3	Strengthening gender-sensitive labour inspection in Egypt
<i>Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)</i>	ILO Egypt followed a structured approach with the inspection function of the Ministry of Labour (MoL) to foster cultural change in favour of gender equality by developing a manual to ensure that labour inspections are conducted in a consistent manner and by providing training for inspectors in 27 governorates ensuring a wide geographical reach.
<i>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</i>	As part of the Joint Programme, the ILO, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labour, developed a comprehensive labour inspection manual that provides uniform guidelines for labour inspection from a gender perspective, covering issues such as childcare support, combating violence and harassment against women in the workplace, and equal opportunities. The manual was launched through extensive workshops in all governorates.
<i>Establish a clear cause-effect relationship</i>	A structured approach helps embedding gender sensitive practices in labour inspection: - <i>Uniform guidelines:</i> The creation of a manual ensures that labour inspections are conducted uniformly, with a strong focus on addressing gender issues like childcare support, violence and harassment against women, and equal opportunities. - <i>Training of inspectors:</i> Extensive training for inspectors, helps operationalize these guidelines, equipping inspectors with the knowledge to promote gender-sensitive practices. - <i>Nationwide implementation:</i> Workshops targeting inspectors from the 27 governorates ensure wide geographic reach, ensuring that labour inspections reflect a unified standard nationwide, and enhancing consistency in labour inspections throughout the country.
<i>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</i>	82 inspectors - including key directors from the Gender Unit of the Ministry of Labour - were trained to operationalise the manual across governorates.
<i>Potential for replication and by whom</i>	Embedding gender-sensitive practices in the labour inspection function can be a key component of ILO's efforts when supporting MoL. There is potential for replicating this process in other countries such as Jordan and Iraq.
<i>Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)</i>	Linked to P&B 2024-2025 Output 5.1. Increased capacity of Member States to design and implement a transformative agenda on gender equality, non-discrimination and inclusion and to Output 5.3. Increased capacity of constituencies to prevent and address discrimination-based violence and harassment at work,
<i>Other documents or relevant comments</i>	N/A

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ANNEX 6. SAMPLED INTERVENTIONS' SELECTION PROCESS

This note presents the criteria and the results of the review of the list of projects currently being implemented by ILO in Arab countries. Based on the application of these criteria, a sample of interventions is proposed. Finally, it is suggested how the evaluation questions will be addressed, either with all the interventions currently active or with the final selected ones to be part of the case studies.

Criteria

The criteria for reviewing and developing a proposal for interventions to be considered in the three country-case studies case studies have been:

- *Implementation Status*: Active projects.
- *Geographical coverage*: Jordan and Lebanon as focused countries and a third one to be covered remotely.
- *GEM values*: interventions with gender as principal and mainstreamed objective
- *Evaluation status*: Mostly projects that will be internally or self-evaluated. No projects with planned external evaluations or recently completed evaluations.
- *ILO outcomes /outputs*: Focused on Outcome 5 *Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all*.
- *Synthesis review*: projects not covered by the synthesis review.

Portfolio overview

1.-) Number of projects, implementation status and Synthesis Review coverage

- Total number of listed projects: # 28
- Finished projects: # 4 [JOR/19/04/UNE; JOR/20/50/USA; RAB/20/01/CHE; YEM/21/01/RBS]
- Active projects: # 23
- Not started: # 1(JOR/23/06/NOR)
- Included in synthesis review: #2 projects. [JOR/20/50/USA and YEM/21/01/RBS]

The evaluation will consider 25 projects including all 23 active projects and two projects recently finished, [JOR/19/04/UNE ; RAB/20/01/CHE] not included in the Synthesis review.

2-) Geographical distribution:

	Jordan	Lebanon	Yemen	Palestine	Subregional (Jordan & Palestine) incl. ILO UNWOMEN JP	Regional	Total
#	11	6	2	1	4	1	25
%	44%	24%	8%	4%	16%	4%	100%

3.) Gender Marker values

GEEW mainstreamed (Value 2):	21 projects (84%)
GEEW as principal objective (Value 3) INT/18/03/UNW (case study); JOR/21/03/NOR; JOR/22/02/CAN; JOR/23/53/USA and LBN/21/01/RBS	4 projects (16%)

4.-) **Program and Budget (P&B) 2024-25**

Outcomes and outputs covered by the 25 projects

OUTCOMES	OUTPUTS
Outcome 1: Strong, modernized normative action for social justice	Output 1.1. Increased capacity of Member States to ratify international labour standards
	Output 1.3. Increased capacity of constituents, partners and stakeholders to engage with normative action
Outcome 2: Strong, representative and influential tripartite constituents and effective social dialogue	Output 2.2. Increased institutional, technical, representational and policy impact capacities of workers' organizations
	Output 2.3. Increased capacity of Members States to make social dialogue more influential and labour relations institutions and processes more effective
Outcome 3: Full and productive employment for just transitions	Output 3.1. Increased capacity of Member States to develop comprehensive employment policy frameworks
	Output 3.2. Increased capacity of Member States to develop inclusive, sustainable and resilient skills and lifelong learning systems
	Output 3.3. Increased capacity of Member States to formulate and implement policies and strategies for creating decent work in rural areas
	Output 3.4. Increased capacity of Member States to develop effective and efficient labour market programmes and services to support transitions
Outcome 4: Sustainable enterprises for inclusive growth and decent work	Output 4.3. Increased support for enterprises – especially MSMEs – to achieve decent work and improve productivity
Outcome 5: Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all	Output 5.1. Increased capacity of Member States to design and implement a transformative agenda on gender equality, non-discrimination and inclusion
	Output 5.2. Increased capacity of constituents to promote investments and decent work in the care economy
	Output 5.3. Increased capacity of constituents to prevent and address discrimination-based violence and harassment at work
Outcome 7: Universal social protection	Output 7.1. Increased capacity of Member States to develop social protection strategies, policies and legal frameworks that are inclusive, gender-responsive and sustainable
	Output 7.2. Increased capacity of Member States to strengthen social protection systems and ensure sustainable and adequate financing and sound governance
	Output 7.3. Increased capacity of Member States to harness social protection for inclusive life and work transitions and structural transformations
Outcome 8: Integrated policy and institutional responses for social justice through decent work	Output 8.3. Improved coherence in support and action to facilitate just transitions towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies
	Output 8.5. Improved coherence in support and action to promote decent work in crises and post-crisis situations

5.) **Evaluation Status**

Projects with evaluations recently completed	1
Projects with evaluations ongoing or finishing in forthcoming months	5
Projects with planned mid-term/final independent and/or internal evaluations*	15
Projects with planned self-evaluations	4
Total	25

*Includes the ILO-UN WOMEN JP (INT/18/03/UNW) evaluation

Sample projects proposal for in-country case studies

This proposal considers four case studies according to the ILO ROAS priorities. In addition to the thematic case study focusing on the ILO UNWOMEN Joint Project, five interventions are considered for the other three case studies. Table 1 shows the finally selected projects on which the analysis will focus in order to produce the evaluation findings.

