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Independent Final Evaluation of the Global Scale of Digital Wages Project

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Key Words: digital wages, decent work, formalisation, responsible business conduct

This evaluation has been conducted according to ILO’s evaluation policies and procedures. It has not been professionally edited but has undergone quality control by the ILO Evaluation Office.

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Abbreviations

ABC	Association of Banks in Cambodia
AIMS	African Institute for Mathematical Sciences
APINDO	Asosiasi Pengusaha Indonesia
ATM	Automated Teller Machine
BFC	Better Factories Cambodia
BMGF	Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
BSP	Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas
BSR	Business for Social Responsibility
BTCA	Better Than Cash Alliance
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
ECOP	Employers Confederation of the Philippines
EPIC	Empowering People for Inclusive and Connected Societies
EQ	Evaluation Question
FSP	Financial Service Provider
HR	Human Resources
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITC-ILO	International Training Centre-ILO
KYC	Know-Your-Customer
MSMEs	Micro, Small, and Medium-sized Enterprises
MTPE	Ministerio de Trabajo y Promoción del Empleo
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIE	International Organisation of Employers

RISE	Reimagining Industry to Support Equality
SCORE	Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
SNKI	Strategi Nasional Keuangan Inklusif
TAFTAC	Textile, Apparel, Footwear and Travel Goods Association in Cambodia
ToC	Theory of Change
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations

Executive Summary

Background

The International Labour Organization (ILO) implemented the Global Scale of Digital Wages Project, an initiative funded by the Gates Foundation[1] and led by the ILO Social Finance Unit. The project aimed at promoting the transition from cash to responsible digital wage payments at country and global levels, thereby advancing the Decent Work Agenda by improving workers' income security, resilience, and economic opportunities. With a budget of USD 4.71 million, it was originally planned for 2021-2023, extended three times at no additional cost, and concluded in November 2025; among the reasons causing the delays was the pandemic. Global activities were coordinated from Geneva, with country interventions in Cambodia, Indonesia, Peru, and the Philippines.

The project operated through three components: country interventions supporting diagnostic work, social dialogue, and tailored national plans; research and knowledge management to generate evidence and provide tools and guidance; and advocacy to elevate digital wages globally and inform policy and regulatory debates. These components aimed to achieve five outcomes: establish a Global Centre on Digital Wage Payments, strengthen regulatory and financial ecosystems in four countries, build enterprise capacity to transition responsibly, raise global visibility, and support Member States in adopting good practices. Together, these outcomes were expected to help achieve the project guiding outcomes: more than 20 million workers gain first-time or improved access to secure digital wages and enable at least 15 countries to integrate responsible digital wage practices into labour policies – contributing to the development objective. Activities included capacity development, technical support for legal and regulatory reforms, and applied research to strengthen the evidence base for responsible digital wage systems.

Project components, outcomes, development objective

[1] Formerly known as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The ILO engaged the team of orange & teal to conduct an independent final evaluation of the project .

Evaluation objectives

The evaluation, conducted during September-December 2025, assesses the project using the OECD DAC criteria relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. It responds to 14 evaluation questions. Furthermore, the evaluation provides recommendations to inform future interventions and identifies lessons learned and good practice. The evaluation is intended for ILO constituents, ILO headquarters and country offices, and donors, while also providing insights for a broader range of stakeholders.

Methods

The evaluation was conducted using a mixed-methods approach, drawing on document review, individual and group interviews, and contribution analysis to explore how project activities plausibly influenced observed outcomes. Our approach was guided by OECD DAC evaluation standards (including quality, criteria application, and safeguarding principles) as well as relevant ILO guidance. We reviewed core project documents – such as the Investment Document, annual and country work plans, progress reports, budget sheets, results briefs, and steering committee materials – and complemented these with external studies on digital wages. In total, we conducted 41 semi-structured interviews with 66 participants. This included in-person interviews in Cambodia, Indonesia, and PeruTable 1: Interviews. Key stakeholders also participated in two validation meetings to provide feedback on preliminary findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

Findings

The main findings, structured by OECD DAC criteria, are as follows:

Relevance: Digital wage payments clearly respond to current needs, and the stakeholders across countries recognised their potential to lead to positive outcomes such as improved financial inclusion. Employers viewed digital wages as a tool that improves efficiency and reduces risks. While workers and their representatives recognised benefits too, the topic was not always seen as a core priority. They raised concerns about fees, gaps in financial literacy and uneven financial infrastructure. The project was well aligned with national priorities related to formalisation, financial inclusion and digitalisation, and supported government agendas in all four countries. It also linked meaningfully to multiple ILO Programme and Budget outcomes and Decent Work Agenda elements. The project's underlying Theory of Change was clear for the project team in HQs and provided guidance. Conversely, some stakeholders did not fully understand the intervention pathways. Nonetheless, the ToC's flexible design enabled adaptation, and strong localisation by country teams helped ensure continued relevance.

Coherence: The project demonstrated coherence by building on earlier global initiatives to digitise payments and addressing gaps related to worker. Across countries, stakeholders recognised that the project drew on existing ILO initiatives and long-standing partnerships to design context-specific interventions. The global partnership model added technical expertise and convening power, although the collaboration became less tangible at the country level. The project used ILO's advantage as a tripartite organisation for policy dialogue and engagement with the constituents, although country-level engagement with workers' organisations was uneven.

Effectiveness: The project made progress across all five outcome areas. It achieved the establishment of the Global Centre (Outcome 1) and raised the profile of digital wage payments through research and global and national tripartite dialogue events (Outcome 4). Capacity building was valued in all four pilot countries, although the ambition of more conducive regulatory frameworks and financial ecosystems remains incomplete (Outcome 2). The project exceeded outreach targets for enterprise training but lacks the systematic and accessible documentation of best practice and learnings that was initially anticipated (Outcome 3). However, it did not reach the initial ambition to foster the adoption of good practices and standards that accelerate the transition to responsible and gender-intentional digital wage payments across ILO's member states (Outcome 5). Overall, the project demonstrated clear results, but they vary in depth and gaps in the monitoring frameworks limited the ability to assess results more precisely.

Efficiency: Across countries, the interviewees noted that activities were delivered on modest budgets and often leveraged existing institutions, partnerships and cost-sharing arrangements. Small investments were seen as catalytic, and staffing setup helped reduce expenses. The project team was widely regarded as committed and technically strong. Extensive consultations strengthened legitimacy and were seen as a great asset, but reduced available delivery time. Part-time staffing, administrative procedures and country-specific bureaucracies sometimes slowed progress. Some concerns were raised about an imbalance between staff costs and funds available for activities, which may have limited scale. Governance mechanisms functioned well initially but became less productive over time, and weak M&E systems limited the project's ability to steer implementation or generate outcome-level evidence. Overall, value for money was viewed positively.

Impact: The project contributed to raise awareness, access to digital wages and policy dialogue – particularly in Cambodia, where interviewees highlighted clearer payroll processes, reduced fraud and greater financial control. In Peru and Indonesia, the results show potential for improved formalisation and better regulatory frameworks, but most results remain at pilot stage. The lack of systematic outcome-level data means it is unclear whether the project is on track to reach its guiding outcomes of expanding access to digital wages for over 20 millions of workers or influencing policy across 15 countries as well as deeper behavioural change, worker empowerment and gender-responsive benefits. Given the enterprise and worker figures from the four participating countries, the quantitative target seems unlikely to have been achieved in the near future.

Sustainability: The evaluation finds promising but mixed prospects for sustainability and scale-up. The strongest signals come from government ministries and employer associations that have started integrating digital wages into regular programmes and national systems. Capacity-building efforts — such as training-of-trainers, e-learning modules, and national training systems — provide important foundations, although risks like staff turnover threaten their continuity in some countries. Interviewees stressed the need for continued technical assistance and government engagement. While the project provides models that are replicable, in theory, scaling will require contextualisation and prerequisites such as strong coordination mechanisms, integration into national systems and regulations, adaptable tools, local champions, and resources.

Conclusions

The project has delivered many concrete results and created valuable assets. The Global Centre on Digital Wages for Decent Work has become a recognised point of reference, and the project's tools, training packages, research products and country partnerships offer a strong basis for further work. Many stakeholders who were interviewed for the evaluation confirmed that the project has promoted and raised the profile of digital wage payments and that their capacity to work with the topic has been increased through trainings and events. There was appreciation for the project team's technical expertise and commitment, and interviewees showed ownership over what has been developed. This momentum creates an opportunity for the ILO to strengthen its leadership in the field, influence policy dialogue, and guidance to its constituents.

The project's additionality lies in promoting responsible digital wage practices that safeguard workers' rights and well-being, rather than accelerating wage digitalisation as an end in itself. Rapid advances driven by technology and market forces in financial services, enterprise management, and daily life worldwide create favourable conditions for the uptake and sustainability of digital wages. In this context, implementation has been easier and more cost-effective (in terms of cost per worker reached) when the project has primarily engaged large, formal enterprises, where a shift to digital payroll would likely occur over time anyway. In these settings, the business case for digital wages is stronger, ESG-related pressure from major buyers is higher, and financial ecosystems are typically more developed. However, among rural MSMEs and in the informal sector, constraints such as limited digital infrastructure, lower financial inclusion, weaker HR/payroll capacity, and higher trust and onboarding needs can increase delivery costs. Yet additionality is likely to be higher where baseline inclusive digital wages practices and worker protections are weaker, offering significant potential for impact when support is well targeted. This implies that the project's additionality varies by context; specifically, with whom and where it is generated.

Several strategic and operational questions have emerged that will shape future work. These include how to balance flexibility with clearer planning, how to best incorporate workers and their representatives, and whether to focus more deeply on a smaller number of countries, sectors and companies, or keep broader coverage. They also relate to how evidence can be generated for changes at outcome level, especially for workers, and which scaling pathways are suitable in contexts with low digital readiness or high informality.

Summing up, the project has created strong foundations and underscored the relevance of responsible digital wage payments. The second phase should build on these assets, address open strategic and operational questions, and focus on areas where the ILO can make the greatest difference. The following recommendations are formulated to support this direction.

Lessons learned and good practices

Several lessons learned and good practices were identified, including that:

- there are trade-offs in balancing quick gains in large, formal enterprises with the more time- and resource-intensive work needed to reach micro and small businesses,
- while digital wages can support formalisation, progress depends on context-specific solutions, evidence and learning to overcome regulatory, infrastructure and trust barriers,

- the experience in Peru shows how evidence-based collaboration can strengthen national regulation and build capacity for data-driven policymaking on digital wage payments.

Recommendations

The report provides recommendations at strategic and project-level, in line with the evaluation's overall scope :

1. Strengthening worker-centred approaches to digital wage payments.
2. Strengthen support to employers (enterprise support system)
3. Develop clear scaling and sustainability strategies
4. Clearly aligned objective and Theory of Change
5. Strengthen M&E systems to enhance learning, communication, and evidence generation across pilot interventions
6. Explore pathways to integrate digital wages into core labour standards

1. Introduction

The International Labour Organization (ILO) commissioned orange & teal to conduct the independent final evaluation of the Digital Wages for Decent Work Project. This report contains the evaluation's findings, conclusions, and recommendations, responding to the evaluation questions as defined in the inception phase.

Aligned with the requirements of the Terms of Reference and the inception report,[2] the report is divided into seven chapters: Introduction, Objective, Approach, Findings, Conclusions, Lessons Learned and Good Practices, and Recommendations. The report's annexes provide additional information, including selected lessons learned and good practices.

2. Objective

The main objectives of the final evaluation are to assess the project's performance using the OECD DAC criteria. Specifically, the evaluation shall:

- Assess the project's performance applying the OECD DAC evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability).
- Identify lessons learned and good practice and provide recommendations to improve design and implementation to maximise the outcomes of similar future projects.

The evaluation responds to 14 evaluation questions, as specified in the inception report. The evaluation matrix, detailing the evaluation question and probes as well as the sources of information, is available in Annex 2.

The evaluation covers the 2021-2025 period[3] and focuses on both planned and unplanned outputs and outcomes. It covers all implementation countries, to varying degrees. Comparatively more resources were allocated to Cambodia, Indonesia and Peru, countries that were identified as particularly important for organisational learning and expected to yield more insights for the evaluation questions. They correspond to topics of interest expressed by evaluation stakeholders — including mainstreaming of digital wages and complementarities between different project components — and are reflected in the evaluation matrix probes.

The intended audience of the report are the ILO, the ILO constituents, the project stakeholders and the Gates Foundation (project donor).

[2] The Inception Report was approved on 30 September 2025.

[3] The project was initially planned for 2021-2023 but was extended. From 1 December 2024 to 30 June 2025, Phases 1 and 2 were running in parallel. During this period, global-level activities were financed under the Phase 2 budget.

The project in a nutshell

The International Labour Organization (ILO) implemented the Global Scale of Digital Wages Project, an initiative funded by the Gates Foundation[4] and implemented by the ILO through its Social Finance Unit (ENTERPRISES Department). The project aimed at promoting the transition from cash to responsible digital wage payments at country and global levels, thereby advancing the ILO's Decent Work Agenda by improving workers' income security, resilience, and access to financial services.

With a total budget of USD 4.71 million, the project was initially planned for 2021-2023 but has been extended three times without additional costs, and concluded in November 2025. The project operated globally from the ILO headquarters in Geneva and implemented country-specific interventions. Grounded in World Bank financial inclusion data and partnerships like the Better Than Cash Alliance, it selected countries based on digital readiness, government commitment, and sector relevance: Cambodia, Indonesia, Peru, and the Philippines. [5]

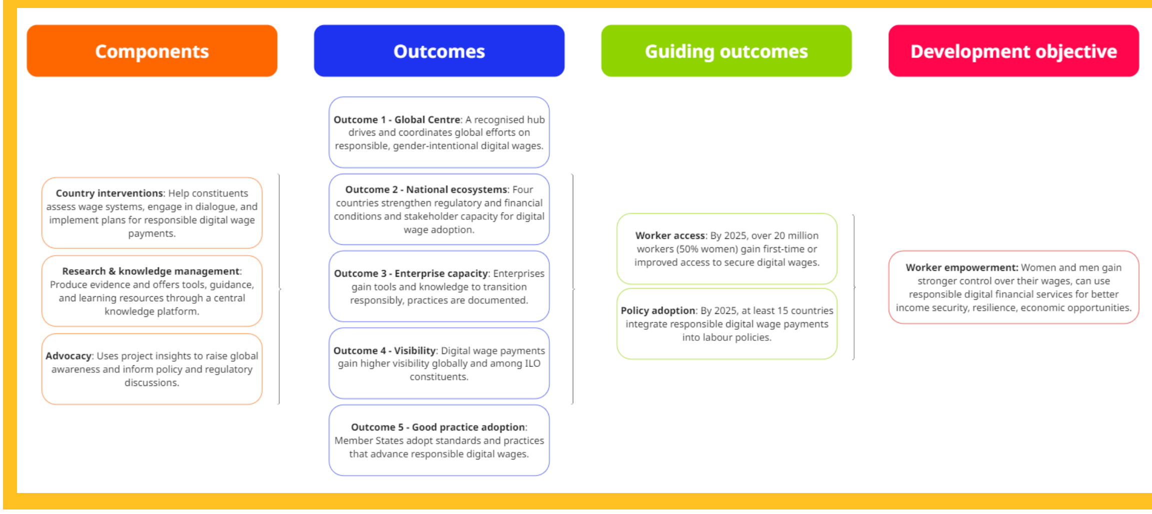
The project had three components designed to advance responsible digital wage payments at country and global levels. Country interventions focused on supporting governments, employers, and workers through diagnostic assessments, stakeholder consultations, and tailored national work plans that promote responsible wage digitalisation. A research and knowledge management component aimed at generating and disseminating evidence on the costs, benefits, and good practices of digital wage payments, while developing a digital repository of tools, guidance materials, and learning platforms. The advocacy component used this evidence and the project's pilots to raise the global profile of digital wages, engage ILO constituents and financial service providers, and inform regulatory and policy frameworks.

Together, these components are intended to contribute to five outcomes. These include the establishment of a Global Centre on Digital Wages for Decent Work and strengthened regulatory and financial ecosystems in four target countries. The project also seeks to build the capacity of enterprises to transition responsibly to digital wage payments and to make their documented good practices widely accessible. At the global level, the project aimed to increase the visibility of digital wage payments among ILO constituents and support the adoption of standards and good practices by Member States. Taken together, these outcomes should contribute to two "guiding outcomes": enabling more than 20 million workers to gain first-time or improved access to secure digital wage payments, and supporting at least 15 countries to integrate responsible digital wage practices into their labour policies – and ultimately to the development objective.

To achieve these outcomes, activities have included capacity development for key actors, technical support for legal and regulatory analysis and reform, and applied research to reinforce the evidence base underpinning responsible digital wage payment systems.

The project was coordinated by the Social Finance Unit in Geneva, with backstopping from other ILO units. Field-level implementation was carried out in collaboration with ILO country offices, national constituents, and technical partners, ensuring alignment with international labour standards, gender equality, and financial inclusion priorities.

Figure 1: Project components, outcomes, and development objective



[4] Formerly known as the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

[5] Initially, six countries – including Kenya and Mexico – were identified for in-depth interventions. The focus was later narrowed to four: Cambodia, Indonesia, Peru, and the Philippines.

3. Approach

In the following, we briefly describe how the evaluation was conducted, including data collection methods and sources of information, to address the evaluation questions that guided our focus (Annex 2).

We used a mixed methods approach, which comprised document review as well as individual and group interviews. We also explored how the project activities plausibly influenced the observed outcomes, using evidence collected through various methods (contribution analysis). Our approach was informed by the OECD DAC Standards (including the Quality Standards for Development Evaluation, and "Applying Evaluation Criteria Thoughtfully" and "Protection of people involved in evaluation" guidelines) as well as ILO's relevant guidance notes and standards.

Document review: We reviewed the documentation shared by the project technical teams, including the initial Investment Document, annual and country work plans, the progress reports and budget expenditure sheets, various results briefs, and steering committee documents. In addition, we researched studies on digital wages to complement and validate the findings of the evaluation.

Individual and group interviews: We conducted 18 on-line, semi-structured interviews involving 25 individuals as shown in Table 1. Furthermore, we conducted 23 in-person, semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in Cambodia, Indonesia, and Peru during the three country visits (for more details see Annex 3 and Annex 4).[6] To ensure gender balance and involvement of different stakeholder groups, we conducted more interviews than initially outlined in the inception report.

Table 1: Interviews

Level	Interviews	Virtual	Face-to-face
Global	11	11	0
Cambodia	9	1	8
Indonesia	10	2	8
Peru	8	1	7
Philippines, the	3	3	0

Validation: Two online workshops on 4 December 2025 and written comments on the draft report provided opportunities for stakeholder participation and feedback.

The evaluation was carried out in line with the inception report, with only minor adjustments. Data and information were gathered from multiple sources and perspectives within the time available, providing a solid foundation for the analysis.

Nonetheless, several **challenges** and **limitations** should be noted:

- The project's M&E partly lacks baseline, clear targets, and achievement data – especially at outcome levels – which limited the assessment of overall performance; to mitigate,

[6] Cambodia: 23-24 October 2025; Indonesia: 23-24 October 2025; Peru: 28-30 October 2025.

we triangulated information from project reports with insights from interviews and supplemented these with additional research.

- The evaluation covers the period December 2020 to November 2025, while the progress reports only include information up to June 2025, limiting the evidence base for the final months; in the interviews, however, we were covering the entire timeline.
- The global-level activities carried out between December 2024 and November 2025 were funded through a Phase 2 budget line, but this was neither clearly shown in progress reports nor evident for interviewees and therefore it is not reflected in the evaluation report neither. However, in our view, the specific funding arrangement does not affect the main findings or recommendations of the evaluation.

In combination, the mitigation measures and the triangulation of data sources helped ensure a robust information base for the evaluation.

We adhered to ethical guidelines and data security in the following ways:

- Interview participants were provided information on the purpose of the evaluation, their involvement, and their rights, to ensure receiving informed consent.
- Information we obtained was de-identified, and we generally allowed for interviewees to decline to answer questions if they so preferred.
- Recordings, transcripts, memos, and contact information will be deleted six months after completion of the evaluation; recordings were only done based on prior consent.

4. Findings

This chapter contains the findings of the evaluation questions (EQ) as presented in the evaluation matrix in Annex 2.

4.1. Relevance

In terms of relevance (EQ1-3), we examine the degree to which the project objectives were consistent with national development priorities and the needs of partners and beneficiaries; the extent to which the intervention contributed to relevant ILO Programme and Budget Outcomes; and whether the project design was adequate, realistic, and appropriate to achieve its intended objectives.

Interviews highlighted that digital wages respond to a clear and pressing need, with hundreds of millions of workers worldwide still paid in cash. Across stakeholder groups, there was broad agreement on the immediate advantages: improving workers' financial inclusion and increasing the efficiency of wage payments. However, interviewees had differing views – and in many cases less clarity – on how the transition needs to be implemented in a responsible manner, and how digital wages could and should be used as a cross-cutting enabler for a variety of other objectives related to formalisation, sustainable enterprise growth, and social protection. These differences were not only expressed along tripartite lines but also varied depending on the companies and workers represented.

Employers consistently viewed digital wage payments as a modernisation tool that improves payroll efficiency, strengthens financial record-keeping, and reduces risks related to the financial vulnerability of their workers impacting morale and productivity. Companies emphasised simpler processes as well as time and security gains. A company in Cambodia mentioned, for instance, *"before we spent 1 day getting the money and 2–3 days counting… now the boss just clicks and the money goes."* Others stressed the safety and reliability for workers, noting that *"almost every month… the worker lose the money"* when wages were paid in cash. In Indonesia, one interviewee warned that when workers become over-indebted, *"they would then lose their productivity… it becomes a vicious cycle."* Large export-oriented factories — especially in Cambodia — further emphasised compliance with buyer expectations, and risk reduction in handling large cash volumes. Meanwhile, employer organisations (OIE, APINDO, ECOP) highlight sector-wide benefits: competitiveness, modernisation, and alignment with national priorities.

Across contexts, employers stressed that successful implementation depends on enabling financial infrastructure, simplified regulations and sustained capacity-building, alongside efforts to ensure that workers' digital literacy and acceptance can keep pace with technological change. In Cambodia, adoption varied according to incentives and support available: factories linked to buyers, Better Factories Cambodia (BFC) oversight or COVID-19 pressures transitioned earlier, while those with weaker incentives and greater worker or operational constraints required more tailored support to shift responsibly. In Peru, informal business models, sector norms and limited financial services in some regions made full digitisation difficult, even when its advantages were recognised.

Workers representatives expressed mixed views. Interviewees recognised that digital wage payments can enhance transparency, safety, and reliability by providing clearer evidence of pay and reducing vulnerabilities such as theft or misuse of wages, particularly for women. At the same time, some representatives warned that hidden fees, weak infrastructure, and risky financial products can shift risks onto low-wage workers. One interviewee noted that safeguards like detailed pay slips, transparent information on fees were underemphasised. Representatives further highlighted that low digital and financial literacy among workers, especially in rural and low-wage settings, hinders progress. Finally, while representatives acknowledged the potential benefits, the topic was not always seen as a core priority, compared to topics related more directly to minimum wages, living wages, and collective bargaining. This was not uniformly the case, however. In Cambodia, unions become strong advocates for digital wage payments.

Workers themselves initially felt hesitant about shifting from cash wages to digital payments, largely due to concerns about administrative fees, bank requirements such as minimum balances, and uncertainty about how the system would work in practice. Workers interviewed in Cambodia and Indonesia — one group having already completed the transition and the other preparing for it — expressed an early preference for cash because it felt more accessible, avoided fees, and maintained the payment frequency they were used to. Over time, however, workers in both settings reported recognising key advantages of digital wages, particularly the greater safety and convenience of not carrying large amounts of cash home. In one group, acceptance was further strengthened after the company organised regular information sessions and the partner bank agreed to lower fees and reduce minimum balance requirements. As a result, workers became more open to and even curious about the new system. Many felt that digital payments could help them manage household finances more deliberately, although some remained unsure about what to expect, as this would be their first experience receiving wages through a bank account.

Across the four focus countries, the project was seen as aligned with national development priorities, particularly around formalisation, financial inclusion, wage protection and digitalisation. The ILO progress reports note how the investment is designed around country priorities on formalisation, financial inclusion and wage protection. This alignment was consistently confirmed by interviewees. In Cambodia, stakeholders highlighted strong links with the Digital Economy and Society Policy 2021–2035 and the National Financial Inclusion Strategy. Indonesian ministries and stakeholders related it to the Asta Cita vision and financial inclusion targets. In Peru, MTPE and regional actors connected the project to *Formalízate Ahora* and post-COVID digital labour reforms. In the Philippines, stakeholders saw the project as filling a clear gap in the government's broader digital payment ecosystem.

Government agencies agreed that the project is aligned with their own agendas on digitalisation and transparency, and MSME competitiveness. Representatives described the project as practically useful for their own work because it helped address real operational challenges they face, not just high-level policy goals. In Indonesia, officials noted that many rural MSMEs are "cash oriented," and described the digital wage project as a "trigger" for wider digitalisation and stronger financial management. The project is seen to support their own programs in these fields. In Cambodia, authorities underlined the significant improvement in wage transparency and labour administration through reliable and traceable payroll data across the garment sector. In Peru, where the context is marked by a predominance of small informal enterprises, tailored support was seen as essential for any shift to more formal and transparent wage practices. Officials were appreciative of the project's ability to provide practical resources — such as data analysis, training, and technical guidance — that help them work with highly informal sectors.

The project has included an explicit reference to digital wage payments in the 2026–2027 P&B draft formulation.[7] While digital wages were not an explicit target in the ILO's Programme and Budget (P&B) 2020-21, 2022-23 and 2024-25, the project related to multiple P&B outcomes,[8] including those referring to sustainable enterprises, labour standards and social protection. In principle, linkages can be made to almost all outcomes: Outcome 2 by strengthening international labour standards on fair wages and wage protection; Outcome 3 by promoting formalisation and the responsible use of technology in support of productive and freely chosen employment; Outcome 4 by increasing MSMEs' productivity and responsible business practices; Outcome 7 by strengthening wage protection and compliance mechanisms; and Outcome 8 by linking formal wage practices to contributory schemes. Moreover, it supported Outcome 6 by improving wage

[7] See Output 8.3. Increased capacity of Member States and the social partners to take advantage of the digitalization of services for decent work, paragraph 220.

[8] Both P&B 2020–21 and 2022–23 feature the same eight policy outcomes. Both biennia use the Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work as their organizing framework: 1) Strong tripartite constituents and influential and inclusive social dialogue. 2) International labour standards and authoritative and effective supervision. 3) Economic, social and environmental transitions for full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all. 4) Sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work. 5) Skills and lifelong learning to facilitate access to and transitions in the labour market. 6) Gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment for all in the world of work. 7) Adequate and effective protection at work for all. 8) Comprehensive and sustainable social protection for all. In the 2024–25 P&B, the ILO strengthened its outcome structure by placing greater emphasis on modernized normative action (Outcome 1) and on global-level policy frameworks and resilience in crises and post-crisis situations (Outcome 8). It also refined outcomes, particularly Outcome 8, to prioritise inclusive and just transitions, integrating cross-cutting priority action programmes to deliver more strategic and systemic impact.

transparency that can help address gender pay gaps. Regarding the partially modified framework in the 2024–25 P&B, the project also related to Outcome 1 by strengthening the normative frameworks for social justice. Finally, the project has included an explicit reference to digital wage payments as a tool to foster decent work in the 2026-2027 P&B draft formulation.

While digital wages are not explicitly mentioned in Decent Work Country Programmes, they are connected to their outcomes. DWCPs in participating countries typically emphasise MSME development within the digital economy (e.g. Indonesia 2020-2025), wage protection, improved working conditions in digital contexts and social security enrolment (Philippines 2020-2024), and closing digital gender gaps (e.g., Cambodia 2019-2023), as well as emerging issues such as platform work. Some interviewees viewed as a practical tool that brings the Decent Work Agenda "to the micro level," supporting more traceable employment relationships and responsible business practices. Across contexts, ILO staff saw the project as operationalising the Decent Work Agenda's pillars — rights, protection, social dialogue, and employment — while helping institutionalise digital wage systems within national systems.

The project design was perceived as ambitious and flexible, but at the same time lacking clarity for some stakeholders.[9] The global design was intentionally flexible, allowing for adaptation also at the country levels. However, while the project's design included numerous elements linked to research, advocacy, and country implementation, its underlying pathways were not sufficiently defined. Some interviewees highlighted that the design was "vague", making it unclear whom the project intended to influence at different stages, resulting in an unfocused approach. Partners noted that adaptation occurred mainly *"organically rather than systematically,"* suggesting a lack of formal mechanisms for learning and revision. As a result, while the flexibility supported experimentation and adaptation, it also diluted focus and hindered consistent and transparent measurement of outcomes.

There was broad agreement that the three components — advocacy, knowledge generation, and country implementation — were complementary and reinforcing one another, although some global partners highlighted gaps in joint planning and coordination to fully realise this potential. Interviewees noted that the design offered real scope for synergies, with evidence and diagnostics feeding advocacy, and training tools translating global guidance into practical support for enterprises and workers. However, perceptions of the project's coordination approach among partners were mixed: Some stakeholders stressed that the project team and partners tried to advance too many themes simultaneously, which led to overlapping activities, duplication of effort, and blurred accountability — *"At a country level... we've maybe struggled to identify tangible projects and roles and responsibilities to complement each other."* In their view, the lack of concrete joint workplans and clearer task division made it harder to achieve tangible results. Other partners, however, felt that the project's adaptive, more informal, and opportunity-driven approach was highly effective and appropriate for the context and the actors involved.

[9] Initially, the project relied on a linear narrative ToC set out in the 2020 Investment Document, which outlined the long-term impact, five to eight project outcomes, and a three components approach anchored in country-level interventions, knowledge generation, and advocacy. The support narrative also included other core elements such as potential risks, a gender perspective, and the use of ILO and stakeholders mandate and expertise. In 2021, the project developed a more comprehensive COM-B ToC, including a visual diagram, which introduced numerous new or reframed outcomes and outputs, as well as explicit assumptions and elements related to scaling up but was supported by little narrative or evidence supporting the assumptions. Instead, it included a M&E focused logical framework with five outcomes and indicators.

Country teams effectively localised the global framework, adapting it to context and partner needs. Country teams successfully translated the global model into locally grounded workplans through evidence based[10] and participatory design approaches, which was seen as a consistent strength across settings. In Cambodia, the ToC was *"localised through stakeholder consultation"* to create a step-by-step approach linking policy, enterprise training, and worker awareness. Indonesia's design evolved through co-creation, described by one partner as *"learning by doing,"* and guided by continuous consultation with employers, banks, and government. In Peru, a clear, phased and regionally adapted process connected diagnostics, training, and regulatory reform, described as *"logical, evidence-informed, and flexible to context."* This localisation strengthened ownership, and partially compensated for the conceptual ambiguities of the global framework.

4.2. Coherence

In relation to coherence (EQ 4-5), we assess the extent to which the project drew on previous thematically related experiences of the ILO and other organisations, and the extent to which it capitalised on the ILO's comparative advantage.[11]

The Global Centre on Digital Wages for Decent Work emerged in recognition of worker protection gaps in earlier digital wage payment programmes. The project built on a decade-long collaboration between the Gates Foundation, the Better Than Cash Alliance, and the World Bank to digitise payments for low-income workers, and on the ILO's engagement after it joined the Better Than Cash Alliance in late 2019. Global interviewees highlighted that earlier initiatives, including Business for Social Responsibility (BSR)'s HerFinance program (from around 2015) and ILO/IFC Better Work factory pilots, revealed persistent worker level hurdles, notably low financial literacy and transaction fees, losses due to corruption, and a widening of the gap between the formal and informal financial systems. These initiatives also demonstrated benefits such as greater transparency, lower administrative costs, and improved financial control for women workers. Interviewees further highlighted the project's intention in giving better voice to worker perspectives, filling a gap left by earlier payment initiatives that had focused primarily on institutions and employers.

At the country level as well, stakeholders viewed the project as building meaningfully on previous global and country-level experience. Key partners highlighted that the project drew successfully on a mix of prior ILO initiatives and existing national or partner-led digitalisation and financial inclusion efforts with support from HQs — such as Better Work/BFC structures,[12] RISE and Better Than Cash Alliance pilots, wage protection and formalisation programmes, and financial-education platforms — to design and implement context-specific interventions. Stakeholders noted that there was genuine buy-in and a sense that all parties were leveraging each other's strengths to shape the approach.

In **Cambodia,** implementation built on strong institutional experience and practical factory-level engagement. BFC's established advisory network, covering over 769 garment factories, enabled

[10] See rapid assessments for Indonesia, Peru and Kenya (Knowledge platform – Digital Wages).

[11] UN specialised agency, tripartite structure, international labour standards, mandate to promote decent work through social dialogue, global, regional and country level presence, engagement with tripartite constituents globally and nationally.

[12] See High-Level Evaluation of the ILO's Better Work Programme (2014-25) with a focus on Phase V Strategy (2022-27).

direct access to employers, brands and unions as well as real-time troubleshooting during rollout. Interviews show the team applied lessons from earlier Reimagining Industry to Support Equality (RISE)/HerFinance[13] – particularly on sequencing training, managing financial service providers' (FSP) engagement and responding to worker concerns and from Better Than Cash Alliance pilots. The Textile, Apparel, Footwear and Travel Goods Association of Cambodia (TAFTAC) brought prior experience from early digital wage pilots, while the Association of Banks (ABC) in Cambodia contributed lessons from the national Bakong payment platform.

In **Indonesia,** while the topic was new for most interviewees, one of the project's strengths was seen in its ability to build on a solid foundation of past ILO projects in Indonesia as well as partner experience, adapting familiar approaches to a fresh and innovative domain. It adapted ILO's proven training and coaching models from earlier SME capacity-building programs such as SCORE and SIYB, while incorporating lessons from Cambodia's work on digital wages. Government counterparts connected the initiative to their ongoing efforts in financial and digital inclusion, entrepreneurship, and job placement, viewing digital wages as a natural extension of earlier digitalisation and formalisation efforts. Business Development Service Providers reported how they built on long-standing collaboration with the ILO, revising materials and methods to fit Indonesian regulations and MSME contexts.

In **Peru,** the ILO's long-standing engagement with the country's formalisation and wage protection agenda provided the foundation for developing the project. Within this framework, the project deepened cooperation with the Ministry of Labour and Employment Promotion (Normative Directorate), ensuring that the emerging regulation was grounded in quantitative evidence and consistent with national policy tools and also embedded in formalisation initiatives (*Formalizate*). The project served as a platform to strengthen collaboration across government actors. Complementary inputs from the ILO's social finance and wage protection expertise helped situate the analysis within a broader decent work perspective and also advance on the capacity building objectives.

In the **Philippines,** the project built on prior ILO experience in financial education and SME development, leveraging established relationships with ECOP to reach firms and with the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) to embed content into national financial-education platforms, aligned with BSP's financial-inclusion and "cash-lite" agenda and broader government digitalisation strategies. Existing programmes that had adopted digital components during COVID-19 provided a natural foundation for shifting attention toward digitising wage payments — a relatively neglected area compared to e-commerce or marketing. ECOP's regional network supported training rollouts, while BSP's platform integration helped extend the project's reach nationally.

The global partnerships were regarded positively by key partners, especially during the development of the strategy and initial resource sharing. Stakeholders highlighted the expansion of digital wage initiatives into new geographies and the ILO's convening power to engage stakeholders, strengthen capacities and open space for potential normative change. The combination of diverse networks, technical expertise and policy access made the collaboration more influential than any actor working alone, with one interviewee describing it as *"lots of convening, sharing learnings, reading each other's reports, giving feedback"*. However, this initial dynamic weakened over time with some stakeholders emphasising that most collaboration remained at the global level (research, knowledge-sharing, learning calls), and there were very few

[13] BTC pilot was implemented in Bangladesh, hence outside the project under evaluation.

concrete examples of coordinated, in-country implementation (*"It does feel a little bit less tangible on the ground")*.

The project built on the ILO's comparative advantage as a specialised UN agency grounded in social dialogue, a global normative mandate, and a long-standing presence at global and country levels. The ILO's unique tripartite structure was widely recognised as a key institutional asset that, together with proactive project team facilitation, helped secure and maintain engagement across constituents. The ILO's established trust with governments and social partners, tripartite structure and normative focus on decent work and wage protection, positioned it well in the eyes of the key partners to address the policy and social dialogue dimensions of the project. Several interviewees noted that the ILO's worker-centred mandate brought an essential balance that had been missing in earlier programmes (which had not sufficiently incorporated workers' perspectives). This approach also helped open doors to strengthen or expand partnerships with initiatives such as RISE and the Better Than Cash Alliance, reinforcing the project's strategic positioning within the broader responsible digital payments ecosystem. Moreover, the design and guidance were anchored in the ILOs Decent Work principles and key ILO conventions — especially C95 (Concerning the protection of Wages, 1949) and C117 (Concerning basic aims and Standards of Social Policy, 1962) — aiming to align the transition to digital wages with the wider ILO mandate.