The proposed selection allows for a nuanced overview of how ILO GEEW work is implemented in different countries (4), as in addition to Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine - covered by the UN Women JP project - a fourth country, Lebanon is selected.

The proposal includes a balanced mix of interventions: three with a gender equality focus and three with a gender mainstreaming focus. This allows for the coverage of all active Outcome 5 outputs and selected Outcome 2 and 8 outputs.

Finally, the selected sample aims to avoid overlap or duplication of evaluation efforts by focusing on projects that will not be evaluated in the forthcoming period - either because no formal evaluation is planned (self-evaluation projects) or because planned mid-term and/or final evaluations are not foreseen in the short term. In this respect, no project already covered by the Synthesis Review has been included.

Table 1. Case studies and proposed sample of projects

Case Study	Code	Project title	Locations	GEM Marker	ILO Outputs	Evaluation Status
Thematic (ILO-UNWOMEN JP)	INT/18/03/UNW	Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine (Funds from Sweden)	Jordan, OPT and Egypt	3	Output 5.3. Increased capacity of constituents to prevent and address discrimination-based violence and harassment at work	Mid-term accomplished.
Jordan country study	JOR/21/03/NOR	Advancing Decent Work for Women to Achieve Economic Development	Jordan	3	Output 5.3. Increased capacity of constituents to prevent and address discrimination-based violence and harassment at work	Self-evaluation
	GLO/23/14/UN D	Climate Change, disability inclusion and intersectionality multi country programme		2	Output 8.3. Improved coherence in support and action to facilitate just transitions towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies Output 5.1. Increased capacity of Member States to design and implement a transformative agenda on gender equality, non-discrimination and inclusion	Final evaluation
Lebanon country study	LBN/23/01/RBS A	Women's Empowerment in the Context of the Care Economy (WE Care) -	Lebanon	2	Output 5.2. Increased capacity of constituents to promote investments and decent work in the care economy	Final internal
	LBN/21/01/RBS	Women in Management Initiative (WIMIN) – supporting women to reach management and leadership positions in firms and workers' and employers' organisations		3	Output 2.1. Increased institutional capacity of employer and business membership organizations to be strong, independent and representative Output 2.2. Increased institutional, technical, representational and policy impact capacities of workers' organizations Output 5.1. Increased capacity of Member States to design and implement a transformative agenda on gender equality, non-discrimination and inclusion	

OPT Case study	PSE/22/02/KWT	Labour Market Governance	OPT	2	Output 5.1. Increased capacity of Member States to design and implement a transformative agenda on gender equality, non-discrimination and inclusion Output 5.2. Increased capacity of constituents to promote investments and decent work in the care economy Output 5.3. Increased capacity of constituents to prevent and address discrimination-based violence and harassment at work	Self- evaluation
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Evaluation questions and interventions that will be used to answer them

Table 2 indicates which evaluation questions we consider appropriate to answer with the proposed sample, and which others we propose to cover with the full set of GEEW interventions supported by the ILO

Table 2. Evaluations questions and projects to be taken into account

RELEVANCE
1. To what extent is the ILO GEEW work in the Arab States responding to the stated needs of ILO's constituencies and the specific needs of the affected population in the countries where GEEW-oriented initiatives are implemented? Are gender and inclusion issues/challenges in the world of work recognized at the national level and by ILO constituents as areas requiring action? 2. To what extent is the ILO GEEW work in the region aligned with internal ILO GEEW frameworks and policies, and to what extent are those frameworks and policies relevant in the Arab States region? 3. To what extent is the design of the sampled projects (e.g. vertical and horizontal logic) relevant to achieve expected results and to meaningfully contribute to GEEW goals?
COHERENCE
4. To what extent do the ILO gender-focused projects in the Arab States work in synergy with other relevant ILO interventions at the global, regional and country levels? 5. To what extent does the ILO's work on GEEW complement other regional and national efforts in the Arab States to promote gender equality? 6. To what extent does the ILO work on GEEW complement SIDA's broad approach to gender equality and employment /decent work? What opportunities lie in maximising the contribution to this global framework?
EFFECTIVENESS
7. What measurable results has ILO achieved in its gender focus areas, either intended or unintended? What is the comparative advantage of ILO's work on GEEW, and how has it been considered more effective in achieving GEEW results in the Arab States? 8. What are the main internal and external factors influencing ILO's ability to make progress towards GEEW results during the period under review?
EFFICIENCY
9. To what extent and how is the ILO ensuring that projects /programmes are designed and delivered cost-efficiently? What processes are working well and why?

9.a To what extent is gender-sensitive budgeting considered and implemented in relevant GEEW initiatives?		
ORIENTATION TO IMPACT		
10. How do the ILO GEEW-related interventions contribute to fostering long-term positive impact in the Arab States?		Sampled projects
10.a What are the key progress/achievements so far on gender equality, non-discrimination and inclusion, as perceived/expressed by ILO constituents?		All projects
11. To what extent have the project's outcomes contributed to advancing sustainable development objectives (as per UNSDCF, similar UN programming frameworks, national sustainable development plans, and SDGs)?		Sampled projects
SUSTAINABILITY		
12. What measures have been taken or are expected to be taken by the ILO at global, regional and national levels to ensure the sustainability of GEEW-related outcomes beyond the projects' lifespan in the region?		Sampled projects