At the same time, country-level engagement across tripartite constituents was uneven regarding workers. Employers' organisations were consistently active and generally supportive, citing trust in the ILO and clear business benefits. Government engagement was also strong, particularly with labour ministries, central banks and regulatory agencies. However, worker-side engagement was more mixed: while trade unions in Cambodia and parts of the Philippines participated meaningfully, engagement in Indonesia and Peru was limited, with ILO country teams pointing to fragmentation and constrained capacity. In Indonesia, trade unions are seen as active primarily in larger companies where digital payments are more common, and focusing on other topics (wage setting, collective bargaining). This pattern was not mirrored at the global level, where workers' representatives were engaged on a more equal footing with their government and employer counterparts.

4.3. Effectiveness

For effectiveness (EQ6-8), the evaluation examines the extent to which the project objectives were achieved, the key internal and external factors that influenced those results, and the emergence of any unexpected positive or negative outcomes.

The initial investment document presents two sets of outcomes to be achieved throughout the course of the project: eight outcomes in the narrative "project overview" section and five outcomes in the tabular "investment results" section. While this reflects a restructuring, the two sets are broadly aligned in content.[14] The eight narrative outcomes are closer to outputs, whereas

[14] The narrative project outcomes "Workers in the intervention countries and the targeted enterprises receive their wages digitally …" and "A set of technical and policy guidance tools to support enterprises …" are merged in the tabular version into "A least 32 enterprises of different sizes, and in different sectors and countries, have the requisite tools and knowledge" (Outcome 3). The outcome "A series of publications on the impact of digital wage payments on the

the five tabular outcomes correspond more closely to higher-level outcomes that are not solely within the project's direct control. For the evaluation, the discussion below is structured along the five outcomes, while also referring to the additional outcomes in the discussion.[15]

Overall, the project has achieved two out of its five planned outcomes fully, and two partially. Against the outcomes set out in the 2020 project document, and based on progress reports up to July 2025 and interview data, the evaluation team assesses Outcomes 1 and 4 as fully achieved: the Global Centre has been established and recognised by key stakeholders, and a number of national and global knowledge-sharing and policy dialogue events have taken place. Outcomes 2 and 3 are partially achieved, showing uneven advances in country-level interventions. Outcome 5 has produced some progress regarding the review of labour policies but is falling short of achieving the original objective of fostering the adoption of good practices and standards across ILO member states.

The status of each outcome was determined based on the evaluation team's judgment, considering information from the interviews and available documents. While the information obtained provides general guidance on the level of achievement, the absence of specific targets, indicators and data for most outcomes, and the fact that multiple objectives are captured within each outcome statement, made it challenging to draw precise conclusions.

Table 2: Outcome achievement

Project Outcomes	Status
1. A Global Centre on Digital Wage Payments for Decent work is set up and recognized amongst key stakeholders as a leader and convenor in the promotion of responsible and gender-intentional digital wage payments	
2. Four selected countries will have created a more conducive regulatory framework and financial ecosystem, and built the capacity of employers and workers to support the transition from cash to digital wage payments	
3. A least 32 enterprises of different sizes, and in different sectors and countries, have the requisite tools and knowledge to responsibly transition to digital wage payments and the best practices drawn from their experiences and lessons learnt are documented and easily accessible.	
a. A set of technical and policy guidance tools to support enterprises of different sizes and engaged in different sectors to transition to responsible digital wage payments.	
b. Best practices drawn from their experiences and lessons learnt are documented and easily accessible.	

productivity and competitiveness of enterprises …" is reformulated as "The profile of digital wage payments is raised in general at global level …" (Outcome 4). Likewise, the outcomes "A global review of labour policies …" and "A review of existing standards and industry codes of practices …" are combined into "ILO Member States adopt good practices and standards …" (Outcome 5). Finally, "A series of national and global knowledge sharing and policy dialogue events…" links to both Outcomes 4 and 5.

[15] The project is also guided by a COM-B Theory of Change, developed in November 2021, which links project outputs to outcomes at both national and global levels. The ToC identifies five "second order outcomes," some of which include quantitative targets. Nearly all of these correspond to the outcomes presented in the investment document, either aligning with the project outcomes themselves or with the "guiding outcomes" discussed in the impact section. One additional element in the ToC is "second order outcome" 3 – "Financial service providers offer enterprises and the women and men workers they employ responsible financial services, including responsible digital wage payment solutions" – with a target of 4 financial service providers by 2023 and 15 by 2025.

4.The profile of digital wage payments is raised in general at global level, and among ILO tripartite constituents in particular, through research and consultations	●
a. A series of publications on the impact of digital wage payments on the productivity and competitiveness of enterprises, the formalisation of employment and respect of labour rights, and the workers' financial inclusion and empowerment (in particular women).	•
b. A series of national and global knowledge sharing and policy dialogue events on digital wage payments.	•
5. ILO Member States adopt good practices and standards that accelerate the transition to responsible and gender-intentional digital wage payments	●
a. A global review of labour policies that are supportive of, and antagonistic to, digital wage payments conducted at the beginning and end of the project to track progress (using a wide selection of countries in key regions).	•
b. A review of existing standards and industry codes of practices to determine whether digital wage payments are adequately reflected and initial steps to advocate for high level discussions on the transition to digital wage payments using ILO mechanisms.	•

Note: Green = Fully achieved, Yellow = Partly achieved, Red = Not achieved. Most sub-elements listed in the table are informed by the additional outcomes discussed in the narrative section of the Investment Document, while "Best practices drawn" is added to show the differences within outcome 3.

Outcome 1: A Global Centre on Digital Wage Payments for Decent work is set up and recognised

Stakeholders consistently affirm that the Global Centre on Digital Wage Payments is now a visible, credible actor in the global conversation on responsible wage digitisation. Internal assessments, as outlined in the progress reports, emphasise that Outcome 1 is fully achieved, backed by strong engagement metrics such as a website with 27,000+ views and 320+ resources and 575 newsletter subscribers. Furthermore, progress reports noted rising demand from governments and brands for collaboration and strengthened internal capacity within the ILO on responsible digital wages. Interviewees describe the Centre as a valuable global hub that has generated *"research, awareness-raising, global convening, and some training,"* while also producing high-quality guidance and technical briefs that have broadened understanding of responsible digital wage practices. They particularly note that the Centre ensured worker interests remained central — highlighting that it *"ensured digitisation efforts included worker benefit/literacy, not only corporate transparency"* — and that it helped bring worker associations to the table, which strengthened the legitimacy and inclusiveness of its outputs. Through events, dialogues, and toolkits, interviewees acknowledged the Centre as a convener capable of coordinating diverse stakeholders across governments, employers, unions, financial service providers, and multilateral partners.

The extent to which the Centre is viewed as a global leader in normative and policy terms is less clear. During interviews, stakeholders highlighted the importance of having reached a shared definition of digital wages, which provided an initial normative anchor for this work. However, some key partners perceived that the project felt short in influencing the international normative frameworks. While the steering committee initially meet quarterly to guide strategy and research, later on diminished to once or twice a year. Moreover, some interviewees perceived that most collaboration took place around global design, research, and learning events, with limited joint implementation or country-level strategy. While stakeholders praise the Centre for producing global knowledge, thought leadership, and responsible practice frameworks, they express a desire for clearer demonstration of how this work translates into sustained institutional adoption and measurable improvements for workers.

Outcome 2: Four selected countries will have created a more conducive regulatory framework and financial ecosystem, and built the capacity of employers and workers

The four pilot countries — Cambodia, Indonesia, Peru, and the Philippines — moved from initial diagnostics and to implementation, but with notable differences in depth and pace. Country-level partners were broadly positive about progress toward a more conducive environment for digital wages, highlighting gains in awareness, capacity building for employers and workers, stronger partnerships with financial institutions and initial improvements in the digital-wage ecosystem and regulatory frameworks. Project contributions to regulatory advancements were noted in all countries, but primarily these were related to ongoing policy dialogue and technical assistance and less to regulatory reform. In Cambodia, digital wages were integrated into national dialogue and administrative barriers for switching to digital payments were reduced. In Indonesia, while no dedicated regulation was issued or modified, government and ILO stakeholders noted that digital wages are now part of policy discussion. In Peru, the labour ministry, with ILO support in analysing electronic payroll data, strengthened national regulation on digital wages. Moreover, the project was perceived as a platform that increased collaboration among stakeholders and helped align agendas and foster a shared understanding. In the Philippines, the project contributed inputs to regulatory drafts like zero transaction fees for microtransactions, aiming to include digital wage payments in financial policies.

While the overall maturity of the sector was seen as a key element to assure progress on the project objectives by interviewees, the projects contribution to changes in the ecosystem were relatively small. In Cambodia, banks and MFIs participated in wage disbursement, worker onboarding and education sessions, and many integrated the national Bakong payments system. In Indonesia, banks were invited as guest speakers in trainings and awareness activities, to explain products and answer questions. In one of these workshops, participants asked whether fees could be lowered, which led a bank to lower payroll account monthly fees from 15,000 to 5,000 IDR for small business workers (equivalent to a reduction from about 0.9 to 0.3 USD). In Peru, some interviewees highlighted that the financial system began supporting digital wallets (e.g. Yape, Plin), thus facilitating the project's objectives, but this was not an achievement by the project. Collaboration overall was limited: *"Regarding the financial system, with banks and the private sector, we haven't had much traction. I think there needs to be a process of awareness-raising in that area, […] forming an alliance there would be fundamental,"* identifying this as one of the objectives for 2026. Finally, in the Philippines, the interviewees noted coordination with banks and other financial service providers to promote the opening of digital wage accounts – though challenges remain, particularly in changing commercial banks' mentality toward serving microenterprises.

Outcome 3: A least 32 enterprises […] have the requisite tools and knowledge to responsibly transition to digital wage payments and the best practices drawn from their experiences and lessons learnt are documented and easily accessible

The project has produced a series of well-framed and context-adapted technical and policy guidance tools to support enterprises and provide direction on digital wage payments. The project designed, tested, and rolled out a one-day training package on responsible wage digitisation for the garment sector in Cambodia, later adapted for smaller enterprises in Peru, the Philippines, and Indonesia. These tools provided step-by-step guidance for HR, payroll, and finance personnel on how to digitise wages responsibly — covering topics such as benefits of digital wage payments, setting up a payroll system, negotiating with financial service providers, addressing worker needs (particularly of women), and ensuring digital and financial literacy. The materials were complemented by short instructional and testimonial videos, used both for training and advocacy.

Partners in all four countries confirmed that the project's guidance tools and training materials were well developed and adapted to local needs through coordinated efforts with local trainers and/or partner institutions. Manuals and audiovisual products, including testimonial-based content, were considered valuable for ongoing training and knowledge sharing. Interviewees shared how these resources were integrated into specific programmes (e.g. BFC/TAFTAC, APINDO, MTPE, ECOP/BSP), where they were regarded as relevant and practically useful in guiding enterprises and workers through the transition to digital wages. However, some stakeholders noted delays at the outset, with project staff initiating training activities before materials were fully finalised.

Tailoring Digital Payroll Tools for Cusco's Tourism Sector

In Cusco (Peru), the project focused on adapting ILO tools on responsible wage digitisation for MSMEs (for business) and Financial education (for workers) to the local and sector-specific context, particularly tourism. The original content was reworked into trainer and participant manuals that used simple language, relevant examples, and practical exercises aligned with Peruvian regulations and workplace realities. Training combined in-person and virtual formats, with a strong emphasis on hands-on use of tools such as Excel templates for payroll and account management. Step-by-step demonstrations showed how to implement digital payroll, save and reuse interbank codes, and carry out everyday banking operations, making the tools feel accessible rather than intimidating — especially for workers with low digital literacy. Additional support was provided for workers with low digital literacy, covering topics from ATM use to securing virtual transactions to address fears about fraud. This combination of localised content, iterative improvements, and user-friendly tools helped make digital payroll more accessible

Several hundred enterprises have participated so far in the four countries, by far overshooting the original outreach target of 32. In Cambodia, the project team reports that over 150 factories have transitioned to digital wage payments through the project's and TAFTAC's direct support, benefiting more than 135'000 workers. For Indonesia, Peru, and the Philippines, the progress reports refer to a further 300 entrepreneurs who received training. In Indonesia, around 100 MSMEs across sectors (tourism, hospitality, construction, retail, food processing) received in-person training and follow-up coaching. In Peru, 66 small enterprises were trained during 2025, with over half adopting digital wages within four months and several formalising employment and registering workers for social security. In the Philippines, the programme trained approximately 100 SMEs on responsible digital wages through employer-organisation delivery. While it's difficult to determine from the reports and other sources exactly how many companies have been participating and how many have switched to digital wages, it's safe to say that this numerical target has been easily reached.

There is limited evidence on the extent of their uptake beyond immediate partner networks, particularly among smaller, rural or informal enterprises.[16] Country-level interviews in Peru and

[16] An ongoing impact assessment will provide further evidence on how the project's training has impacted SMEs' wage digitalisation in Peru and Indonesia.

the Philippines further suggest that, although SMEs valued the materials, sustained implementation of digital wages remained modest in these contexts, indicating that the tools' contribution to wider behavioural change is, at this stage, at best partial. Moreover, some stakeholders noted that project reporting focuses mainly on delivery of tools and trainings rather than on how many enterprises have actually changed their wage practices as a result.

Documentation of good practices and lessons learned is not yet available in a clear, stand-alone format. In regard to the systemic capturing of practices and learnings, the progress reports primarily refer to testimonial-based videos on the platform, as well as virtual and physical events where digital payments are promoted. Interviewees, however, referred mainly to these events, expressing generally positive views about them (see Outcome 4 discussion below). When it comes to sharing good practices, some interviewees noted that country teams and partners tend to share impressions in an ad hoc manner, often relying on general follow-up rather than a structured exercise. Some insights may have been incorporated into briefs and reports, but this is not clearly documented in the reports. Overall, the project appears to have generated valuable experience from the implementation, but it lacks a clear, systematic approach to capturing and using learning as a feedback loop and for wider dissemination.[17]

Outcome 4: The profile of digital wage payments is raised […] through research and consultations

The project drew on strong technical and research expertise, leveraging both the core team and its partnerships, which supported credible and sound analytical work as well as highly valued technical assistance. The project team's knowledge and competence were widely praised during interviews, with stakeholders recognising the high quality of its research and the valuable contribution it made to policy processes. At the global level, the project has produced a series of technical briefs and reports on digital wage payments, focusing on themes such as enterprise development, employment formalisation, respect for labour rights, and workers' financial inclusion published via the Global Centre on Digital Wages online platform. Country wise, research briefs from rapid assessments in Indonesia, Kenya, and Peru have been published, alongside a global study on Earned Wage Access (EWA), a study on enabling environment for digital wages in Inda (in collaboration with BTCA), a study on the barriers to wage digitisation in Chinese supply chains and an impact assessment in Cambodia. Moreover, the project recently commissioned a study on the impact of the training on digitalisation of wages (forthcoming). Furthermore, the project tailored global methodologies and frameworks to specific national needs and supported customised diagnostics and research pieces. In Indonesia, for instance, data produced by the project was seen as important to strike partnerships with government agencies. In Peru, a payroll dataset shared by the Ministry of Employment has been analysed and is being used to frame future regulation regarding the implementation of digital wages.[18] At the same time, some stakeholders were highlighting significant gaps in documenting outcome-level evidence, including on digital wages adoption and impact on formalisation, worker empowerment and rights.

Events helped build awareness and common understanding. The project has organised and contributed to numerous knowledge-sharing and dialogue events at both national and global levels, bringing together governments, employers' and workers' organisations, financial

[17] See further discussion in the efficiency chapter and recommendation nº5.

[18] For details, see the good practice documentation in Annex 6.

institutions, and partners. Interviewees across stakeholder groups consistently reported increased awareness of digital wages and noted how digital wages have become more embedded within financial inclusion and decent work agendas. Moreover, interviews highlighted how these events facilitated the sharing of diverse perspectives and helped build common understanding. As one interviewee stated, *"For me, the last session they organised a month ago — a two-day event — clearly showed the results, and the exchange among experts really helped to further clarify our understanding of what we are promoting."* Project documentation shows that since inception, 3,690 stakeholders have participated in engagement events, with the project leading or co-organising more than 10 major global webinars, including sessions with OECD (2022 & 2024), Financial Inclusion Week (2022 & 2023), including some sessions in collaboration with BTCA. Country-level events included Business Forum 2023 and 2024 in Cambodia (270 and 116 participants respectively) and multi-stakeholder workshops in all four pilot countries.

Outcome 5: ILO Member States adopt good practices and standards that accelerate the transition to responsible and gender-intentional digital wage payments

The global review of labour policies offers a valuable overview and a useful resource for dialogue on digital wage regulation. The project conducted an extensive review of laws and policies in 190 countries, which found that over 100 countries reference digital wage payments, at least 22 require them by law, and 15 include them in financial inclusion strategies. The project drafted a policy brief based on these inputs[19] and reported using the findings during discussions and technical meetings with governments, employers' and workers' organizations and other key stakeholders in the targeted countries and at global level. However, the final version of these policy review and brief is still pending publication. Furthermore, although the project reported ongoing monitoring of these policies, it fell short of producing a second broad analysis comparable to the initial one, as well as a review of existing industry standards, as planned in the initial project outcomes.

It remains uncertain how influential the project will be in fostering the adoption of good practices and standards by ILO Member States. Interviewees consistently noted that the project increased stakeholder awareness, fostered dialogue, and contributed to some regulatory advances on responsible digital wages in the pilot countries (accounted for under Outcome 2, see discussion above). Moreover, digital wages were included in the P&B 2025–26 draft as an explicit reference for the first time. However, contributions to the actual adoption of good practices and standards were largely opportunity-driven and anecdotal, focused on the pilot-country level rather than stemming from a systematic approach designed to reach across Member States. Some interviewees perceived these contributions as indirect and modest, and below initial expectations, engagement centred more on broad policy guidance than on widespread national adoption of standards. While the work done is seen as relevant and valuable, the project recognises that the objectives envisaged under outcome 5 may have been overly ambitious for the initially planned project cycle.

Key factors and unexpected results

Across global interviews, the dedicated and competent teams, strategic hires and strong multi-stakeholder ownership were mentioned as positive factors. These reinforced credibility with unions, partners, and global brands. A learning-oriented culture and continuous dialogue enabled

[19] "What governments have done to promote digital wage payments"

adaptive decision-making, while complementary networks and stakeholder trust expanded reach. Externally, momentum from government digitalisation policies, ESG-driven pressure from major buyers, and supportive financial ecosystems created conducive conditions for advancing wage digitisation and transparency efforts.

Regarding barriers, interviewees highlighted unclear objectives, overly ambitious designs, weak monitoring frameworks, staffing delays, and heavy budget allocations toward salaries. Fragmented advocacy, institutional heterogeneity, and staff turnover further created challenges. Externally, political instability, infrastructure gaps, legal constraints, employer and union resistance, and country-specific contextual challenges posed persistent obstacles. Some interviewees considered risk mitigation as slow, reactive, or too informal, with adaptations often ad hoc rather than guided by systematic strategies.

COVID-19 was consistently cited as a turning point: while disruptive, it opened unprecedented opportunities that led to major regulatory outcomes. Several interviewees noted that the COVID-19 pandemic dramatically accelerated the urgency for contactless wage systems, changing SMEs business as usual, and opening policy windows that fostered momentum for digital wage adoption. These circumstances, that may still persist, facilitated regulatory advancements such as joint guidance on digital payrolls, Peru's Decree 1499. Similarly, financial-sector partners in the Philippines recognised that post-pandemic fintech expansion, fee reductions, and simplified know-your-customer (KYC) rules directly improved affordability and access, a finding confirmed by government and employer respondents. The project capitalised on this situation to explore the opportunities it presented. However, in parallel, some interviewees mentioned that the project's capacity to introduce this topic to national-level stakeholders was limited during the lockdown period. This resulted in delays in the recruitment of national project officers, as well as in the initial country-level digital wages assessments which had an impact on the overall project timeline.

The project benefited from a favourable stance among employers' organisations, as well as some governments and financial service providers, towards implementing digital wages. While this facilitated training activities, some employers' representatives also highlighted the need for more targeted support to address the practical challenges they faced in adopting these processes. In contrast, several stakeholders pointed to trade union scepticism in certain contexts, which sometimes translated into more limited inclusion in practice. Competition and innovation among financial service providers (Cambodia), the presence of community-based advisors (Indonesia), and strong local leadership expanded reach and built trust. Adaptation measures — including Khmer-language app versions, localised training, WhatsApp-based follow-up, peer learning, and hybrid communication approaches — helped bridge gaps in literacy, geography, and access, while targeted advocacy and evidence-sharing addressed employer concerns and helped hesitant factories or enterprises to transition.

Across contexts, structural barriers such as informality, digital literacy and infrastructure, combined with cultural preferences for cash and mistrust toward financial institutions, remained a consistent constraint. Workers often expressed concern over hidden bank charges, potential wage deductions, and loss of control over wages, reinforcing this mistrust and limiting willingness to shift to digital accounts. Trainers noted that many MSMEs perceived digital payrolls as costly or administratively complex, particularly in settings with weak infrastructure and limited in-house digital capacity. Fear of online theft and data breaches further discouraged uptake, prompting governments and partners to introduce consumer-protection campaigns

(Philippines), alongside awareness sessions and worker education initiatives on digital security to gradually build confidence in digital wages. Workers in Cambodia reported workers taking leave to fix bank account errors, while shared phones among family members compromising privacy and limiting women's financial autonomy. Limited cash-out points increased travel time and risks, while financial-sector representatives warned that aggressive credit products posed additional vulnerabilities for low-income workers.

Some partners questioned the alignment between project ambitions and the choice of implementation countries, pointing out that not all contexts had the same political stability, ecosystem readiness or institutional capacity. Cambodia was cited as a strong fit, given an already active ecosystem (BFC, brands, banks) and clear sectoral demand. In contrast, stakeholders observed that in some other countries, partner capacity, informality levels and infrastructure constraints made it harder to advance in some regions.[20]

In terms of unexpected results, interviewees were particularly surprised by the speed of uptake and roll-out — a development more related to the rapid achievement of expected outcomes than to entirely new and unexpected results. This sentiment was shared at both global and country levels. Globally, respondents noted significantly increased recognition of the agenda within and beyond the ILO, including its uptake by new partners. On the country level, several achievements were highlighted in this regard. In Cambodia, for instance, this included how the project catalysed wider adoption in the financial sector, and how competitive pressure among financial providers reduced payroll costs, easing access for smaller factories. In response to this emerging momentum, the ILO project team reported that they developed global e-learning modules and set up or strengthened a community of practice to support partners beyond direct project countries and to ensure that these spontaneous initiatives remained aligned with decent work and worker-protection principles. These adaptations allowed the project to capture and consolidate positive spillovers that were not fully foreseen at the outset.

4.4. Efficiency

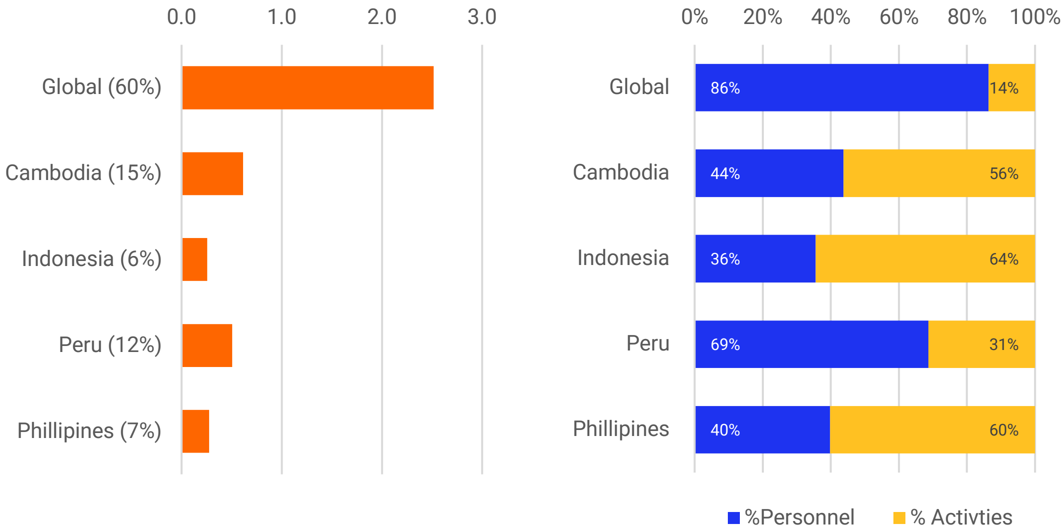
Regarding efficiency (EQ9-10), the evaluation examines whether financial, human, and time resources were used effectively, and whether a monitoring and evaluation strategy was developed and implemented to strengthen accountability, promote learning, and inform management.

Overall, there is broad agreement that the project used its resources efficiently. Across the project countries, interviewees mentioned that the activities were designed to operate with modest budgets and that the project made effective use of existing institutions. In Cambodia, the ILO team and national partners stated that relatively small investments had "catalytic" effects – not least because they were embedded in BFC systems and because factories recouped digital payroll costs within a few months. In Peru and the Philippines, interviewees similarly judged the resource use to be efficient, especially in light of the small project budgets. Others provided examples where costs were saved such as in Indonesia, where using partner venues, bank CSR

[20] The project team conducted research and secondary data analysis to assess digital readiness, financial inclusion gaps, and alignment with ILO priorities. Countries like Kenya and Mexico were considered but not retained. Final selection was based on digital infrastructure, government commitment, relevance to cash-based wages, stakeholder consultations, Better Than Cash Alliance membership, and sectoral suitability.

programmes and one-day training packages were seen as cost-effective ways to reach MSMEs, (which others critiqued, arguing that more investments would be needed to develop tailor-made capacity building). In Peru, low attendance at some regional workshops was noted to have reduced cost-effectiveness. One concern mentioned was a (perceived) disbalance between staff costs and resources that were allocated to fund activities such as innovation grants or direct support to local partners (see Table 3). The "staff-heavy, top-heavy and activities-focused" spending was seen as limiting the project's ability to translate its technical work and partnerships into larger-scale results.

Table 3: Expenditure (left: Components, in Mio USD, right: Personnel vs activities)



Human resources were used effectively overall, and the team was regarded for its commitment and competence, but some staff constraints affected the implementation. Interviewees across the countries consistently mentioned the high level of staff commitment, technical competence, coupled with a willingness to learn and improve. The global and country-level teams were generally described as very engaged and responsive. Many stakeholders saw the ability to draw on existing staff and institutional capacities – which resulted in cost savings – as an important factor that increased efficiency. However, human resource constraints were also identified. For instance, while the part-time staffing in Indonesia and Peru, where national officers worked in several projects, helped maximise limited resources, it required staff to divide their attention across different tasks.[21] Interviewees noted that this sometimes slowed delivery. Related to this, the dual reporting structure in the country offices led to additional coordination demands for staff.

Several interviewees pointed to delays arising from ILO practices, internal procedures and external conditions such as COVID. The project undertook extensive consultations with

[21] The project was managed through a hub within the ILO Social Finance Programme. A full-time Global Project Director and Global Technical Officer led overall strategy, design, fundraising and partner coordination, and provided technical support across countries. They were supported by part-time global functions in communications, administration/finance and gender. Country-level implementation was carried out by national officers in Cambodia, Indonesia, Peru and the Philippines. They were responsible for stakeholder engagement and adaptation of tools and training. The Cambodia and Philippines officers worked full-time on the project, while the Indonesia and Peru posts were initially part-time and cost-shared with other projects (Peru later shifted to full-time).

constituents and partners to ensure relevance and secure genuine buy-in from governments, employers and workers before starting the country-level activities. This process took time, but partners consistently stated that it strengthened legitimacy and ownership, and was therefore seen as a worthwhile investment. Nevertheless, the extended consultation period reduced the time available for delivery, and some activities progressed more slowly than planned, leading to two non-cost extensions from 2023 to 2024 and from 2024 to 2025. Interviewees in several countries described certain procedures as slow or cumbersome, including initial planning steps and the development and validation of research products and training materials. Country-specific bureaucratic requirements, such as government clearances and procurement processes, were also mentioned as reasons for delays. The project documented delays (e.g., in the steering committee meeting reports) and proposed mitigation measures, but did not identify major systemic inefficiencies; significant reasons were related to COVID-19, particularly regarding the early stages of project implementation at the country level.

Governance and coordination mechanisms functioned well initially but became less effective over time, especially regarding country-level action. Interviewees generally regarded the Steering Committee's governance and coordination mechanisms as initially efficient and useful. The meetings provided a platform for information exchange, discussion of implementation challenges, identification of gaps and reinforcement of key messages to stakeholders. The meetings were described as open and collaborative. Over time, however, the effectiveness of these mechanisms appeared to diminish. Some interviewees felt that the committee's design was better suited to high-level alignment than to the practical, hands-on coordination required for day-to-day delivery. Others argued that more frequent meetings could help address bottlenecks and challenges more quickly and support faster implementation. Indeed, while the investment document foresaw that the Steering Committee meets every quarter, the frequency dropped over time. As one interviewee put it: "maybe more frequent regular meetings would also help in this regard, just for alignment, for sharing challenges instantly rather than waiting until the end of the year or longer to share what hindered the progress."

The investment document outlines a broad approach to monitoring and evaluation, but does not describe a detailed results framework to systematically assess project performance. The investment document specifies that a global and country-level monitoring mechanism is expected to track implementation – "to ensure the timely delivery of the project action plan" – and that quarterly internal reviews will be held to assess progress and the need for any adjustment. The project's M&E approach also foresaw a mid-term and an independent final evaluation. The M&E approach combines a target-actual comparison to track whether outcomes and outputs are achieved on time with a before-after comparison to assess changes from the baseline to the intended results.[22] At the level of the project's intended impact ("guiding outcomes"), neither the investment document nor the subsequent progress reports provide a systematic monitoring instrument. The M&E approach fits with the requirements set out in the investment document template. However, it does not describe a coherent results framework or specify how monitoring data will link to the project's intended outcomes, including regarding disaggregated data.

[22] The respective tools mentioned in the investment document are: First, a plan to track target and actual completion date of the project's outcomes; second, the diagnostics and policy reviews planned for the first year that serve as baseline for the project's performance assessment in the third year; and third, a plan to track target and actual completion date of the project's outputs.

Annual progress narratives in the investment document reported on project progress and adjustments. The narratives described the activities undertaken and the results achieved within each reporting period, indicating whether implementation was completed, on track, or delayed. For the latter, it described how it intended to address them. However, the narratives did not consistently specify the planned activities or interim targets for the upcoming period, making it hard to assess the implementation progress. In this context we also note, adding to the findings on cross-cutting issues in chapter 4.7, that the project is sensitive to gender issues and reports on selected activities with gender disaggregated data (e.g., number of women among training participants). Data on youth and persons with disability are not provided in the progress narratives. Taken together, the progress narratives present a useful overview of implementation, although they do not provide a structured or comprehensive target–actual comparison aligned with the project's intended outcomes. The extent to which the progress reporting was used to steer the project's implementation could not be established, though the interviewee feedback around it was mixed.

The project's M&E approach to inform decision-making and learning was unclear. Several interviewees described the project's M&E arrangements as weak and often insufficient to systematically guide learning and decision-making, particularly at the global level, with some describing it as "weak to non-existent." Beyond the progress reports, the focus was primarily on activities rather than outcomes, they argued. It was also noted that the M&E tools developed were either inconsistently used or not widely adopted across the global and country levels. Some interviewees mentioned that apart from participant data in events, trainings etc., few disaggregated data (gender, youth, disability) were collected. While available processes supported day-to-day learning within country teams, many interviewees stated they did not amount to a coherent evidence base for strategic management. This lack of systematic data sharing resulted in some global partners having limited clarity on the main outcomes and results achieved beyond their direct personal involvement.

In the absence of a more structured M&E framework, the country teams approaches tended to be more practical to address context-specific requirements. Despite the lack of a formal results framework, project teams generally adopted a proactive approach to sharing necessary information and addressing implementation needs. For example, in Cambodia, a worker representative explained that stakeholders met "every few months to update and learn" and used group chats to report developments from participating factories. In Indonesia, interviewees described monitoring as hands-on and iterative; workshop delivery was regularly reviewed — "we evaluated the first workshop and made it more interactive" — and WhatsApp groups were used to maintain communication. In Peru, M&E was characterised as ad hoc, relying mainly on Excel tools created by individual staff members.

4.5. Impact

To assess impact (EQ11), the evaluation explores the observable contributions the project made toward its long-term objectives.

The project works towards two "guiding outcomes" outlined in the Investment Document, considered "within its sphere of direct and indirect influence":

1. Over 20 million workers, at least half of whom are women and currently paid in cash, will gain first-time or improved access to digital wage payments with appropriate safeguards;
2. At least 15 countries will integrate responsible digital wage payment practices into their labour policies, compared to the baseline situation in 2020.

Achieving these guiding outcomes should in turn contribute to realising the development objective: All women and men workers have better control over their wages and benefits and effectively use digital financial services for better resilience, and economic opportunities. Companies are enabled to respect worker's rights, become more productive and grow. In addition, the investment document outlines a broader goal, stating that in the long run, both male and female workers will have improved their well-being through increased access to fair wages, social protection, employment opportunities, and greater equality, voice, and representation.[23]

However, the project's M&E system does not systematically collect data on these guiding outcomes, development objectives, and broader goals. They appear to function more as high-level programmatic aspirations than as indicators designed for monitoring project performance. As a result, the evaluation cannot draw on comprehensive, project-generated evidence to assess impact at national or global levels. More importantly, because these aspirations are not tracked, they risk being overlooked during implementation, strategic steering, and learning processes.

Overall, while the project has results across its main pathways, the available evidence suggests that progress toward its longer-term objectives remains uncertain. The project operates through several pathways that contribute to its long-term objectives. As outlined in the effectiveness section (see Table 2), these encompass country interventions, research and knowledge management, and advocacy. Although progress across these areas is uneven, the project has demonstrated tangible contributions and results in each. Nevertheless, it remains unclear whether the project is on track to meet the targets set in the guiding outcome – acknowledging that there is no evidence to indicate that it has reached substantially more countries than those where direct interventions took place (thus falling short of the target that 15 countries integrate responsible digital wage payment systems). Furthermore, while evidence exists on the costs and benefits of digital wage payment systems, far less is known about their contribution to the development objectives and broader goals mentioned in the investment document such as increased assets, income, voice, or representation of women. The current implementation experience also suggests that larger, more formal enterprises with a sound level of digitalisation tend to be more responsive to the project's support. Conversely, smaller and more informal actors are harder to reach and may perceive potential downsides – such as increased exposure to taxation or social security obligations – which may undermine uptake. Though it is not possible to substantiate it further, these observations indicate that the intended behavioural changes may be less widespread or less pronounced than expected.

Interviewee feedback indicates that the project made early and tangible contributions to workers' access to digital wages, although the extent and visibility of the results remained uneven. In Cambodia in particular, workers, employers and government representatives

[23] The formulation for these broader goals in the Investment Document is: "The interventions undertaken by the Global Centre will enable workers, in particular women, to have a better control over their wages and benefits and use worker-centric digital financial services for better resilience and economic opportunities. In addition, the interventions will enable enterprises to respect workers' rights and formalize employment, to become more productive and to grow. In the long run, male and female workers will have improved their well-being through employment opportunities, fair wages and social security benefits, increased assets and income, equality, voice and representation."

described changes in behaviours and financial inclusion, which is illustrated by one worker who explained that *"now I just scan to pay for food … I don't carry cash anymore"*. It reflects interviewees' perceived improvements in convenience, safety and financial control. Also in Cambodia, interviewees described reductions in payroll fraud, improved transparency, and strengthened social protection potential. Peruvian employers and government representatives in Peru on the other hand mentioned that digital systems helped transitioning from informal to formal work arrangements.

The project has contributed to policy development, institutional strengthening and the broader enabling environment for responsible digital wages. Interviewees in Cambodia, Indonesia and Peru mentioned that the project helped policy dialogue, strengthened linkages between labour and financial sectors, enhanced knowledge of key actors, and established foundations for more comprehensive reforms. A notable results for a policy change was in Peru, where government representatives confirmed that the project supported a national regulation requiring digital wage payments (Decree Law 1499 2020, a regulation passed in response to the pandemic).While many of these results have limited employment or worker-level effects at this stage, several interviewees stated that they are essential precursors to impact. At the same time, interviewees widely recognised that progress toward the project's long-term objectives was still limited. Several interviewees mentioned that "*most initiatives remained pilots or small activities*" and, while valuable, translated into "*transformative impact at scale*" across countries or employers and workers.

The project plans several studies to assess its impact, covering effects on enterprise productivity, costs and benefits, formalisation, labour rights, financial inclusion, and women's economic empowerment. At the time of reporting, the main impact assessment, for which the ILO commissioned 60_decibels, a research team, had not yet been released. However, the project supported other research efforts, including studies by the University of Liverpool, the Better Work programme in Cambodia, and the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences (AIMS). As highlighted in the following spotlight, the studies suggest that digital wages enhance financial security, savings behaviour, and trust in financial services. At the same time, their benefits remain uneven and are limited by structural constraints affecting low-income, informal, and women workers.

Spotlight: Research findings on impact of digital wage payments

Given the absence of direct measurement of the project's long-term objectives, this spotlight provides insights from other sources to hypothesise some of the effects to which the project potentially has contributed, such as better control over wages and improved resilience of workers. Moreover, the spotlight is a means to partly complement and validate the findings from the document review and interviews.

OECD (2025): The policy brief highlights that digital wage payments bring many benefits, such as convenience, speed, security, and greater financial inclusion, including a decline in informal sector employment through increased formalisation. However, it also underscores that financial literacy and consumer protection are key factors to mitigate risks in the use of digital financial systems.