ANNEX 7. LIST OF PROJECTS

# of projects	Project code	Project title	Start-End Date	Country	Deliverable Status	Gender Marker
1	GLO/23/14/UND	Climate Change, disability inclusion and intersectionality multi country programme	Sep 23- Jul 25	Jordan/Somalia /South Africa	In progress	GED-2
2	INT/18/03/UNW (case study)	Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine.	Jan 19-Aug 24	Jordan /Palestinian Territory	In progress	GED-3
3	INT/20/02/EUR	Social dialogue for formalization and employability in the Southern Neighborhood Region (SOLIFEM)	Mar 21- Aug 24	Jordan/ Palestinian Territory (MENA)	In progress	GED-2
4	JOR/17/02/IBR	Support to the MSSRP to assess, monitor and increase the labour-intensity of its capital investments		Jordan /Palestinian Territory	In progress	GED-2
5	JOR/19/04/UNE	Decent Jobs for Cultural Heritage	Oct 20-Jan 24	Jordan	Finished	GED-2
6	JOR/20/01/EUR	Towards an inclusive national social protection system and accelerating decent job opportunities for Syrians and vulnerable Jordanians	Sept 20- Dec 2024	Jordan	In progress	GED-2
7	JOR/20/04/MUL	Etidama++ Fund – Formalization and Extension of Coverage	Oct 20- May 24	Jordan	In progress	GED-2
8	JOR/20/05/JOR	Technical advisory services for strengthening, extension and reform of social security programmes in Jordan, including the Tenth Actuarial Review of the Social Security Corporation	Jan 21 -Dec 24	Jordan	In progress	GED-2
9	JOR/21/01/USA	Formalizing Access to the Legal Labour Market for Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan – Phase III	Sept 21 - Mar 24 Completed ?	Jordan	In progress	GED-2
10	JOR/21/03/NOR	Advancing Decent Work for Women to Achieve Economic Development - Jordan	Dec 21 - Jan24	Jordan	In progress	GED-3
11	JOR/22/01/ITA	Towards a more inclusive economy through immediate job generation and enterprise development for vulnerable refugees and host communities in Jordan _ Phase II	Mar 23- Mar 25	Jordan	In progress	GED-2
12	JOR/22/02/CAN	Building Capacity for a More Inclusive and Fair Working Environment for Workers and Trade Union	Feb -22 - Mar 25	Jordan	In progress	GED-3
13	JOR/22/03/DEU	Employment through Labour Intensive Infrastructure Programme in Jordan - Phase VI	Oct 22- Aug 24	Jordan	In progress	GED-2

14	JOR/23/53/USA	Better Work Jordan Mental Health Project (2024-2025)	Nov 19 - Dec 25	Jordan	In progress	GED-3
15	JOR/23/54/NLD	PROSPECTS – Improving Prospects for Host Communities and Forcibly Displaced Persons in Jordan (Phase 2)	Nov 23 – Dec 27	Jordan	In progress	GED-2
16	LBN/20/03/DEU	Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme in Lebanon Phase IV		Lebanon	In progress	GED-2
17	LBN/22/01/EUR	Improving living conditions and resilience of refugees displaced by the Syrian crisis and vulnerable hosting communities in Lebanon	Jan 23 – Dec 25	Lebanon	In progress	GED-2
18	LBN/22/03/DEU	Employment Intensive Infrastructure Programme in Lebanon- Phase V	Dec 22 – Dec 25	Lebanon	In progress	GED-2
19	LBN/23/01/RBS	Women's empowerment in the context of the care economy (WE Care) - Supporting women-led care cooperatives to change perceptions and policy in the care sector.	Apr 23 – Sept 24	Lebanon	Finished	GED-2
20	LBN/23/01/SWE	Promoting decent jobs for Lebanese host communities and Syrian refugees	Jul 23 – Jun 25	Lebanon	In progress	GED-2
21	LBN/21/01/RBS	Women in Management Initiative (WIMIN) –supporting women to reach management and leadership positions in firms and workers' and employers' organisations	Sept 21- Jan 24	Lebanon	Finished	GED-3
22	LBN/23/50/NLD	PROSPECTS – Improving Prospects for Host Communities and Forcibly Displaced Persons in Lebanon (Phase 2)	Nov 23 – Dec 27	Lebanon	In progress	GED-2
23	PSE/22/02/KWT	Labour Market Governance	NA – Dec 24	Palestinian Territory	In progress	GED-2
25	YEM/21/01/UND	Enhancing Rural Resilience in Yemen Phase III (ERRY III): Supporting Resilient Livelihoods and Food Security in Yemen (UNDP with funding from EC and SIDA)	Mar 22 – Feb 25	Yemen	In progress	GED-2

ANNEX 8. PROTOCOLS FOR INTERVIEWS AND FGD

The following interview protocols provide examples of guiding questions for three respondent groups:

1. ILO ROAS regional and national management and programme staff
2. Country-level partners including workers associations, private sector entities and NGOs
3. Country-level duty bearing stakeholders (governmental entities)

The questions are based on the Evaluation Matrix and linkages to the evaluation criteria are included within each protocol. During the data collection phase of the evaluation, these interview protocols will be further tailored and customized for each stakeholder group to take into account the specific role, relevance and contribution of each stakeholder.

Standardized Introduction for Interviews

My name is [] We are working with Artival, an independent Research & Evaluation consulting firm leading these evaluation on the ILO gender work in the Arab region. We have contacted you following the contact details provided by [...] We would like to conversate with you, as XXX , to gather:

(alternative for ILO regional staff) your thoughts, suggestions, insights and recommendations regarding ILO GEEW work in XXX on [specific topic] and, more generally, in the Arab States *(alternative for ILO project staff and national constituencies)* to get your feedback on the design, implementation and effectiveness on the XXX project

Thank you again for your participation. We expect this interview to take about one hour, maybe a little more. Please let me know if that works well for you. If you'd prefer, we can also schedule a follow-up interview.

Please feel free to speak freely, as everything is confidential. There will be no direct quotes in any of the reports unless you specifically request us to do so. All the information gathered through interviews is kept confidential and use only for the sole purpose of the exercise. In this regard, would you mind if we record the interview

Do you have any question prior to the interview?

Guiding Questions

ILO ROAS regional and national management and programme staff

Timeframe for discussion: 60 minutes maximum

RELEVANCE

1. To what extent has it been possible for the ILO team to consult / maintain a continuous dialogue with the different actors (constituencies, partners, bellwethers, beneficiaries)? - *at the thematic, national/regional, project level* - in order to gather their visions and expectations? How and at which level/which stakeholders? If it has not been possible, why? What barriers to conducting consultations/maintain dialogue exist?
2. How do the national/project constituencies and ~~partners~~ perceive gender and inclusion issues in the world of work) (Prompt: *in general, in the care economy; women's access to jobs; equal pay; harassment at work*)? Do they recognize gender and inclusion challenges as areas needing action? How – could you please elaborate? Were they aware of such challenges? Were they prioritized in their strategies/practices? What challenges did you face in “getting them on board?”
3. So, to what extent is this intervention / the ILO GEEW work in the Arab States appropriate to the national/ regional context?
4. How would you assess the strategic focus of the ILO ROAS GEEW work at the national and regional levels? To what extend is it and comprehensive /tackling the most pressing issues?
5. In your opinion, what type of gaps would be ILO helping to close in in the country and or in the region in terms (Prompt: *women access to employment / equal pay; are economy, discrimination and harassment*) Are there other agencies already working on this ?