Romny and Bora (2024): The study explored what drives people in Cambodia to use digital payments and how these systems shape their financial behaviour. It surveyed Cambodian users (359 responses across sectors) and found that *financial literacy improved* as individuals use digital payments more often, and this improved understanding further increases their *willingness to keep using digital services*. Moreover, it found that people are more likely to use digital payments when they feel the technology is easy to use, useful in their daily lives, and trustworthy – which can be linked to the project's ambition of promoting responsible digital wage systems. Interestingly, from a behavioural perspective, is that social influence also matters: when friends, family, or colleagues use digital payments, individuals are more inclined to do the same.

Lawreniuk (2022): This qualitative study in Cambodia's garment sector explored how women garment workers navigate the transition from cash to digital wage payments and how these systems shape their financial practices. Drawing on 30 interviews and six focus groups across six factories, the study found that while *digital wages improve timeliness and transparency of payments*, they also introduce new costs and burdens for workers, such as account fees and long queues at ATMs on payday. Many workers still withdraw most or all of their wages immediately, which indicates that there is persistent low trust in financial institution and limited digital and financial literacy. It also showed that women's ability to benefit from digital wages is influenced not only by technology, but by broader structural factors: low wages, high household debt, and gendered financial norms that limit their control over income.

Sources: Romny Ly, Bora Ly (2024): Digital payment systems in an emerging economy, Computers in Human Behavior Reports, Volume 16. Sabrina Lawreniuk (2022): Navigating Wage Digitization: A Rapid Qualitative Review of Garment Workers' Experience in Cambodia, Final Report. OECD (2025), Policy Brief: Supporting Informed and Safe Use of Digital Payments Through Digital Financial Literacy.

4.6. Sustainability

With regard to sustainability (EQ12-13), the evaluation considers whether project results are likely to be maintained after completion, and the extent to which the project's approach or results can be scaled up or replicated by national partners or other actors.

Across countries, the most durable sustainability signals come from government ministries and employer associations taking over digital wage promotion. The clearest signs of durable sustainability come where public institutions and employer organisations have taken real ownership of digital wages, and their responsible implementation. A number of employers' organisations and public agencies across Cambodia, Indonesia, Peru and the Philippines, are integrating digital wages into regular programmes and agendas. Some interviewees highlighted that digital wages are increasingly embedded in national data systems and monitoring frameworks (e.g. BFC monitoring in Cambodia, financial inclusion surveys in Indonesia surveys (not yet implemented), Planilla Electronica (in Peru). However, there are also concerns that these sustainability signals might not last ("unclear if industry associations or other partners have the capacity and resources to continue efforts post-project"). Agendas and relationships can also be vulnerable to political changes, budget cuts or reliance on a few individual "champions". One stakeholder emphasised the need to build a system of incentives — described as a "carrot and stick" balance — so that regulatory pressure and motivational factors jointly support a continuation of the project's results once project funding ends.

Capacity-building efforts is seen as key to create durable structures. The project invested heavily in training-of-trainers, e-learning and institutional capacity-building, which stakeholders see as another core pillar for sustainability. ILO progress reports emphasise that training-of-trainers approaches, institutionalised e-learning modules and national training systems (e.g. master trainers in Cambodia, job counsellors in Indonesia, *Formalizate* in Peru, SME e-learning in the Philippines) provide "lasting structures for continuation". Institutional partners are building virtual or physical repositories — "anything that's already recorded online goes into the database" — and using these as a kind of "virtual centre" for ongoing learning. In Cambodia, local trainers certified through ITC Turin, Khmer-language materials and factory induction modules are already being used without constant direct ILO involvement. Large export-oriented factories, together with TAFTAC and BFC, now manage their own training and factory-transition processes, and where digital wages have become a standard expectation of buyers and an accepted norm among workers. However, in Peru, both ILO staff and government counterparts note that sustainability of capacities is threatened by staff turnover in government agencies, risking the loss of institutional memory.

Spotlight Indonesia: Embedding digital wages training content

Institutional partners in Indonesia expressed strong commitment to continuing and scaling the use of digital wage payment training materials beyond the project. The examples below highlight how key institutions plan to embed and adapt the content within national training and SME support structures.

The Ministry of Manpower plans to embed ILO digital wage payment modules into its national job-counsellor system so counsellors can serve not only as intermediaries between jobseekers and employers but also as business advisers for micro-entrepreneurs. The content is expected to be integrated into capacity-building programmes, competency assessments, and later into the Ministry's e-learning platform, with the long-term goal of reaching all 1,700 counsellors nationwide.

APINDO, Indonesia's national employers' organisations, intends to continue using and adapting the digital wage payment materials beyond the project, incorporating them into its wider SME support ecosystem through its virtual SME Hub, which houses training tools and publications from multiple partners. The organisation plans to draw on the modules for masterclasses, webinars, mentoring activities, and provincial-level requests.

Business Service Development Providers (BSDP) consultants reported that trainers who have participated in the Train-the-Trainers program have already begun independently delivering the training — including through Bank Indonesia and the Social Protection Office — indicating opportunities for integration into national SME support programmes.

Interviewees reported that the business case makes reverting to cash highly unlikely. Employers described payroll processes as faster, more accurate, and significantly less burdensome, underscoring the dramatic reduction in payroll complexity. Others highlighted that digital payments not only cut processing time but also minimised errors and delays. Several companies also pointed to efficiency gains across subcontracted sites and stable adoption even among initially reluctant workers, explaining that once systems were integrated. However, based on the interviews it is difficult to say whether companies who only partially implemented digital wages (i.e., not covering all working arrangements, including casual, temporary, and part-time workers) would end up rolling the system out to all workers.

Despite encouraging signs for sustainability, many interviewees also underscored the importance of further support. Across interviews, a recurring condition mentioned for long-term sustainability is the need for ongoing technical assistance and government engagement to ensure reforms move beyond early adopters and become embedded across diverse sectors and regions. Employers and trainers also highlighted the need for support to MSMEs. Others mentioned the importance of supporting partners through international coordination to ensure that projects can draw on good practice while remaining grounded in each country's economic realities.

Although a second phase was initially envisioned with co-funding from brands, bilateral donors, or other stakeholders, this did not materialise, leaving the initiative reliant on a single external funding source. It is unclear what will happen once external support ends, particularly given the lack of clarity around who would finance, own, or drive the digital wage agenda going forward.

The project offers a basis for scale-up and replication, but this will require contextual adaptations. Cambodia's phased, tripartite approach has already been replicated in Indonesia and adapted for Cambodia's own emerging sectors, while global partners note that the overall framework has proven replicable in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Yet the interviews repeatedly emphasise that replication cannot be copy-paste: it requires careful contextualisation to sectoral norms, infrastructure conditions, literacy levels, and enterprise size. The feasibility of scaling-up is influenced by sectoral characteristics (including enterprise size and degree of formality), institutional capacity, and the overall maturity of national digital payment systems. Examples from Peru and Indonesia show that territorial presence, local alliances, and sector-specific training packages are also essential to make scale meaningful rather than superficial. In Cambodia, interviewees consistently described sector-wide uptake in the garment industry, however, scaling beyond organised, export-oriented industries was seen as more challenging where weaker HR systems, low digital readiness, cost barriers, uneven infrastructure and persistent financial illiteracy may constrain long-term uptake.

Interview evidence also provided pointers to the conditions required for scaling, which are not always present. Stakeholders across regions mentioned the need for:

- **Robust coordination mechanisms across government, employers, and unions**: Tripartite or multi-stakeholder structures — such as Cambodia's model or Indonesia's APINDO networks — enable smoother replication. In less formal sectors additional capacity-building is needed.
- **Embedding digital wages into national systems and platforms**: Integration into ministerial training systems, national curricula, and employer association and government programmes creates large-scale reach. This reduces reliance on external actors and makes scale routine.
- **Integration into national (and international) regulatory frameworks**: from establishing legally binding obligations (e.g. payslip format) or designing regulations that facilitate digital wage payments (e.g. digital wallets safety prevention measures).
- **Clear partnerships, structured workplans, and political buy-in**: Successful replication depends on coordinated action, stakeholder alignment, and supportive policy environments.
- **Adequate digital and financial infrastructure**: Connectivity, agency banking, and ATM access remain prerequisites — especially in rural or low-literacy settings.
- **Accessible, simplified, and context-specific tools**: Low-literacy, translated materials (e.g., Cambodia's Khmer-language modules and chatbot, Peru adapted manuals) are essential. Other countries require further adaptation to reach informal and rural populations.
- **Local champions and trained multipliers**: Factory managers, enterprise advisors, unions, and job counsellors play a major role in diffusion — "one champion can help many new members".
- **Standardised materials and digital learning tools**: Scalable resources — chatbots, e-modules, templates—support low-cost replication.
- **Sustained support, funding, and institutional continuity**: Expansion in Peru, Indonesia, and the Philippines is limited by resource gaps, staff turnover, and the short-term nature of project funding. Long-term technical assistance is needed to reach underserved or less formal sectors.

Scale-up requires prioritisation and strategic focus. A recurring theme — especially from Indonesia and global partners — is that the next phase of scaling must shift from experimentation to depth. Stakeholders warned that pilots across many small businesses or scattered regions dilute impact and strain limited resources. Instead, future replication should focus on key sectors with high employment potential, strong policy levers, or existing networks of champions. Peru and the Philippines echo this need for sharper prioritisation, noting that scaling requires not just more activities but stronger institutionalisation, better coordination, and clearer documentation. The message across interviews is that scaling should be deliberate and grounded — not a wide but shallow expansion. As discussed in the Learnings and Good Practice section (chapter 5), there are important trade-offs to be considered, between balancing quick wins with sustained work in more challenging parts of the economy, where potentially more additionality of an intervention can be achieved.

4.7. Cross-cutting issues

In relation to cross-cutting issues (EQ14), the evaluation assesses how effectively the project addressed the needs of women and vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities.

Strong gender-intentional design at the global level, but inconsistent operationalisation. Project documents acknowledged gender dimensions and addressed specific issues from the design stage. While the project did not have a formal gender strategy, planned actions explicitly prioritise women and low-income workers, with a stated target of at least 50% female beneficiaries and a design that incorporates gender-intentional digital wage approaches, gender-qualified consultants, and planned gender-disaggregated M&E. However, interviewees pointed to gaps between design and implementation: gender considerations were often articulated at a conceptual level, but gender-specific actions and results were uneven across countries and, in many cases, largely a by-product of working in sectors with a high prevalence of women rather than a consistently applied strategy.

The project produced positive effects for women partly because its sectoral focus. The progress reports confirm that interventions were concentrated in female-dominated sectors with high concentrations of women — especially the garment sector in Cambodia — and linked to broader initiatives such as EPIC and equal pay transparency. In Cambodia, where around 80% of garment workers are women, institutional stakeholders pointed to strengthened financial autonomy, reduced risks associated with cash handling, and improved budgeting and saving practices through tailored financial literacy training. At the same time, interviews with those working directly with women workers underscored persistent challenges, particularly for older, low-literacy, and rural women. Many struggled with phone use, passwords, and app navigation; some even “had to give their passcode to others for help,” exposing them to privacy and security risks.

Beyond women, inclusion of other vulnerable groups was uneven. In a number of interviews, it was discussed how youth, older adults, rural workers, and workers in low-income or informal sectors faced layered and interlinked hurdles linked to education level, geography, age, ethnicity, and cultural norms. Those in rural or low-connectivity areas were particularly affected by limited access to financial infrastructure and low digital literacy. In many cases, participants associated digital wage systems with increased costs — such as taxes and deductions for social protection schemes— and expressed fear of fraud or loss of control over income. These different vulnerabilities show that barriers to digitalisation are not only about technology but linked to broader inequalities, such as weak infrastructure, informality, and complex administrative systems, as well as personal factors like mistrust, low financial skills, or fear of new tools. At the same time, the most vulnerable groups can also benefit the most when support is well targeted. In Cambodia, interviewees shared how low-literacy workers improved their confidence through simple financial education, and in Indonesia, stakeholders pointed out how digitalisation "helps them get access to credit and build a financial record," showing that well-designed support can help reduce these gaps.

The lack of systematic monitoring meant that information on gender, age, and disability were not collected consistently, making it hard to understand how different groups were affected by the project. Even though early diagnostic work identified gender-related risks, these findings were not turned into concrete measures, targets, or indicators for specific groups. As a result, it is difficult to assess whether activities led to fair and equal outcomes for women, youth, or persons with disabilities. As mentioned above, interviewees across global and country teams noted that strong analysis at the beginning was not matched by equally strong implementation or follow-up. As one partner said, the project *had "awareness… but lacked concrete actions and targets,"* and another added that *"documentation and operationalization…remain insufficient."* These gaps explain why many interviewees stressed the need for more intentional inclusion strategies in the future. Suggestions included creating structured digital and financial literacy programmes for rural and digitally excluded groups, clearer frameworks to support disability inclusion and remote communities, attention to cybersecurity concerns raised by women entrepreneurs, and better monitoring systems to ensure vulnerable groups are truly reached.

5. Learnings and good practice

This section summarises key lessons learned and good practices that emerged during project implementation. These insights are intended to complement – not duplicate – the lessons already documented by the project team in progress reports, steering committee discussions, and knowledge products such as briefs and webinars.

For example, the project generated learnings on why Cambodia offered favourable conditions for more progress, as well as on the importance of sustained engagement and trust-building with regulators, particularly Ministries of Labour and Central Banks, when advancing digital wage policies. Such lessons have been captured in existing project documentation and are therefore not repeated here to avoid redundancy.

Instead, this chapter highlights selected lessons that have broader relevance for future programming and cross-country learning. Two lessons learned, and one emerging good practice are presented in Annex 5 and Annex 6, using the standard ILO templates.

Lessons learned 1: Balancing rapid scale with the effort required to achieve system-wide impact. The project faces a trade-off when determining how to prioritise support for digital wage payments: interventions in large, formal enterprises can quickly reach thousands of workers because these firms typically have stronger administrative systems, higher digital readiness, and clearer incentives to adopt electronic payments. In contrast, supporting micro and small enterprises requires more time, resources, and tailored assistance, and each intervention may reach only a small number of workers, even though these businesses account for most employment in many countries. Recognising this, achieving inclusive impact depends on extending digital wages beyond a few organised sectors and therefore requires balancing quick wins with sustained work in more challenging parts of the economy. This is also where the question of additionality becomes important: while large enterprises may have digitalised regardless of the project, the potential for added value may be greater among smaller and more informal businesses, where progress is slower but the need for support is higher.

Lessons learned 2: Digital wages offer strong potential to support the formalisation of economies, but moving from theory to practice requires more evidence and iterative learning. Interviews revealed that the project offers a platform for successfully fostering formalisation in pilot countries through various mechanisms (e.g. wage transparency and traceability of payments). Nonetheless, the introduction and adaptation of such instruments to the local context present challenges, including overcoming regulatory and infrastructure barriers and building trust among workers and employers, which is key to ensuring their feasibility and effectiveness. Policy innovation, data gathering and adjustments are essential to translate digital wage digitalisation into sustained formalisation outcomes, and an evidence-driven and adaptive approach is key for scaling digital wage initiatives responsibly and effectively.

Good practice 1: Evidence-based collaboration to support Peru's digital wage payment regulation. The project and the Ministry of Labour jointly analysed the electronic payroll dataset to identify wage payment patterns and regulatory gaps relevant to the implementation of Decree-Law 1499. The ILO contributed methodological support, international labour standards guidance, and comparative insights that strengthened the regulatory proposals. Multi-stakeholder consultations convened at the ILO helped validate the findings and improve transparency. The resulting analysis has informed the draft regulation now under public consultation and has strengthened national capacity for data-driven rulemaking on wage payments. This illustrates how targeted empirical research, and international standards can support data-driven regulatory development in the labour sector.

6. Conclusions

This chapter brings together the main insights from the findings to draw broader conclusions of the evaluation. It highlights what the project has achieved, where its added value is strongest, and which strategic issues we consider require further attention. The conclusions also provide a bridge toward the recommendations that are presented in the next chapter.

The project has delivered many concrete results and created valuable assets. The Global Centre on Digital Wages for Decent Work has become a recognised point of reference, and the project's tools, training packages, research products and country partnerships offer a strong basis for further work. Many stakeholders who were interviewed for the evaluation confirmed that the project has promoted and raised the profile of digital wage payments and that their capacity to work with the topic has been increased through trainings and events. There was appreciation for the project team's technical expertise and commitment, and interviewees showed ownership over what has been developed. This momentum creates an opportunity for the ILO to strengthen its leadership in the field, influence policy dialogue, and guidance to its constituents.

The project's additionality lies in promoting responsible digital wage practices that safeguard workers' rights and well-being, rather than accelerating wage digitalisation as an end in itself. Rapid advances driven by technology and market forces in financial services, enterprise management, and daily life worldwide create favourable conditions for the uptake and sustainability of digital wages. In this context, implementation has been easier and more cost-effective (in terms of cost per worker reached) when the project has primarily engaged large, formal enterprises, where a shift to digital payroll would likely occur over time anyway. In these settings, the business case for digital wages is stronger, ESG-related pressure from major buyers is higher, and financial ecosystems are typically more developed. However, among rural MSMEs and in the informal sector, constraints such as limited digital infrastructure, lower financial inclusion, weaker HR/payroll capacity, and higher trust and onboarding needs can increase delivery costs. Yet additionality is likely to be higher where baseline inclusive digital wages practices and worker protections are weaker, offering significant potential for impact when support is well targeted. This implies that the project's additionality varies by context; specifically, with whom and where it is generated.

Several strategic and operational questions have emerged that will shape future work. These include how to balance flexibility with clearer planning, how to best incorporate workers and their representatives, and whether to focus more deeply on a smaller number of countries, sectors and companies, or keep broader coverage. They also relate to how evidence can be generated for changes at outcome level, especially for workers, and which scaling pathways are suitable in contexts with low digital readiness or high informality.

Summing up, the project has created strong foundations and underscored the relevance of responsible digital wage payments. The second phase should build on these assets, address open strategic and operational questions, and focus on areas where the ILO can make the greatest difference. The following recommendations are formulated to support this direction.

7. Recommendations

This chapter presents recommendations that are based on the findings and conclusions of the evaluation, including the feedback received from the project stakeholders during the validation process.[24]

The recommendations are strategic and project-level, in line with the evaluation's overall scope
Because the evaluation was commissioned as a final evaluation for Phase 1, little information was obtained on Phase 2. Some recommendations discussed below might have already been adopted, while others build on and complement issues that the project had noted during implementation. In this sense, the recommendations can also be understood as broad recommendations for similar initiatives and validation of issues on the project's agenda. Furthermore, although the evaluation focused on four countries, it maintained a broad perspective. As a result, and due to the nature of the data collected, country-, sector-, component-, or activity-specific recommendations were not feasible. However, we have summarised and

[24] Project stakeholders participated in the validation process through two online meetings on 4 December 2025 and by providing written feedback on the draft report.

grouped the interviewees' suggestions – any of which address specific operational aspects – to complement our recommendations. The recommendations are directed to the ILO, donors, and constituent partners.

Recommendation 1: Strengthening worker-centred approaches to digital wage payments

Main addressee	Priority	Resources	Timing
ILO, in consultation with workers' organisations	Medium	Low-medium	Medium-term

Justification: Workers' representatives acknowledged the potential benefits of digital wages; however, they did not always view the topic as a core priority, and often perceived the agenda as more focused on employers' interests. Some representatives cautioned that hidden fees and risky financial products could shift costs onto workers, especially the most vulnerable. While workers' organisations were consistently engaged at the global level, their involvement at country level was uneven and particularly limited in some contexts in Indonesia and Peru. This created gaps in worker support to the project and may have affected the design of inclusive digital wage mechanisms at national level and beyond. It may also have constrained ownership and learning loops, reducing the extent to which workers' perspectives were systematically captured.

Possible actions: Carry out a more in-depth assessment of workers' demands at both global and country level, to help strengthen involvement, ownership and support by workers' representatives.[25] Ensure consistent worker representation and engagement in wage digitalisation processes by ensuring the involvement of worker representatives across all contexts and designing context-sensitive consultation frameworks that improve the likelihood of genuine participation. Include monitoring mechanisms to verify that cost savings from digital wage systems translate into tangible benefits for workers. Use insights and evidence generated under the project's M&E system (see Recommendation 5) and draw on lessons and approaches from Cambodia and the Philippines, where worker engagement was stronger, to inform potential actions.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen support to employers (enterprise support system)

Main addressee	Priority	Resources	Timing
ILO, in consultation with government and employer organisations	Medium	Medium-high	Medium-term

Justification: Employers and their representatives reported important productivity gains from digital wages, including reduced payroll errors, and noted that where digital payments are well established, the business case makes reverting to cash highly unlikely. At the same time, across countries, employers stressed that successful implementation depends on enabling financial

[25] During interviews and the evaluation validation workshops, workers' representatives pointed to some very concrete requests, such as clear regulations on pay slips, the role of digital wallets and better safeguards around hidden fees and risky financial products, which — if not addressed — could undermine an inclusive transition to digital wages. Taking these concerns on board would help ensure that workers' views on digital payments are more supportive, ease broader implementation across countries and contexts, and be reflected in the project's forthcoming actions.

infrastructure, simplified regulations, and sustained capacity-building — particularly in non-urban areas and in sectors with high informality. However, several employer representatives also highlighted that further expansion of wage digitalisation will require ongoing support from public institutions and social partners.

Possible actions: Explore options to strengthen sustained enterprise support systems across different country contexts, by leveraging MSME support services provided by employers' and sector organisations, or by proposing complementary services through partnerships, including by government. Assess the effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, and lessons learned from current enterprise support systems. Address not only the technical aspects of rollout, but also the need for a responsible and inclusive approach that considers longer-term impacts. Draw on insights from existing ILO initiatives on formalisation, which may provide relevant experience for designing or adapting enterprise support systems.

Recommendation 3: Develop clear scaling and sustainability strategies

Main addressee	Priority	Resources	Timing
ILO, in consultation with donors	High	Medium	Short-term

Justification: The project achieved strong outreach in the four focus countries, surpassing the initial expectations in terms of participating companies. However, it is not yet clear how the initiative will continue to expand or be maintained once external funding ends. Establishing a strategy for scaling and sustained implementation is therefore essential to ensure the project's benefits endure and can be replicated across additional contexts.

Possible actions: The strategy should draw on lessons learned from the project to date as well as from comparable ILO initiatives, and examine the regulatory, financial, institutional, economic and social conditions needed for digital wage payments to scale effectively. It could explore opportunities for collaboration with other programmes and identify ways to mainstream digital wage approaches within and beyond ILO programmes, including through sectoral strategies or value chain engagement – leveraging references to digital wages in the P&B 2026-27. Trade-offs between focusing on large or small companies, as well as on urban or rural areas, should be addressed. The strategy could include a compelling business case that demonstrates the benefits for employers and governments and may also involve placing greater emphasis on policy dialogue and institutional engagement in implementing countries, even if this requires prioritising such work over additional piloting.

Recommendation 4: Clearly align objective and Theory of Change

Main addressee	Priority	Resources	Timing
ILO, in consultation with donors	High	Medium	Short-term

Justification: The project adopted a suitable approach to understanding and supporting behaviour change through the COM-B ToC model. However, the model was not fully leveraged during project design or implementation, which limited its potential to inform strategic decisions.

Possible actions: A clearer articulation of assumptions — especially those most at risk — and the development of targeted support mechanisms to ensure the assumptions hold true in practice would help increase the likelihood of intended outcomes. Similarly, improvements are needed in the logframe, ensuring that targets capture the intangible dimensions of systems change while remaining sufficiently concrete and communicable for stakeholders to track progress effectively. Future projects may more clearly articulate their time-bound expected outcomes and pathways to impact within the Theory of Change. The project team could then employ this framework more actively as a tool for adaptive management, and learning throughout implementation.

Recommendation 5: Strengthen M&E systems to enhance learning, communication, and evidence generation across pilot interventions

Main addressee	Priority	Resources	Timing
ILO, in consultation with donors	High	Medium	Short-term

Justification: The evaluation team identified several gaps in the project's results framework. Among other effects, these gaps limited the systematic collection of results from pilot interventions, weakened learning loops, and hindered clearer and faster communication of results with stakeholders, implementation partners, and the donor. As a result, specific country-level results and the underlying causal links were often difficult to understand. Moreover, perceptions of the project's achievements differed across stakeholders.

Possible actions: This recommendation proposes developing and implementing an M&E plan to harmonise assessment across pilot countries. Such harmonisation would enhance the comparability of results across countries and over time, facilitate aggregation at the project level, and support learning and the dissemination of findings. In designing this framework, the project could consider more traditional elements — such as common data collection methods and indicator formats — while also integrating aspects such as shorter reporting cycles (e.g. sub-annual updates) and results that focus on behavioural change among workers. A wide range of methodologies is available, which the project could select and tailor in coordination with M&E specialists. A further step in the process would be to clarify how these results are communicated to stakeholders and how they are systematically used for strategic steering and as a learning tool.

Recommendation 6: Explore pathways to integrate digital wages into core labour standards

Main addressee	Priority	Resources	Timing
ILO, in consultation with partners and constituents	Medium	Medium	Medium-term

Justification: The project conducted an extensive global review of labour policies to identify how digital wages are reflected in existing normative and policy frameworks. Drawing on these inputs, it produced an analytical brief and reported that these findings were useful in informing discussions with constituents at the country and global levels. However, it remains uncertain to what extent, and through which concrete mechanisms, the project will contribute to fostering the widespread adoption of good practices and standards on digital wages by ILO Member States (Outcome 5). Moreover, several stakeholders called for stronger integration of digital wages into pertinent policy and normative frameworks.

Possible actions: In relation to the assessment of Outcome 5 and complementary to recommendation 4, the project could explore and establish instruments to systematically steer digital wage standard-setting at both country and global levels through existing ILO mechanisms. This could include dedicated convenings and structured multi-stakeholder collaboration (worker representatives, employers, financial service providers, and government) to translate the evidence into policy actions and regulatory guidance that can drive change at scale. For example, the project could develop a guide on how to incorporate digital wages into global, regional, and national strategies, to be used not only by the project team but also by constituents and partners.

Suggestions by interviewees

As part of the interviews, stakeholders were asked whether they had suggestions how to strengthen the project further. The following lists summarises the suggestions of 36 stakeholders, synthesised in nine clusters.

- **Strategic direction and targeting:** Embed initiatives in national frameworks; create a clear results measurement framework with measurable outcomes; focus on fewer priorities with deeper engagement; allocate budgets toward implementation rather than central overhead.
- **Data, evidence and M&E:** Strengthen M&E systems; collect disaggregated data; publish and use diagnostics; build replicable models; document methodologies for scale.
- **Policy and regulatory environment:** Formalise digital wage and pay-slip requirements; conduct risk mapping before regulation; improve inter-agency coordination; base reforms on evidence; ensure consumer protection and fraud awareness.
- **Stakeholder engagement and governance:** Strengthen multi-stakeholder/dialogue platforms; deepen engagement with unions and sceptical groups; identify and support local champions; ensure participatory and ownership-building processes.
- **Gender and inclusion:** Systematically integrate gender and social inclusion; document gender-related risks; tailor approaches to vulnerable groups, informal workers, and rural populations; prioritise youth and women in capacity-building.
- **Capacity building and training:** Expand financial and digital literacy training; make training continuous and practical; finalise training/monitoring tools before rollout; provide coaching/mentoring systems; avoid "makeshift" digitalisation by linking training to real problem statements.
- **Implementation design and delivery:** Ensure behavioural-change approaches (not only tech); allow more time for implementation and evaluation; provide post-training accompaniment; simplify materials; tailor interventions by sector and firm size.
- **Financial infrastructure and FSP support:** Improve system reliability; reduce transaction fees; strengthen technical support from financial service providers (FSP); ensure agent readiness; provide helpdesks during peak times; support onboarding (documents, app installation).
- **Enterprise and worker support:** Provide practical factory/enterprise-level assistance; expand bank choice and access points; ensure ATMs/agents are available; deliver real (not promotional) financial literacy; integrate digital wages as an entry point to formalisation with proper foundations.

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Annex 1: Terms of Reference

International Labour Organization

Final evaluation

"Global Scale of Digital Wages"

The Evaluation Office of the International Labour Organization (ILO/ ILO-EVAL) is seeking expressions of interest from an independent international qualified consultant (individual) to conduct a final evaluation of the above project.

The evaluation will be undertaken over 1,5 months August 2025 - November 2025.

Deadline: 13th August 2025, at 18h00 of Eastern European Standard Time (GMT+2).

For more details see the ToRs below.

Interested candidates are required to supply the following information together:

1. **A technical proposal providing brief approach to be used to conduct this evaluation**, with a description of how the candidate's skills, qualifications and experience are relevant to the required qualifications of this assignment (maximum 4 pages)

2. A list of **previous evaluations** that are relevant to the context and subject matter of this assignment, indicating the role played by the consultant applying (it can be highlighted in the CV)

3. A copy of the candidates' **curriculum vitae**

4. A statement confirming their **availability** to conduct this assignment and that the candidates have no previous involvement in the implementation and delivery of the project to be evaluated, or a personal relationship with any ILO Officials who are engaged in the project (no specific template)

5. Adhere in writing to the attached code of conduct (wcms_746806.pdf (ilo.org))and comply with UN Norms and standards

6. A **financial proposal** indicating a daily professional fee expressed in USD.

Note that fees must be commensurate with the consultants' qualifications and experience.

NOTE: Applications submitted with a fee/rate in a currency other than USD will not be considered for evaluation.

The deadline for the submission of an expression of interest for this assignment is **13th August 2025, at 18h00 of Eastern European Standard Time (GMT+2).**

Terms of Reference

Final Evaluation

1. Key facts

Title of project being evaluated	Global Scale of Digital Wages
Project DC Code	GLO2034GAT
Type of evaluation (e.g. independent, internal)	Independent
Timing of evaluation (e.g. midterm, final)	Final
Donor	Gates Foundation
Administrative Unit in the ILO responsible for administrating the project	Social Finance Unit, ENTERPRISES
Technical Unit(s) in the ILO responsible for backstopping the project	
P&B outcome (s) under evaluation	4
SDG(s) under evaluation	1, 5 y 8
Budget	4,709,083.91 USD
Period of evaluation	August 2025 – November 2025
Evaluation Manager	Pablo Arellano

2. Background information

Description of the project

The project "Global Centre for on digital wage payments for Decent Work" promotes the transition from cash to responsible digital wage payments. Through research, evidence-based advocacy, and the development of the capacity of both employers and workers as well as of inclusive digital payment ecosystems, the Global Centre enables millions of male and female workers around the world to receive their correct wages, paid digitally into bank accounts or mobile money wallets and make the most out of them. The Global Centre supports the development of conducive regulatory frameworks and financial ecosystems that i) enhance the productivity of enterprises, ii) encourage the respect of labour rights, and iii) boost the financial inclusion of workers. The Global Centre is operated from ILO Geneva headquarters and has field activities in four countries.

The project proposal was based on analysis and experience, believing that digitizing wages supports FSP and BMGF's goals in the following ways: 1. Digitizing wages protects workers and offers them a powerful onboarding opportunity for broad DFS usage; 2. Digitization supports greater transparency and decent work conditions for the over 230 million workers still being paid in cash by enabling increased worker benefits, increasing enforcement of protections by the governments, and supporting economic development (Digital governance/Poverty Reduction); 3. Workers, especially women, are supported with the appropriate products and support to become confident users of digital financial services. They have increased agency and are able to take more purposeful actions in pursuit of financial goals; and , 4. Wage digitization promotes more competitive financial sectors and digital financial ecosystem. It also creates a larger ecosystem of private (outside of the financial sector) and public supporters for financial inclusion that can accelerate overall digitization, including advocacy and utilization of the digital stack.

Digitization of private sector wages is an area where engagement can promote responsible and gender-intentional digitization that promotes financial inclusion, which may not occur as quickly or at all without the proposed efforts.

Project components

The project considers that ILO will establish a Global Centre on Digital Wage Payments for Decent Work, based at the ILO's Geneva-based headquarters, which will address the challenges of cash wages and informality through A) country interventions, B) research and knowledge management, and C) advocacy. The main thrust of the approach is that, for a transition from cash to digital wages to be successful, it has to be based on incentives for both workers and employers – they both have to benefit, otherwise it will not work.

A. Country interventions. The project supports to four countries to proactively advance the cause of digital wage payments and establish a set of exemplar countries that others can learn from. This process begins with a diagnostic review to identify associated opportunities and challenges, and establish a baseline against which outcomes of the project will be measured. The review is then an input to a process of stakeholder dialogue. Emerging from these discussions will be a national work plan that is customised to the local circumstances. The work plan would draw from a menu of activities and interventions intended to target the specific conditions for that country.

B. Research and knowledge management. The ILO believes strongly in evidence-based policy recommendations. While the evidence associated with digital payments in general is quite compelling, more information about the costs and benefits of digital wage payments – for employers and workers

– is needed to encourage the transition away from cash. Research needs to consider a range of business sectors, and various business sizes, in a variety of countries, to generate a solid body of evidence to persuade many more enterprises to pay their workers digitally. The Centre documents the country processes, and identify good practices so that future waves of intensive country support can benefit from the success and challenges of the pilot countries. The knowledge management agenda of the Centre also involves creating a digital warehouse of evidence, tools and guidance that can provide support to countries that do not benefit from intensive, change management support. The Centre facilitates lessons across the pilot countries through a virtual community of practice platform that will enable countries to learn from each other's success and challenges, and to facilitate peer support to achieve greater results.

C. Advocacy. The evidence generated by the research and the pilot countries is also used to raise the profile of digital wage payments in general, and among ILO constituents – governments, employers' and workers' organizations – experts and researchers, financial service providers, global supply chain key actors and development agencies. This advocacy can potentially be used as the basis to develop additional ILO guides or codes of practices. The ILO generates a range of tools for its constituents, which could be used to address digital wage payments. The Centre engages with governments, employers' and workers' organizations, and other technical experts to explore other means to discuss the importance of digital wage payments for the world of work and promote the transition away from cash. The Centre compiles the lessons learned and evidence on digitalization of wage payments generated or being generated by ILO and other stakeholders such as the World Bank, BSR, Microfinance Opportunities, and the Better than Cash Alliance (BTCA), including the quarterly Global Exchange Learning series on digital payments launched by the ILO, BTCA and IFC in 2020.

To identify countries of intervention, the Centre coordinated with the ILO's country offices requests for support to national constituents and to other national stakeholders to undertake the activities needed to facilitate the transition to digital wage payments. There were selected as beneficiary countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines and Perú.

A Theory of Change (ToC) of the Global Centre on Digital Wages for Decent Work was developed including a one-page diagram and a narrative document. The narrative considers one-page diagram links the Global Centre's outputs at the national and global levels (within its sphere of control) to its first-order and second-order outcomes (within its sphere of direct and indirect influence) and development objective (within its sphere of interest). It also presents the underlying assumptions for the outputs to translate into results. The Global Centre's approach aligns with international labour standards, social dialogue, gender equality and non-discrimination, and just digital and environmental transitions. A critical element of the theory of change consists of the replication, aggregation, and scale-up processes that ILO constituents, technical partners, and other stakeholders are expected to contribute to as their opportunities, capacity, and motivation to advance responsible digital wages grow, and as they learn and share experiences with others on the subject and improve associated behaviours and practices. The overall development objective is : All women and men workers have better control over their wages and benefits and effectively use responsible (digital) financial services for better income security, resilience, and economic opportunities.

Project outcomes

1. Women and men workers receive responsible digital wages and access related responsible (digital) financial services
Indicator: Number of workers with first-time or improved access to responsible digital wages and related responsible (digital) financial services, by sex and country. Target: In the intervention countries, workers in the pilot enterprises receive their wages digitally, have access to related (digital) financial services and make informed decisions about using (digital) financial services for building their assets and managing risks. Target: By 2025, 20 million workers, including 10 million women workers, gain first-time or improved access to responsible digital wages and related (digital) financial services.
2. Enterprises pay responsible digital wages to their workers and are more sustainable
Indicator: Number of pilot enterprises that, with Global Centre support, introduce or improve the payment of responsible digital wages to their workers, by size, industry, and country. Target: 16 pilot enterprises by 2022. Target: 32 pilot enterprises by 2023.
3. Financial service providers offer enterprises and the women and men workers they employ responsible financial services, including responsible digital wage payment solutions.
Financial services are responsible when they are safe, fair, and of good quality, meet consumer needs, and comply with applicable regulatory requirements. Indicator: Number of financial service providers that, with Global Centre support, introduce or improve their offer of responsible financial services, including responsible digital wage payment solutions, to enterprises and the women and men workers they employ. Target: 4 financial service providers by 2023. Target: 15 financial service providers by 2025.
4. Countries develop policies, legislation and other measures specifically aimed at facilitating the transition of enterprises and the workers they employ to responsible digital wages
Indicator: Number of countries that, with Global Centre support, have put in place measures to facilitate the transition of enterprises and the workers they employ to responsible digital wages. Target: 4 countries by 2023. Target: 15 countries by 2025.
5. Constituents, technical partners, and other stakeholders increasingly adopt good practices and standards for the promotion of responsible digital wages and recognize the Global Centre on Digital Wages for Decent Work as a leader and convenor on the subject
Indicator: Number of requests for technical assistance or information on the promotion of responsible digital wages, by type of institution. Indicator: Audience reach for the Global Centre's products and activities at the global and regional levels.