COHERENCE

6. To what extent and how are interventions focusing on Gender Equality outcome are linked /connected whether at regional /global levels? Would you say there is certain complementary? (Prompt: *covering same issues from different angles, internal distribution of work, working with different partners*)
7. In that case what would be the added value of complementarities /partnerships (prompt: *leverage more funding; efficiency; increased influence*)
8. Is there any sharing of expertise among GEEW focused initiatives? If so, of what type?
9. Do you feel there is enough technical capacity to advance on a gender transformative agenda at the country office level/ regional office level? What are the limitations, and the opportunities?
10. Are you aware of other interventions supported by the donor SIDA in the region? To what extent does this initiative /ILO GEEW work complement them?

EFFECTIVENESS

11. How has the ILO engaged with stakeholders during program planning and implementation? Who have been /are the main project/country partners? ((MoL – General Confederation of Lebanese Workers – Social Workers Syndicate).
12. How else has the project/ILO consulted with final beneficiaries during the project cycle? Are there mechanisms in place to regularly collect and incorporate their feedback? Are these mechanisms common across projects in country/region?
13. Regarding reaching the project's outcomes, how did the actual outcomes compare to the targets/ Were there any significant successes or gaps? Can you elaborate more (any unintended result)?
14. What key factors contributed to meeting or missing the projects/ILO country portfolio on gender) targets, especially with regards to GEEW?

15. Were there any unexpected challenges or opportunities that influenced the project outcomes?
16. What is the comparative advantage of ILO in this project and more generally in the country /Arab States?
17. Are there any key lessons learnt that you could point to us? Any key recommendation for the future ILO work on GEEW?

EFFICIENCY

18. Can you describe how the ILO ensures that GEEW focused projects are designed and delivered cost-efficiently? What specific processes or strategies are in place to ensure cost-efficiency in these projects?
19. Are there any examples where cost-saving measures were successfully implemented without compromising the quality of the outcomes? (For example, cost sharing)
20. What processes are working well and why? What processes are working less well? To what extent the program /initiative has been able to adapt to a changing context? How?

ORIENTATION TO IMPACT

21. Can you describe the long-term impacts of the intervention outcomes? In your opinion, what are the most significant changes or outcomes that have resulted from this project? How do you think these changes will be sustained over time? Are there any specific examples or success stories you can share that demonstrate these long-term positive impacts?
22. Would you say that this response holds true to the rest of GEEW work in the country/regional level? How so? Could you please elaborate – or provide project examples where long-term impacts of GEEW work sustained?

SUSTAINABILITY

23. What steps have been taken in the project to ensure that the gender equality and women's empowerment (GEEW) outcomes will continue after the project ends? (Prompt: *for example agreements or plans to continue or expand complaint and referral mechanisms – changes to policy framework – or commitments to continue provision of support to coops for example*)

ENDING

- Are there any other constituencies/entities that you recommend that would be helpful in informing this evaluation?
- Any experts whether from ILO or outside?

Country level implementing partners

Timeframe for discussion: 45 minutes maximum

No	Guiding Question	Criteria
0	Can you briefly describe your role with your organization/ agency? Since when have you been in your position? Please tell us about your agency's/organization's work related to GEEW? What is your level of co-operation and partnership with ILO in this area?	Introductory/ clarification of stakeholder role

1	a) To what extent do you think ILO GEEW work in the country/ Arab States is appropriate to the national/ regional context? b) To what extent are current trends (economic, political, social, cultural) supporting or posing challenges to ILO's programmes?	Relevance
2	What do you see as ILO' comparative advantage compared with other UN entities and partners to advance the GEEW agenda?	Effectiveness
3	In relation to the programme that you have been involved with, to what extent have stakeholders/beneficiaries involved in the design and implementation of the programme?	Relevance
4	From your perspective, how effective has the programme been? What have the main achievements been? Have there been any unexpected outcomes from your activities? What have been the main enabling and hindering factors to achievement or non-achievement of project results?	Effectiveness
5	To what extent did the programme results contribute to addressing the underlying causes of inequality and discrimination? Have the rights and needs of marginalised women, including women with disabilities been effectively addressed through the project? Are any groups underserved?	Relevance
6	To what extent has the intervention been cost effective? Could the results have been achieved at a lower cost or by adopting alternative approaches/delivery mechanisms?	Efficiency
7	As an IP, what guidance/support have you received from ILO to apply human rights and results-based approaches in terms of monitoring and reporting?	Efficiency
8	To what extent has ILO's organisational structure, project management approach and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the delivery of programme results? Do you have any suggestions to strengthen this?	Efficiency
9	As the program is about to end or has ended, what is the likelihood that the benefits will be maintained for a reasonable long period of time? (<i>Highly likely, likely, somewhat likely, not likely</i>) What factors are critical to sustainability of the programme results? How committed are the national/local governments to advance GEWE? Do they recognize gender and inclusion challenges as areas needing action?	Sustainability
10	Lessons learnt: Based on your experience with the programme, which approaches and strategies do you think are the most effective?	Lessons learnt / effectiveness

	Are there any innovations/good practices that should be scaled up?	
11	What do you see are the main trends, development issues and challenges the ILO in [Country/them] should address in its future programming?	Formative recommendations

Government stakeholders

Timeframe for discussion: 45 minutes maximum

No	Guiding question	Criteria
0	Can you briefly describe your position and involvement and cooperation with ILO? Since when you have been in your position?	Introductory /clarification of stakeholder role and linkage with ILO
1.	To what extent have ILO's interventions been aligned with the needs/priorities of your ministry/ government/ organisation? Relevance	Relevance
2.	What has been the main result/benefit from your partnership with/support from ILO Please share some examples with us. (Prompt: <i>on women's access to employment; equal pay; discrimination and harassment in the workplace; care policies /economy</i>)	Effectiveness
3.	What factors had the greatest influence (positive and/or negative) on the effectiveness of GEWE work in the country?	Effectiveness
4.	What do you see as ILO's comparative advantage in addressing GEWE compared to other UN entities and key partners? (Prompt: <i>legislative /normative reform; capacity building; research (statistics) technical assistance; tripartite structure</i>) To what extent do you think ILO has adequate skills and experience to support actions implemented with your organisation?	Efficiency / Effectiveness
5.	How has your understanding about GE changed as a result of ILO's support? How have you been able to apply knowledge gained through training/technical assistance? Please identify any areas where any capacity gaps remain and where further support is needed. <i>For line Ministries (to chose the most relevant):</i> a) What are the priority needs of women in your area? b) To what extent do ILO's interventions adequately address the root causes of gender inequality in your area? c) Do you see any wider changes as a result of work on gender issues, either positive or negative?	Sustainability

	d) What factors are making the greatest contribution to bringing about gender equality and women's empowerment in your area? e) What do you see as the main barriers and opportunities faced by advocates of gender equality? f) To what extent has your cooperation/engagement with women's groups changed as a result of the project?	
6.	If ILO's interventions were to end, what is the likelihood that the benefits will be maintained for a reasonable long period of time? What factors are critical to sustainability of the project results?	Sustainability
7.	How 'institutionalised' is GEWE capacity? How well are institutions (at central and local levels) / partners (private sector and trade unions) able to implement and monitor laws, plans, policies and international commitments related to GEWE? To what extent is there commitment and technical capacity to sustain GEWE progress across the government?	Sustainability
8.	Lessons learnt: Based on your engagement with ILO, which of its approaches and strategies do you think are the most effective in advancing GEWE?	Lessons learnt / Effectiveness
9.	What do you see are the main trends, development issues and challenges the ILO in XXX should address in its next DWCP / GEWE interventions?	Formative

Do you have any additional recommendations or observations that you would like to share with us?

Focus Group Discussion Guide for Beneficiaries

(Main activities: training and awareness sessions)

Introduction (5 minutes)

- Welcome and thank participants for their time.
- Introduction and purpose of the discussion.
- Explain that the discussion is confidential and that there are no right or wrong answers.
- Explain the discussion is voluntary and that they have no obligation for continuing the conversation if they want to quit at any time.
- Outline the topics to be covered: relevance, effectiveness, use, sustainability, changes in lives or work, scalability, and replicability. (in suitable terminology)
- Set ground rules (e.g., respect others' opinions, one person speaks at a time).
- Participant introductions: Name, position, organization/company/entity (if any)

Participants Participation (5 minutes):

Could you please share which specific training or awareness sessions you participated in? (Probe for details: type of training, duration, frequency, etc.)

Section 1: Relevance (10 minutes)

1. Perception of Needs
 - How did you first hear about this training/awareness/activity?
 - What were the main reasons you decided to participate in the training/activity?
 - To what extent did the activity or training content address your needs and concerns related to gender equality, inclusion, and decent work?
2. Contextual Fit
 - How well did the training topics align with the challenges you face in your daily life or work?
 - Were there any topics that were particularly relevant or irrelevant to your situation?
3. Consultation
 - Were you consulted or asked for your input during the design phase of these activities? If so, how was your feedback used?

Section 2: Effectiveness (10 minutes)

1. Learning Outcomes
 - What were the key lessons or skills you gained from the training?
 - How well do you feel you understood the concepts presented in the training?
2. Application
 - Have you been able to apply what you learned in your daily life or work? If so, how?
 - Can you share specific examples where the training helped you address a challenge or improve a situation?

Section 3: Use and Sustainability (15 minutes)

1. Utilization
 - How often do you refer back to the information or skills you learned during the training?
 - Are there any barriers that have prevented you from using what you learned?
2. Sustainability of Results
 - What changes, if any, have you observed in your work or personal life since attending the training?
 - Do you think these changes will last over time? Why or why not?
 - If part of an organization: What changes, if any have you observed/made in the company's policies or structures?
 - How has this affected the organizations/company's performance on gender equality and women empowerment (probe for decent work standards, leadership positions, decision making)? (Also probe for specific instances or actions taken)
3. Support and Resources
 - What kind of support or resources would help you continue to use what you learned?

- Do you feel the training provided you with adequate follow-up or ongoing support?

Section 4: Impact and Change (15 minutes) (if not responded to before or not clearly for triangulation)

1. Personal/Work Impact

- How has the training impacted your attitude towards gender equality, inclusion, and decent work?

2. Wider Impact

- Has the training influenced the culture or practices of your workplace? How?

Consultation and Feedback (5 minutes)

- Have you had the opportunity to provide feedback to ILO or the training provider after the sessions? How was your feedback received and acted upon?

Section 5: Scalability and Replicability (10 minutes)

1. Scalability

- Do you think this training could benefit others in your community or workplace? Why or why not?
- What changes would you suggest to improve the training if it were to be offered to a larger group?

2. Replicability

- Can this training be easily adapted for other groups or contexts? What modifications might be necessary?

Closing (5 minutes)

- Ask if there's anything else participants would like to add.
- Thank participants for their contributions.
- Provide information on any next steps (e.g., follow-up contact, how the information will be used).

ANNEX 9. TERMS OF REFERENCE

Thematic evaluation on gender work in the region with emphasis on the SIDA-funded ILO-UNWOMEN Joint Project

1. Introduction and context

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is committed to achieving gender equality and non-discrimination in the world of work, which are among the themes of the fundamental labour standards. Two of eight ILO fundamental conventions relate to gender equality, the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No.100) and Discrimination, (Employment and Occupation) Convention 1958 (No.111), and the principles and rights enshrined in those Conventions are found in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work. In line with the 1999 ILO gender equality and mainstreaming policy, as an organisation dedicated to fundamental human rights and social justice, ILO must take a leading role in international efforts to promote and realise gender equality, including supporting gender-responsive delivery of the Decent Work Agenda.

The ILO is committed to the UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEEW). In addition to regularly reporting to the ILO Governing Body, the Office also reports annually on implementation results to UN Women, which coordinates online reporting and publishes technical notes on indicators and their methodology.

The ILO recognises the critical importance of gender equality and women's empowerment in achieving sustainable development and social justice and supports the incorporation of a gender dimension in ILO/donor partnership agreements and gender analysis before planning and implementation of programmes, so as to increase equality of opportunity for women and men to participate in and benefit from all programmes. It also involves on the one hand gender mainstreaming to include women's and men's priorities and needs in all policies and programmes, and on the other hand specific interventions designed to empower one or the other sex, generally women as they are more likely to experience gender-based social, political or economic disadvantage.