Indicator: References to Global Centre's products and activities in: (a) UN entities and IFI reports; (b) Materials developed by technical partners; (c) peer-reviewed academic journals; (d) constituent organizations' products and communications; and (e) media.

Indicator: Number of unique downloads of Global Centre's knowledge platform products, by region.

Current status of the project

Initially the project was stablished for a period of three year from 2021 to 2023. It has been extended in three occasions, without cost increase. The project will finalise end in November 2025. Out of the total budget of 4,709,083.91 USD, it has been spent 4,266,845 USD, which represent 91% of the total budget. Also, it has elapsed 92% of the time of the total project duration.

At present, the project has prepared four annual progress reports, one covering the period from December 2020, until November 2025. The scope of the final evaluation will include the activities reported in these four progress reports and remaining period until the end of the project. All the information will be shared with the selected team.

Purpose, objectives, and scope of the evaluation

Purpose

ILO considers evaluation as an integral part of the implementation of technical cooperation activities. As per ILO evaluation policy and procedures all programmes and projects with a budget of USD 1 million + must have an internal midterm evaluation and a final independent evaluation, which should be managed by an ILO certified evaluation manager and implemented by independent evaluators.

The evaluation will be used, for project accountability, project improvement and institutional learning. Among other points the evaluations will identify what worked, what did not work at output, outcome and impact levels, what is sustainable, what is the legacy of the project and what are the recommendations for the future. As well as the design stages and any mitigation measures that eventually was taken.

The ILO applies the evaluation criteria established by the OECD / DAC Quality Standards for Development Evaluation and the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN System. This evaluation will follow guidelines on results-based evaluation of the ILO Evaluation Department (EVAL) contained in the "ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation (4th edition)"[1] and, more specifically, the checklist "CHECKLIST 4.2: PREPARING THE EVALUATION REPORT". [2]

[1] Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_571339.pdf
[2] Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746808.pdf

Scope

This evaluation, as a product of analysis of the implementation of the project in its entirety, will examine the entire project intervention in the four countries (Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines and Perú) from December 2020 to November 2025. It will consider all the documents linked to the design of the project. This includes the project document, periodic reports and implementation of its recommendations as well as documents produced as outputs of the project (e.g. knowledge products, policy strategies). The evaluation will make sure to address ILO's cross-cutting issues, as reflected in the evaluation questions below.

Clients of the evaluation

Clients of the evaluation are ILO's constituents, national and international partners. Furthermore, the findings of this final evaluation are destined for ILO's management (the project team, SFU, ENTERPRISES, and the field offices involved) overseeing the implementation of the project, as well as for the project's donor (BMGF) and the Steering Committee of the project

The knowledge generated by this evaluation will also benefit other stakeholders that may not be directly targeted by the project's intervention such as: key government institutions, civil society organizations, donors, UN agencies, international organizations that work in relevant fields, and other units within the ILO.

3. Evaluation criteria and questions (including Cross-cutting issues/ issues of special interest to the ILO)

The evaluation will be based on the following evaluation criteria: strategic relevance, coherence, validity of project design, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability. Relevant data should be sex-disaggregated and the different experiences and perspectives of women and men should be considered throughout the evaluation process. The evaluation will integrate gender equality and non-discrimination, international labour standards, social dialogue, and a just transition to environmental sustainability as crosscutting themes throughout its deliverables and process. It should be addressed in line with EVAL Guidance Note 3.1: Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation[3] and Guidance Note 4.5: Stakeholder engagement[4]

[3] Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746716.pdf
[4] Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746724.pdf

The following questions, while not an exhaustive list, are intended to guide and facilitate the evaluation. Other aspects can be added as identified by the evaluators in accordance with the given purpose and in consultation with the evaluation manager. Any fundamental changes to the evaluation criteria and questions should be agreed between the evaluation manager and the evaluators, and reflected in the inception report.

Relevance.[5]

1. Were the project objectives consistent with the national key partners' needs, requirements, and the country needs?

2. How did the project contribute to the relevant International Labour Organisation Programme & Budget Outcomes and development priorities in the countries where the project has been implemented?

3. To what extent did the project build on previous experience of the ILO in the selected countries, and relevant experience of other local and international organizations in the selected countries?

Coherence[6].

1. Was the project design adequate to meet project objectives? Do outputs causally link to the intended outcomes and objectives?

2. To what extent was the project design adequate and effective in the coherence and complementarity between the different project components?

3. To what extent did the project build on the comparative advantage of the ILO?

Effectiveness[7]

1. To what extent have the project objectives been achieved?

2. Have unexpected positive and negative results took place?

3. What were the main internal and external factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of results?

Efficiency[8]

1. Are the resources (financial, human, time) made available to the project used efficiently regarding obtained outputs?

[5] The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries', global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.
[6] The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution.
[7] The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups.
[8] The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way.

2. Have the project developed an M&E strategy that enhance accountability, learning and feed into management?

3. How have the roles and responsibilities between the project and key partners regarding planning M&E of the project worked?

Orientation towards Impact[9] and Sustainability[10].

1. What can be identified as project sustainable impacts in the target groups and other actors as relevant? Are the results integrated or likely to be integrated into national institutions, target populations, and will partners be able to sustain them beyond the project (institutionalisation of project components)?

2. What measures and actions have been put in place to ensure ownership of the project's results within the selected countries?

3. Can the project's approach or parts of it, and results be replicated or amplified by national partners or other actors considering institutional and financial dimensions?

Cross-cutting issues:

1. To what extent has the project identified and integrated into its actions the operational and strategic needs and priorities for men, women, and vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities, in the relevant sector of operation?

2. How has the project been able to meet the specific needs of men, women and vulnerable groups, such as persons with disabilities?

4. Methodology

The independent final evaluation will comply with evaluation norms and standards and follow ethical safeguards, all as specified in ILO's evaluation procedures. The ILO adheres to the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) evaluation norms and standards as well as to the OECD/DAC Evaluation Quality Standards. The evaluation is an independent final evaluation, and the final methodology and evaluation questions will be determined by the consultant in consultation with the Evaluation Manager.

The evaluation should use an approach that enables the evaluation to capture intervention's contributions to the achievement of expected and unexpected outcomes. The methodology will include examining the intervention's Theory of Change (or request if feasible that evaluators reconstructs one if the TOC is not in place), with particular attention to the identification of assumptions, risk and mitigation strategies, and the logical connect between levels of results and their

[9] The extent to which the intervention is likely to generate or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.
[10] The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue or are likely to continue

alignment with ILO's strategic objectives and outcomes at the global and national levels, as well as with the relevant SDGs and related targets.

The evaluation will apply methodology that should include multiple methods, with analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, including triangulation to increase the validity and rigor of the evaluation findings, engaging with tripartite constituents, stakeholders and partners of the project, as much as feasible, at all levels during the data collection and reporting phases.

The data and information should be collected, presented and analyzed with appropriate gender disaggregation even if project design did not take gender into account. Also, the data collection, analysis and presentation should be responsive to and include issues relating to ILO's normative work, social dialogue, diversity and non-discrimination, including disability issues, and just transition.

The methodology will ensure involvement of key stakeholders in the implementation as well as in the dissemination processes (e.g. stakeholder workshop, debriefing of project manager, etc.). The methodology should clearly state the limitations of the chosen evaluation methods, including those related to representation of specific group of stakeholders.

The evaluation methodology will include, among others:

- **Desk review:** desk review of all relevant documents: project document and its logical framework, funding agreement, relevant minute sheets, implementation plan, performance evaluation plan, progress reports, other relevant documents and studies.
  Desk review, including the following information sources:
    - Project Document;
    - ToC, logframe, results framework, work plans, budget;
    - List of key stakeholders to be interviewed with contact details:
    - List of names and positions of current and former technical assistance project staff and contacts;
    - All technical progress reports including the inception phase;
    - Research, strategy documents and study reports (including baseline studies if existing) conducted by the Project;
    - All key project finance documents and records;
    - Newspaper articles;
    - Mission reports; and
    - Any other available relevant document on the project.

The desk review may suggest a number of preliminary findings that could be useful in reviewing or fine-tuning the evaluation questions. The desk review will include briefing interviews with the project team and the donor.

The evaluators will ensure that women's views and perceptions are also reflected in databases, interviews and that gender-specific questions are included in the questionnaires.

- **Initial meetings,** this will include at least:
  - with the project staff: the evaluators will meet the project staff to reach a common understanding for the evaluation process.
  - with backstopping units and the donor: the evaluators will meet with the technical backstopping in HQ through Teams or other online platform. These meetings aim to reach a common understanding in relation of the technical and financial status of the project.
- **Interviews with stakeholders for collection of primary data**: the evaluators will meet with the national key partners of the project. The evaluators will meet with number of project beneficiaries and organize focus group discussions with them. During the data collection process, evaluators will compare and cross-validate data from different sources (constituents, project staff, project partners and beneficiaries) to verify their accuracy, and different methodologies (review documentary and interviews) that will complement each other. The evaluation will cover the project activities in Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines and Perú. It is considered two field missions to collect data and interviews with stakeholders, one to Peru and other one to Cambodia/Indonesia/Philippines (to be decided at inception phase).

An indicative list of persons to be interviewed will be prepared by the project in consultation with the Evaluation Manager. The project will provide logistical support in the organization of these online interviews and for the field missions (travel arrangements and scheduling interviews). Main stakeholders to be consulted: will include key national partners in Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines and Perú; workers' and employers' organizations; the donor; ILO relevant staff and other actors involved in the project. A details list of contact will be determined with the evaluators.

The evaluators should develop the final evaluation methodology, including a theory of change (ToC), in consultation with the evaluation manager, once the evaluators submits the inception report. The methods should be selected for their rigor and their ability to produce empirical evidence to meet the evaluation criteria, answer the evaluation questions and meet the objectives of the evaluation. The evaluators may adapt the methodology, but any fundamental changes should be agreed between the evaluation manager and the evaluators, and reflected in the inception report. For required quality control of the whole process, the evaluators will follow the EVAL evaluation policy guidelines and the ILO/EVAL checklists available in the Annex I.

5. Main deliverables

The following products will have to be produced and delivered by the evaluators:

- **Inception report** (incl. methodological note) (refer to Checklist 4.8 "Writing the Inception Report"[11]) the extension will be not more than 20 pages excluding the annexes, upon the review of available documents and an initial discussion with the project management (EVAL Guidelines –Checklist 4.8) will be developed. The inception report will:
  - Describe the conceptual framework that will be used to undertake the evaluation, including revisiting the ToC as required if it was to be used as the evaluation framework;
  - Elaborate the methodology proposed, including developing a ToC, in the TOR with changes as required;
  - Set out in some detail the matrix of evaluation questions, including the data indicators required to measure them, answer the evaluation questions, and data sources by specific evaluation questions (emphasizing triangulation as much as possible) data collection methods, and purposive sampling.
  - Set out the list of key stakeholders to be interviewed and the tools to be used for interviews and discussions. This can include the election criteria for individuals for interviews (as much as possible should include men, youth and women);
  - Detail the work plan for the evaluation, indicating the phases in the evaluation, their key deliverables and milestones;
  - Set out the agenda for the stakeholders workshop;
  - Set out outline for the final evaluation report;
  - Interview guides and other data collection tools

- **A first draft of the evaluation report** that will have to be written in English, answer the questions related to the evaluation criteria, including the recommendations, lessons learned, good practices, technical recommendations for the key stakeholders. The report will be sent

[11] Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746817.pdf

to the evaluation manager (refer to "Checklist 4.2: Preparing the evaluation report"[12] and Checklist 4.9: Rating The Quality Of An Evaluation Report [13]). The Evaluation Manger is responsible for reviewing and approving this draft. The draft review report will be shared with all relevant stakeholders by the evaluation manager. They will be asked to provide comments within five working days.

1. Cover page with key project and evaluation data
2. Executive Summary
3. Acronyms and abbreviations
4. Context and description of the project including reported key reported results
5. Methodology and limitations
6. Findings (this section's content should be organized around evaluation criterion and questions), including a table showing output and outcome level results through indicators and targets planned and achieved and comments on each one.
7. Conclusions
8. Recommendations (i.e. for the different key stakeholders and project partners), indicating per each one priority, timeframe and level of resources required. Suggested: maximum 5 recommendations in total).
9. Lessons learned and good practices (following ILO's template)
10. Annexes:
    - TOR
    - List of persons consulted
    - Schedule of work (briefings, data collection, interviews, field visits, workshop/s)
    - Documents consulted
    - Evaluation matrix
    - Data collection tools
    - Logical framework analysis matrix
    - Lessons learned
    - Emerging good practices

[12] Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746808.pdf
[13] Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746818.pdf

- **The final evaluation report**, which must be written in English, must be about 30-40 pages maximum (excluding annexes and executive summary), follow the structure presented in appendix I and include a cover page. Appendices should include the questions matrix, the interview and focus groups guides, field work schedule, a list of interviewees, and a list of documents analysed, a PowerPoint summary in English.
- **A separate summary of the final evaluation report** (ILO/EVAL template) will be sent, together with the final report, in English to the evaluation manager based on the executive summary of the evaluation report.
- **Lessons learnt and good practices** (template for lessons learned and good practices can be found in the "Checklist 4.2: Preparing the evaluation report"[14] and Checklist 4.9: Rating The Quality Of An Evaluation Report [15])
- **Final Approval of Report by EVAL.: quality of the report will be reviewed and comments/feedback may be provided before final approval of the report**
- **Dissemination**: the evaluation report will be submitted to the key stakeholders by the CO, a workshop will be organised to inform the main stakeholders, and also the report will be uploaded in the EVAL public repository of evaluation reports (e-discovery)

6. Management arrangements and work plan (including timeframe)

The organization and coordination of the evaluation assignment will be provided by Mr Pablo Arellano (arellano@ilo.org), the designated Evaluation Manager at ILO level. The evaluators will discuss with him all technical and methodological issues when needed. The consultant, with the support of the evaluation manager, will be able to coordinate with the CTA to provide the main documents and any information that they will need to carry out the evaluation. It will facilitate contacts with the different partners. Meetings will be organized on this occasion with the authorities, partners and beneficiaries concerned by the project. The evaluators will also receive technical, logistical, and administrative support from the project team.

The evaluation manager is responsible for completing the following specific tasks:

- Brief the evaluators on ILO evaluation policies and procedures;

[14] Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746808.pdf
[15] Available at: https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746818.pdf

- Initial coordination with the project team on the development of the data collection process and the preliminary results workshop;
- Review and provide comments on all evaluation deliverable
- Circulate the first draft of the evaluation report to the key stakeholders requesting written comments within 5 working days;
- Consolidate the received written comments received into a master evaluation report to send the evaluators; and
- Ensure the final version of the evaluation report addresses the stakeholders' comments (or an explanation why any has not been addressed) and meets ILO requirement

Proposed work days for the evaluation

Task	Responsible	Date
Selection evaluators	Evaluation Manager	
Recruit evaluators	Evaluation Manager, Evaluation Focal Point, Project Manager	**15/08/2025**
Inception phase: briefing with the evaluation manager, project manager, documents review and development and approval of the inception report	Evaluation Manager, Project Manager, Evaluators	**September 2025**
Data collection phase (interviews and field missions)	Evaluators	**Sept-October 2025**
Post-data collection debrief call	Evaluation Manager	**October 2025**
Report drafting: preparation of draft preliminary report (full draft with annexes) submitted to the evaluation manager for review	Evaluators	**October 2025**
Circulating the draft report for comments from stakeholders	Evaluation Manager	**October - November 2025**
Workshop with stakeholder	Evaluation Manager, Project Manager, Evaluators	**November 2025**
Consolidate feedback from stakeholders and send feedback to the consultant.	Evaluation Manager	**November 2025**
Preparation of Final Evaluation Report and separate Evaluation Summary and submits to ILO. The evaluators will incorporate the feedback as	Evaluators	**November 2025**

appropriate, and send the final report to the evaluation manager		
Review and approval of the evaluation report by the evaluation manager and the Department Focal Point	Evaluation Manager	**November 2025**
EVAL provides final approval	Evaluation Manager	**November 2025**

Timeline

The evaluation will be undertaken over 1,5 months August 2025 - November 2025. A detailed timetable will be included in the inception report developed by the evaluators.

Payment Schedule

The fees of the evaluators, corresponding to approximately XX days of effective work, will be made once the products are received to the satisfaction of the ILO as follows:

- Payment 1: 30% (US$ XXX) upon delivery and approval of the **Inception report**.
- Payment 2: 70% (US$ XXX) against delivery and approval of the **Final Evaluation Report**, including **the summary of the final evaluation report** and the **lessons learnt and good practices**

7. Profile of the evaluators

The evaluation will be conducted by experienced evaluators.

Main qualifications:

- Advanced university degree preferably in economics, business management or related qualifications,
- A minimum of 7 years of professional experience in evaluating international programmes and projects, development initiatives, logical framework and other strategic approaches, M&E methods and approaches, and information analysis and report writing,
- Recent experience with result-based management monitoring and evaluation methodologies

- Previous involvement and understanding of ILO procedures is an advantage and extensive national / international experience in the fields of project formulation, execution, and evaluation is required.
- Work experience in the Asia and Latin America regions will be an asset.
- Excellent communication and interview skills,
- Excellent report writing skills,
- Demonstrated ability to work in group and deliver quality results within strict deadlines,
- Excellent knowledge and excellent drafting skills in English. Working knowledge of Spanish will be appreciated.
- Excellent communication and interview skills,
- Knowledge of gender equality and disability inclusion within evaluations
- Demonstrated ability to work in group and deliver quality results within strict deadlines,

Main duties:

- Responsible for conducting the evaluation
- Coordinate with evaluation manager, project team and stakeholders to conduct the entire evaluation process
- Conduct a desk review of all relevant documents and meet main stakeholders
- Elaborate the inception report (incl. methodological elaborations), the first draft and final report, executive summary and templates for lessons learned and good practices in deadlines and in conformity with ILO and international standards
- Conduct an online workshop with main stakeholders at the end of the evaluation
- Participate to debriefings with main stakeholders on the main results and recommendations of the evaluation

8. Legal and ethical matters

All data and information received from the ILO or other stakeholders for the purposes of this assignment shall be treated as confidential and shall be used only for the purpose of executing this mandate. All intellectual property rights arising from the execution of this mandate are attributed to the ILO. The contents of the written documents obtained and used in connection with this assignment may not be disclosed to third parties without the prior written consent of the ILO or the relevant stakeholders.

This evaluation complies with the United Nations norms and standards for evaluation and will ensure that ethical safeguards regarding the independence of the evaluation are taken into account. Please see UNEG ethical guidelines here.