The ILO has been implementing interventions in the Arab States (from now on, the region) to advance gender equality and women's empowerment in the world of work. Consequently, the Regional Office for the Arab States (ROAS) plans to undertake a thematic evaluation on gender work conducted in the region, putting particular focus to relevant initiatives with a clear GEEW focus. In this area, the ILO, in partnership with UN Women, has been implementing the project "Promoting Productive Employment and Decent Work for Women in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine", funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). This initiative is one of the most salient GEEW initiatives for the ILO in the region, and it is to have a prominent focus in the thematic evaluation.

Background to the evaluation

As a first step in the process of preparing the grounds for a gender thematic evaluation in the Arab States region, the ILO has conducted a Synthesis review of “Project Evaluations: Gender Work in the Region” to provide a consolidated overview of ILO's work on gender issues in the Arab States in the period 2018-2023, including achievements, good practices and lessons learned, and recommendations to identify potential areas of intervention in the future.

The synthesis review produced findings related to the OECD-DAC criteria of ILO's work on gender in ROAS, as documented and analysed in project-level evaluations of Technical/Development cooperation projects. Based on the evaluation reports assessed (24 linked to 22 different initiatives), the synthesis review examined ILO's areas of work on GEEW, achievements, opportunities, and challenges, identifying trends or recurring themes. The document contributes to guiding the design of the thematic evaluation by building up and reflecting the findings, practices and recommendations included in the report.

As already mentioned, the ILO is implementing the joint initiative with UN Women funded by SIDA. The initiative is a 4-year multi-country programme promoting productive and decent employment opportunities and treatment for women in Egypt, Jordan, and the occupied Palestinian territory. Aligned with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 5 and 8 on gender equality, decent work, and economic growth, the programme aims to address the structural causes of inequalities that women face in these countries and that hinder women from enjoying equal opportunities for decent work and reaching their full economic potential. The thematic evaluation is expected to shed light on the achievements, challenges and opportunities of this initiative to contribute to expected goals.

2. Purpose, Scope, and Clients

The evaluation will have a strong forward looking, improvement-oriented focus, so as to maximize the capacity of existing GEEW oriented projects to contribute to their expected goals. Therefore, the evaluation will aim at studying existing efforts in the context in which they operate, to identify opportunities and challenges. The **accountability-oriented focus** will be mainly addressed for the ILO-UN women joint initiative that finishes in June 2024.

As introduced, the primary objective of this thematic evaluation is to comprehensively examine ILO's current efforts in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment in the region, with a special focus on the ILO-UN Women joint project. The evaluation will seek to map the ongoing efforts on gender and then evaluate these interventions considering the OECD-DAC criteria. Ultimately, this evaluation will help the ILO strategize its gender-related future regional interventions and develop a regional-level gender action plan. Furthermore, the findings and recommendations can help other key regional actors, like SIDA, assess and analyse future strategies for its work in the region.

This evaluation will cover the work of ILO on GEEW (including GEEW for women with disabilities) active in 2024. The evaluation will address current efforts to institutionally mainstream gender equality in the Arab region, potentially including all relevant countries

covered in the region⁵⁰. The evaluation will look at how gender equality and mainstreaming (GEM) is or is not designed, implemented, and used in line with ILO's policy and technical work, to realize ILO's goal of gender equality and decent work. In addition, it will address coherence at different levels, focusing on SIDAs work and the global framework on GEEW and how this is being utilised and implemented in the regional projects. The purpose of the evaluation of gender work in the region with emphasis on the SIDA-funded ILO-UNWOMEN Joint Project is to:

- ✓ Assess the overall work of the ILO ROAS on GEEW based on the sampled scope of projects with gender focus, with particular attention to the ILO-UN Women joint project as a case study within the broader context of ILO's gender work in the region.
- ✓ Understand to what extent ILO policy and technical work on GEEW are followed/utilized to advance GEEW in designing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating progress on GEEW
- ✓ Review ILO's comparative advantages on GEEW work and the level of complementarities and coherence sought with other relevant players and donors working on gender equality-related initiatives within the UN system and beyond.
- ✓ Provide recommendations on strengthening existing gender equality and mainstreaming efforts and how future strategies should be designed and implemented in the region.

The evaluation will take stock of the progress accomplished and GEEW results achieved by active projects since 2024 (including the SIDA-funded ILO-UNWOMEN Joint Project) and is expected to support learning among key stakeholders to inform the implementation process of existing initiatives. The main users of the evaluation include:

- Project teams and other field staff
- ILO Regional Office of Arab States (ROAS)
- ILO Project Offices
- ILO GEEW focal points and units
- ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL)
- ILO constituents
- Donors

3. Suggested Key Evaluation Questions

The evaluation questions are centred on OECD-DAC criteria of (i) relevance (e.g. "fit for purpose" and "validity of design"), (ii) coherence, (iii) effectiveness, (iv) efficiency, (v) orientation to impact, and (vi) sustainability of ILO's GEEW efforts in the Arab region. The following are some initial overall evaluation questions to be addressed and adjusted during the inception phase:

RELEVANCE

⁵⁰ Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the occupied Palestinian territory, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, the Syrian Arab Republic, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

13. To what extent is the ILO GEEW work in the Arab States responding to the stated needs of ILO's constituencies and the specific needs of the affected population in the countries where GEEW-oriented initiatives are implemented? Are gender and inclusion issues/challenges in the world of work recognized at the national level and by ILO constituents as areas requiring action?
14. To what extent is the ILO GEEW work in the region aligned with internal ILO GEEW frameworks and policies, and to what extent are those frameworks and policies relevant in the Arab States region?
15. To what extent is the design of the sampled projects (e.g. vertical and horizontal logic) relevant to achieve expected results and to meaningfully contribute to GEEW goals?

COHERENCE

16. To what extent do the ILO gender-focused projects in the Arab States work in synergy with other relevant ILO interventions at the global, regional and country levels?
17. To what extent does the ILO's work on GEEW complement other regional and national efforts in the Arab States to promote gender equality?
18. To what extent does the ILO work on GEEW complement SIDA's broad approach to gender equality and employment /decent work? What opportunities lie in maximising the contribution to this global framework?

EFFECTIVENESS

19. What measurable results has ILO achieved in its gender focus areas⁵¹, either intended or unintended? What is the comparative advantage of ILO's work on GEEW, and how has it been considered more effective in achieving GEEW results in the Arab States?
20. What are the main internal and external factors influencing ILO's ability to make progress towards GEEW results during the period under review?

EFFICIENCY

21. To what extent and how is the ILO ensuring that projects /programmes are designed and delivered cost-efficiently? What processes are working well and why? To what extent is gender-sensitive budgeting considered and implemented in relevant GEEW initiatives?

ORIENTATION TO IMPACT

22. How do the ILO GEEW-related interventions contribute to fostering long-term positive impacts⁵² in the Arab States? What are the key progress/achievements
-

⁵¹ (1) policy development and law reform, (2) gender responsive labour market governance; (3) skills development, (4) Gender equal workplace practices; (5) organising and collective bargain.
<https://www.ilo.org/resource/gender-equality-arab-states>

⁵² As considered by ILO, the following: (1) Equality of opportunity and treatment in employment, (2) Equal remuneration for work of equal value, (3) Equal participation and representation in decision-making processes

so far on gender equality, non-discrimination and inclusion, as perceived/expressed by ILO constituents?

23. To what extent have the project's outcomes contributed to advancing sustainable development objectives (as per UNSDCF, similar UN programming frameworks, national sustainable development plans, and SDGs)?

SUSTAINABILITY

24. What measures have been taken or are expected to be taken by the ILO at global, regional and national levels to ensure the sustainability of GEEW-related outcomes beyond the projects' lifespan in the region?
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4. Methodology and Approach

4.1 Overall approach.

The evaluation will be transparent, inclusive, participatory, and gender and human rights responsive. The evaluation will apply multiple methods; both qualitative and quantitative evaluation approaches should be considered for this evaluation. These complementary methods and collection of different sources of data will be deployed to ensure that the evaluation:

- ✓ Responds to the needs of users and their intended use of the evaluation results.
- ✓ integrates gender and human rights principles throughout the evaluation process, including participation and consultation with key stakeholders (rights holders and duty-bearers).
- ✓ Triangulates the data collected to provide reliable information on the extent of results and benefits of support for particular stakeholders, especially vulnerable and marginalised groups.

As the evaluation focused on GEEW, the evaluation indicators, methodology, and data-gathering technique should fully consider gender responsiveness by using the GRES scale. The evaluation team should review data and information disaggregated by sex and gender and involve both men and women in the consultation, evaluation analysis, and evaluation team. The team should use gender-inclusive methodologies to ensure that all views and perspectives, especially of women, are gathered and represented and follow the ILO EVAL Supplementary Guidance Note: Integrating gender equality in ILO monitoring and evaluation (2023).

The evaluation team should identify all relevant GEEW active projects in the region, mainly those that consider gender responsive and gender transformative goals as per the

in the economic, social and labour fields, (4) Freedom of association and protection of the right to organise, (5) Balance between work and family life fair for both men and women, (6) Equal access to safe work and to social security, including maternity protection, and (7) Equality in obtaining a meaningful career development.

GRES scale. Based on the results, **a sample of the projects will be selected to focus the analysis** and produce in-depth results. The depth of the analysis will correlate with the number of projects selected, and therefore, that selection should be carefully justified during the inception phase.

The evaluation team will draft the **evaluation matrix**, including key questions, rationale, and necessary indicators, during the inception phase once the final scope of the evaluation is agreed upon by ILO representatives. They will consider input from key informants and assess the usefulness and feasibility of each question with the evaluation manager to finalise them.

The methodology will include examining the **Theory of Change** of sampled projects to assess the logical connection between the levels of results and their alignment with the ILO's strategic objectives. Particular attention will be given to identifying assumptions, risk and mitigation strategies, and the logical connection between levels of results and their alignment with ILO's strategic objectives and outcomes at the global and national levels, as well as with the relevant SDGs and related targets.

To assess orientation to impact and higher-level goals, the evaluation should partially or entirely consider qualitative methodological approaches to establish plausible and evidence-based levels of contribution to expected and unexpected results. Approaches such as Outcome Harvesting⁵³ and the Most Significant Change⁵⁴ could be considered in this context.

5.2 Case study approach

The case studies are designed to examine how the GEEW interventions are planned and executed and the outcomes they achieve in program countries, both nationally and regionally. Each case study will use various sources and types of evidence (both quantitative and qualitative) to ensure their findings are valid. The evaluation will include both desk reviews and field-based country case studies. Case studies will be illustrative rather than statistically representative.

The evaluation will consider four case studies according to ILO ROAS's priorities. Two in-country case studies will focus on the work done in Lebanon and Jordan since these countries have more prominent GEEW-related initiatives. Another remote case study will focus on the work done in a third country, which will still be determined based on the final sample of reports identified. Finally, a fourth partially remote case study will focus on the work done in the context of the ILO-UN Women joint project and interventions in Jordan, OPT and Egypt to identify the main priorities for future programming. The total number of days for the data collection phase is 20, which in principle will be distributed on around 4-5 for each case study, as additional time will be allocated for informants at the global level and other informants.

The evaluation will be conducted in a participatory manner by engaging the stakeholders at different levels and ensuring that they have a say about the implementation

⁵³ <https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/approaches/outcome-harvesting>

⁵⁴ <https://www.betterevaluation.org/methods-approaches/approaches/most-significant-change>

of the selected projects, can share their views, contribute to the evaluation and participate in dissemination processes.

The evaluation team will elaborate on the details of the methodology based on the Terms of Reference (TORs) and the inception report, which is subject to EVAL's approval. The evaluation team is expected to apply mixed methods, which draw on both quantitative and qualitative evidence and involve multiple means of analysis. The methodology for the collection of evidence should be implemented in three phases: (1) an inception phase based on a review of existing documents to produce an inception report; (2) a fieldwork phase to collect and analyse primary data; and (3) a data analysis and reporting phase to produce the final evaluation report. The mixed methods include but are not limited to:

- √ **Desk review** of relevant documents, including the Theory of Change/logical frameworks, progress and evaluation reports, ILO strategic and programming documents, etc. The evaluation team is expected to gather qualitative and quantitative data by reviewing documents, websites, and online databases with relevant information, including financial data and key indicators that measure output progress and outcome changes.
- √ **Interviews and group discussions** (in-person and remote) of key stakeholders should reflect a diversity of backgrounds inside and outside the Offices. The initial protocols for focus group discussions will be created during the inception phase and finalised before field visits. While organising these discussions, care will be taken to ensure gender balance, geographic distribution, cultural sensitivity, and representation of all population groups and stakeholders at various levels (constituents, service providers, target groups, etc). The evaluation team will particularly consider the categories of stakeholders targeted by the evaluation when selecting the type of focus groups (e.g., socially homogeneous groups vs. groups with differing viewpoints), if applicable. Overall, the evaluation will conduct 40-45 interviews/group discussions.
- √ **On-line survey** to obtain feedback and/or information from constituents (target groups) and other key stakeholders that cannot be reached through interviews and group discussions. A survey can efficiently gather data from a larger population sample targeted by the evaluation. To conduct a survey, the evaluation team will create a clear and straightforward questionnaire that respondents can easily understand and answer. By analysing quantitative and qualitative data (the latter often gathered from open-ended questions), evaluators can measure and compare the significance of different opinions.
- √ **On-site observation during the in-country fieldwork** will be conducted in Jordan and Lebanon. Evaluators can collect data by directly watching individuals (e.g., service providers interacting with direct beneficiaries) or indirectly by observing the results of these behaviours (e.g., checking business and dynamics at the place of work). Site visits enable evaluators to see what is happening where the ILO GEEW interventions are implemented, thus enhancing their understanding of these interventions and their impacts.

The evaluation team may add additional criteria. The inception report should present a detailed evaluation approach and a range of specific methodologies.

5. Main Outputs

A. Inception report in English, including an outline of the report (to be submitted electronically to the evaluation manager). This report will be up to 20 pages long and will propose the methods, sources, and procedures for data collection. It will also include a proposed timeline for activities and the submission of deliverables. The evaluation team will share the initial draft of the inception report with the evaluation manager to seek her/his comments and suggestions. The inception report should be in line with the [ILO EVAL Office Checklist](#).

B. Draft Final Report in English that should include:

- ✓ Executive Summary with key findings, conclusions and recommendations
- ✓ Evaluation background (purpose, scope, clients, methodology)
- ✓ Findings
- ✓ Conclusions and recommendations (identifying which stakeholders are responsible)
- ✓ Lessons learned & good practices, using separate templates provided by ILO EVAL
- ✓ Appendices including the TORs, inception report, and a list of those consulted.

This draft will be app. 40-50 pages plus executive summary and appendices. It shall also contain an executive summary of max. five pages, the body of the draft report shall include a brief description of the projects, their contexts and current situations, the purpose of the evaluation, their methodology, and their major findings, conclusions, and recommendations. The Evaluation Manager will disseminate the draft final report to all key stakeholders and concerned ILO officials for inputs and comments.

C. Debriefing/Presentation of preliminary findings:

The evaluation team will participate in a debriefing meeting to present the preliminary findings of the evaluation report.

D. Final Report in English incorporating feedback from stakeholders on the draft and a consolidated table of the comments and how the evaluator has responded to each comment or why not.

The Final Evaluation Report should be submitted electronically to the evaluation manager. The ILO Evaluation Office will approve the final report. Upon approval, ILO will disseminate it to all key project stakeholders and concerned ILO officials.

E. An evaluation summary using the ILO Summary template.

It is expected that the Evaluation Report, within identified results areas, will cover quantifiable progress - or not – on gender-related outcomes, indicators and/or strategies and activities based on available information, whether corresponding strategies and indicative activities were successfully launched or completed; good practices and challenges in

implementing these result areas and short analytical assessment of progress and difficulties in implementation in the Arab region.

6. Deliverables and Timeframe

The proposed time frame for this evaluation is from June to September 2024 (50 working days) by the following tentative schedule:

Phase/Deliverable	Number of working days	Timeline
Desk review and preparation of Inception Report and evaluation framework	10	End July 2024
Data collection	20	August 2024
Draft Evaluation Report	17	Beginning October 2024
Final Evaluation Report (following ILO feedback) and summary	3	End of October 2024
Total days	50	

7. The evaluation team

This evaluation will be carried out by a multidisciplinary team that will be externally recruited. The team members (and/or the company they work for) will not have been involved in the design, implementation, or monitoring of any of the projects to be considered for the evaluation during the period under review, nor will they have any other conflict of interest or bias on the subject.

The evaluation team will consist of the following:

- ✓ A core team composed of two evaluators, including a team leader
- ✓ Supported by (a) a methodological expert and (b) a quality control

The team members must communicate clearly in English and have excellent analytical and drafting skills.

The team leader must have at least ten years of extensive experience in leading evaluations of a similar size, complexity and character, as well as technical expertise in the areas related to ILO's work and GEEW and experience in assessing relevant initiatives in developing countries and/or humanitarian settings. The team leader should also have experience in gender and human rights, particularly assessing programmes that employ human rights-based approaches or target poor and marginalised women. His/her primary responsibilities will be:

- ✓ guiding and managing the team throughout the evaluation phases
- ✓ setting out the methodological approach
- ✓ conduct data collection (remotely or in-country)
- ✓ reviewing and consolidating the team members' inputs to ensure the quality and timeliness of the evaluation deliverables

- ✓ liaising with the ILO evaluation manager and representing the evaluation team in meetings with stakeholders
- ✓ delivering the inception reports, and evaluation report, all other relevant outputs established in this ToR.

The team members will bring together a complementary and balanced combination of the necessary technical expertise in the thematic areas directly relevant to the evaluation, including a local expert fully acquainted with the realities in the region, particularly in the areas of interest already described. The team members should also have expertise in human rights and the work of ILO. The team members should have at least ten years of individual experience in their respective areas of technical expertise. The team members will:

- ✓ contribute to the design of the evaluation methodology
- ✓ undertake an in-depth documentary review
- ✓ conduct fieldwork (remotely and in-country) to generate additional evidence from field visits and consultations with a wide range of stakeholders
- ✓ participate in team meetings, including with stakeholders
- ✓ prepare inputs and make contributions to the evaluation deliverables
- ✓ fulfilling tasks and assuming responsibilities included but not limited to section 10 to ensure full compliance with the present term of reference.

The evaluation team must ensure that the local expert has all the necessary qualifications and experience to plan and organize the field work and actively participate in data collection and reporting.

8. Management and Responsibilities

The project team and ROAS will support the evaluation team by providing documentation support and facilitating access to information, key informants, and other sources relevant to the evaluation. Such support includes identifying similar evaluations, a list of key stakeholders, a list and abstracts of key documents, and guidance on GEM-related documents.

The ILO Regional M&E officer will provide quality assurance and support on all key outputs.

9. Evaluator's Code of Conduct and Ethical Considerations

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