Annex I. All relevant ILO evaluation guidelines and standard templates

1. Code of conduct form (To be signed by the evaluators)

http://www.ilo.org/eval/Evaluationguidance/WCMS_206205/lang--en/index.htm

2. Checklist 4.8 Writing the inception report https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746817.pdf

3. Checklist 4.2: Preparing the evaluation report
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746808.pdf

4. Checklist 4.9: Rating The Quality Of An Evaluation Report
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746818.pdf

5. Guidance Note 5.5: Dissemination of Lessons Learned and Emerging Good Practices
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746730.pdf

6. Guidance Note 3.1 Integrating Gender Equality in Monitoring & Evaluation of Projects.
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746716.pdf

7. Guidance Note 4.5: Stakeholder engagement https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746724.pdf

8. Guidance Note 3.2: Adapting evaluation methods to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate
https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746717.pdf

9. Checklist 4.3: Filling in the Evaluation Title Page https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746810.pdf

10. Template for executive summary https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_746822.pdf

Annex 2: Evaluation matrix

In the evaluation matrix, we added probes to each evaluation question. The focus of the evaluation was on the lead question, the probes merely provided a lens or direction for inquiry. The probes will therefore not explicitly be answered in the evaluation report. We use document review (doc) and interviews (int) as sources and methods for data collection. Priority source/methods indicated with ●, secondary with ○.

EQ #	Evaluation questions and probes	Measures or Indicators	Information Sources	Doc	Int	Informants	Assessment
	Relevance						
1	Were the project objectives aligned with national development priorities and the needs of partners and beneficiaries? • Does the project align with needs and priorities of beneficiaries? • Does the project align with needs and priorities of key partners (governments, employers, and workers' organisations)?	Project covers relevant themes / groups in design and implementation	National Development plans Project design document (PRODOC) Project partners and stakeholders	●	●	Representatives of tripartite constituents Project staff and technical specialists	Extent to which relevant NDP themes / groups are referenced Synthesis of responses of interviewees
2	How did the project contribute to the relevant ILO Programme & Budget Outcomes? • Is the project aligned with DWCPs or P&B?	Project supports priorities in DWCPs and P&Bs in each of the four focus countries	ILO P&B and DWCPs Project partners and stakeholders	●	●	Project staff and technical specialists	Extent to which project objectives align with P&B or DWCPs priorities
3	Was the project design adequate to meet project objectives? • Is the ToC clearly defined? • Do outputs causally link to the intended outcomes and final objectives?	Project has a ToC explaining progression from activities to results, assumptions, and risks	PRODOC, ToC	●	○	Project staff, partners and technical specialists	Evaluator assessment

	• Are project components complementary? • Has the ToC been adapted in response to contextual changes?	Rationale and process of adaptation are transparent					
	Coherence						
4	Did the project build on previous thematically related experience of the ILO and other local and international organisations in the selected countries? • What thematically related interventions have been implemented by the ILO in the four countries? What are other key interventions? • Which relevant experiences have been most useful to the project? •	Key past experiences which were taken into account in design and implementation	PRODOC Project partners and stakeholders	○	●	Representatives of tripartite constituents Project staff, partners and technical specialists	Extent to which past experience were referenced Synthesis of responses of interviewees
5	Did the project build on the comparative advantage[26] of the ILO? • How effectively has the project engaged ILO's tripartite constituents? • Has the project capitalised on ILO's thematic and regional expertise?	Extent to which tripartism and knowledge sharing was leveraged	Project partners and stakeholders	○	●	Representatives of tripartite constituents Project staff, partners and technical specialists	Analysis of project design documents Synthesis of responses of interviewees
	Effectiveness						
6	Have the project objectives been achieved? • Which outcomes and outputs have been fully or partially achieved? •	Extent to which intended results were achieved	PRODOC, Progress reports and M&E plan	●	●	Project staff	Comparison of baseline, target, and achievement values Synthesis of

[26] UN specialised agency, tripartite structure, international labour standards, mandate to promote decent work through social dialogue, global, regional and country level presence, engagement with tripartite constituents globally and nationally

							responses of interviewees
7	What were the main internal and external factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of results? • What are the key internal and external factor pointed out by the project team and stakeholders? • How has the project adapted to contextual shifts, for instance, COVID-19? • What risk mitigation strategies were used for addressing these factors?	Factors that contributed to result achievement	Project staff, partners Progress reports	●	●	Project staff, technical specialists, partners	Synthesis of factors documented in progress reports Synthesis of responses of interviewees
8	Have unexpected positive and/or negative results occurred? • What positive or negative unintended results have been observed? • How did the project team respond to them?	Extent to which unintended results emerged	Project staff, partners		●	Project staff, technical specialists, partners	Synthesis of responses of interviewees
	Efficiency						
9	Were resources (financial, human, time) used efficiently? • Were resources utilised in a cost-effective manner? • Were the resources available aligned with what was needed to reach the objectives? • Were there delays or inefficiencies in project delivery – and how did the project respond to them?	Extent to which resources were used efficiently	PRODOC, Progress reports and financial information	○	●	Project staff	Synthesis of responses of interviewees
10	Has the project developed and implemented an M&E strategy that enhances accountability and learning and feeds into management? • Was the monitoring framework effectively used to follow up and report on project results? • How was it applied to inform decision making?	The monitoring systems were functional, applied, and provided support to project management.	PRODOC, Progress reports and M&E plan Project staff	○	●	Project staff	Synthesis of responses of interviewees

	• Did it include disaggregated data (by gender, youth, persons with disability)?						
	Impact						
11	What observable contributions did the project make toward its overall development goal? • What contributions did it make to for the target group ("more than twenty million workers (at least 50% women), currently paid in cash, will gain first-time access or improved access …")? • What changes are observable on the policy level ("at least fifteen countries will promote responsible digital wage payments through their labour policies …")	Extent to which intended results were achieved	PRODOC, Progress reports and M&E plan Project partners and stakeholders	●	●	Representatives of tripartite constituents Project staff, technical specialists, partners	Comparison of baseline, target, and achievement values Synthesis of responses of interviewees
	Sustainability						
12	Are project results likely to be maintained after the project ends? • Are partners likely to maintain project results after the project ends? (i.e. ownership, institutionalisation of project components) • Were capacity-building, policy and/or regulatory efforts sufficient to support continuation? • Is there evidence from beneficiaries that the project's results are likely to be maintained?	Extent to which results are likely to be maintained Measures taken for sustaining project results	Progress reports Project staff, partners	○	●	Representatives of tripartite constituents Project staff, technical specialists, partners	Synthesis of factors supporting / undermining sustainability Synthesis of responses of interviewees
13	Can the project's approach or results be scaled up or replicated by national partners or others? • Did the project identify and document good practices to facilitate replication and scaling up? • What are conditions for successful scaling / replication?	Measures taken to prepare scaling / replication	Progress reports Project staff, partners	○	●	Project staff, technical specialists, partners	Synthesis of good practices documented in progress reports Factors supporting or

							undermining scaling Synthesis of responses of interviewees
	Cross-cutting issues:						
14	How well did the project address the needs of women and vulnerable groups, such as people with disabilities? • How has the project addressed the priorities of women, youth, and people with disabilities? (design, implementation and M&E framework) • Are there positive or negative specific observable impacts on women, youth, and people with disabilities?	Extent to which intended results were achieved	PRODOC, Progress reports and M&E plan Project partners and stakeholders	●	●	Project staff, technical specialists, partners	See above on effectiveness and impact References in documents Synthesis of responses of interviewees
	Learnings						
15	What key lessons learned, and good practices have emerged from the project?	Lessons learned and good practices that emerged	Progress reports Project partners and stakeholders	○	●	Project staff, technical specialists, partners	Synthesis of learnings and good practices documented in progress reports Synthesis of responses of interviewees

Annex 3: Interviewees

Interviewees are listed in chronological order.

Table 4: List of interviewees

Online	Number	Name	Organisation, Role
Global level (11 interviewees, 5 women)			
Yes	1	Ms. Valerie Breda	ILO, Digital Wages for Decent Work, Project Manager
Yes		Mr. Andrej Slivnik	ILO, Digital Wages for Decent Work, Project Officer
Yes	2	Ms. Ella Moffat	Reimagining Industry to Support Equality (RISE), Programme Manager
Yes	3	Mr. Rafael Peels	ILO, ACTRAV, the Bureau for Workers' Activities, Specialist
Yes	4	Mr. Luis Rodrigo Morales	International Organisation of Employers (IOE), Director of Policy, Steering Committee
Yes	5	Mr. Daniel Kostzer	International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), Chief Economist, Steering Committee
Yes	6	Ms. Katherine Rickard	Better than Cash (BTC), Private sector engagement Lead, Steering Committee
		Mr. Samer Bakeer	Better than Cash (BTC), Digital payments specialist
Yes	7	Mr. Jose Luis Viveros Añorve	ILO, Employers' activities specialist, Member of the steering Committee
Yes	8	Ms. Leora Klapper	World Bank, Lead Economist, member of Steering Committee
Yes	9	Ms. Sara Park	ILO, Better Work, Head of partnerships and policy
Country level			
Cambodia (17 interviewees, 8 women)			
No	1	Ms. Kong Sasa	New Focus Facotry co., ltd
No	2	Dr. Ken Loo	Textile, Apparel, Footwear & Travel Goods Association in Cambodia (TAFTAC)
No	3	Mr. H.E. Bronch Sopheana	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MLVT)
		Mr. Missing Name	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MLVT), Deputy Director General of the General Department of Labour of Cambodia
		Mr. Missing Name	Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training (MLVT), Deputy Director of the Labour Inspection Department
No	4	Mr. Preap Monnysovann	Collective Union of Movement of Workers (CUMW)
No	5	Ms. Thy Kunthea	Horizon Outdoor Factory, Role
No	6	Six factory workers (five female, one male)	Horizon Outdoor Factory

	7	Mr. Koy Heng	Association of Banks in Cambodia
		Mr. Chey Serivatna	Association of Banks in Cambodia
Yes	8	Ms. Froukje Boele	ILO Better Factories Cambodia, Role
No	9	Mr. Virak Nuon	ILO Better Factories Cambodia, Role
Indonesia (18 interviewees, 11 women)			
Yes	1	Ms. Rini Wahyu Hariyani	Riwani Globe (Enterprise Development Services), Founder and Director
Yes	2	Mr. Arief Umar	ILO, National Project Coordinator
No	3	Ms. Isnarti Hasan	Ministry of Manpower, Manpower Placement Development of the Directorate General of Manpower Placement Development and Employment Opportunities Expansion, Director
		Mr. Iwan Darmawan	Ministry of Manpower, Employment Expansion and Job Creation of the Directorate General of Manpower Placement Development and Employment Opportunities Expansion, Director
No	4	Mr. Djamin Nainggolan	Association of The Indonesian Payment Systems, Executive Director
No	5	Ms. Lishia Erza	APINDO, Chair of the SME Entrepreneurial Development Committee
No	6	Ms. Retno	Women SME Association, Consultant
No	7	Mr. Yana	PT. Sarongnusa Noor Maja, HR management consultant
No	8	Seven factory workers (six female and one male)	PT. Sarongnusa Noor Maja
No	9	Ms. Sri Dustirawati	Ministry of MSME Office Bandung, Head
Yes	10	Mr. Arinengwang Gusta Galung Raharjo	Otoritas Jasa Keuangan, Literacy and Financial Inclusion Department, Deputy Director
		Mr. Puji Iman Siagian	Otoritas Jasa Keuangan, Literacy and Financial Inclusion Department
Peru (13 interviewees, 8 women)			
No	1	Ms. Virginia Rose-Losada	OIT, Especialista en Empresas, Cooperativas y Desarrollo Rural
No	2	Mr. Julio Perez Coaguilla	OIT, Coordinador Nacional del Proyecto de Salarios Digitales para el Trabajo Decente
No	3	Ms. Ana Cecilia Torres Mendoza	Ministerio de Trabajo y Promoción del Empleo, Directora (e) de la Dirección de la Formalización Laboral y Capacitación en la Normativa Laboral
No	4	Ms. María Hanna Oscco Gaspar	Ministerio de Trabajo y Promoción del Empleo, Directora (e) de la Dirección de Normativa de Trabajo
No		Ms. Alejandra Alejos Gallegos	Ministerio de Trabajo y Promoción del Empleo, Analista legal de la Dirección de Normativa de Trabajo

No		Mr. Christian Hinojosa Medina	Ministerio de Trabajo y Promoción del Empleo, Coordinador de la Dirección de Normativa de Trabajo
No	5	Ms. Jacqueline Aguilar Dancuart	Cámara de Comercio, Industria, Servicios, Turismo y de la Producción de Cusco, Gerente General.
No		Mr. Carlos Guillermo Fernández Chávez	Cámara de Comercio, Industria, Servicios, Turismo y de la Producción de Cusco, Coordinador del Centro de Estudios Empresariales.
No	6	Ms. Hayme Elena Llacho Machaca	Independiente, formadora en metodologías de OIT
		Mr. Julio Revatta Tagle	Empresario, formador en metodología de OIT
No	7	Ms. Ana Virginia Javier Flores	Empresaria de ITC PERU TRAVEL
Yes	8	Ms. Ursula Mc Lean	Asociación para el Desarrollo Agropecuario Sostenible (ADAS), Gerente General
Yes		Mr. Fernando Asavache Diaz	Asociación para el Desarrollo Agropecuario Sostenible (ADAS), Coordinador de proyectos.
Philippines (5 interviewees, 1 women)			
Yes	1	Mr. Richard Umali	ILO, Former Project officer
Yes	2	Mr. Hideki Kagohashi	ILO, Enterprise development specialist
Yes	3	Mr. Ray Tadeo	Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), Manager, training and capacity building
Yes		Mr. Jerusalem Rojas	ECOP's digital wages project (2023-2024), Project coordinator
Yes		Ms. Talia Tulad	Employers Confederation of the Philippines (ECOP), Training and development specialist
Donor (2 interviewees, 1 woman)			
Yes	1	Mr. Camilo Tellez	Senior program officer, Gates Foundation
Yes	2	Ms. Maria May	Former Senior program officer (Dec 2020-June 2024), Gates Foundation

Annex 4: Participant data

The following tables present disaggregated data on the 41 interviewees, broken down by stakeholder group, country, and gender.

Table 5: Interviewee data

Interviewees	
Stakeholder group	
Constituents	24
ILO	12
Donor	2
Other	28
Country	
Cambodia	17
Indonesia	18
Peru	13
Philippines	5
Gender[27]	
Female	34
Male	32
Total	66

[27] Gender classifications were based on the evaluators' judgement at the time of data collection and may not reflect participants' self-identified gender.

Annex 5: Lessons learned

Global Scale of Digital Wages Project

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO2034GAT

Name of Evaluator: orange & teal, Basel, Switzerland

Date: 21 November 2025

Lesson learned element	Balancing rapid scale with sustained efforts to reach smaller enterprises
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	The project faces a trade-off when determining how to prioritise support for digital wage payments. Interventions in large, formal enterprises can quickly reach thousands of workers because these firms typically have stronger administrative systems, higher digital readiness, and clearer incentives to adopt electronic payments. In contrast, supporting micro and small enterprises requires more time, resources, and tailored assistance, and each intervention may reach only a small number of workers, even though these businesses account for most employment in many countries. Recognising this, achieving inclusive impact depends on extending digital wages beyond a few organised sectors and therefore requires balancing quick wins with sustained work in more challenging parts of the economy.
Context and related preconditions	This lesson reflects experiences across countries with different levels of sectors, enterprise structures, or digital readiness. Interviewees mentioned that progress was strongest with larger, export-oriented enterprises that already had organised HR systems and plans to adopt digital payment – for instance, enterprises in Cambodia's garment sector – while scaling beyond this sector and smaller firms proved more challenging. These differences influenced how quickly the project could advance and underscored the need for context-specific approaches.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	This learning can be relevant for ILO project teams and constituents working on (digital) wage payment policies and practices.
Challenges / negative lessons-Causal factors	There are several challenges and factors that can make it difficult to scale digital wage payments evenly across sectors and companies, including: • Sector and enterprise structure (larger vs. smaller firms, formal vs informal economy) • Local context (urban vs. rural) and associated infrastructure, especially financial sector infrastructure • Level of digitalisation or digital readiness, of organisational capacity and processes (e.g., existing HR structures) • Institutional environment, regulatory practices, level of cooperation and coordination across stakeholders
Success / positive Issues-Causal factors	The project had several activities and approaches to address the aforementioned challenges: • Diagnostics and country-level interventions to assess and test where digital wages were most feasible and where more support was needed • Research agenda to understand what works and activities to disseminate the research findings • Flexibility to adapt and adjust to different contexts
ILO Administrative Issues (staff,	The lesson shows the importance of designing projects with a sound theory of change that is responsive to different contexts. Resource

resources, design, implementation)	allocation, timelines, and ambitions may need to account for the higher level of work required to support MSMEs.

Global Scale of Digital Wages Project

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO2034GAT

Name of Evaluator: orange & teal, Basel, Switzerland

Date: 16 December 2025

Lesson learned element	**Digital wages can support formalisation, but require evidence and adaptation**
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	Digital wage payments have strong potential to support the formalisation of economies and, more specifically, of employment, by creating a formal and auditable transaction record between employer and worker, which can help address wage-related issues (payroll fraud, under-reporting of wages, etc.). The project showed that digital wages can foster formalisation through mechanisms such as increased wage transparency and more traceable payment processes.
Context and related preconditions	This lesson is based on experiences from pilot countries, each with different levels of digital and institutional readiness. Introducing and adapting digital wage payments in a given context requires taking into consideration the respective local financial system, regulatory environment, and degree of informality. Often this means overcoming regulatory and infrastructure barriers and building trust among workers and employers, which is essential. These differences underscore the need to adapt interventions to local conditions and to build evidence that responds to each country's specific needs and challenges.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	This learning can be relevant for ILO project teams and constituents working on (digital) wage payment policies and practices.
Challenges / negative lessons-Causal factors	Several challenges can occur when digital wage payments and formalisation outcomes shall be linked: • Regulatory gaps or ambiguity that make it harder to enforce or incentivise digital payments. • Inadequate digital and financial infrastructure, limited accessibility and reliability, particularly in more rural or informal sectors. • Low levels of trust among employers and workers, especially where cash-based practices are deeply rooted. • Limited availability of consistent data made it hard to track progress and assess the formalisation effects of digital wages.
Success / positive Issues-Causal factors	The project provides several success factors, including: • Engagement with employers and workers helps build trust and awareness of the benefits and risks of digital wage payments. • An evidence-driven and adaptive approach is key for scaling digital wage initiatives responsibly and effectively. • Policy innovation, data gathering, and adjustments are essential to translate digital wage payments into formalisation outcomes.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	The challenges and success factors highlight the need for project designs that allocate time and resources for experimentation, evidence generation and monitoring, as well as adaptation. Tripartite engagement is essential for finding context-specific solutions and building essential trust for digital wage payments.

Annex 6: Good practice

Global Scale of Digital Wages Project

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO2034GAT

Name of Evaluator: orange & teal, Basel, Switzerland

Date: 21 November 2025

Good practice element	Synergies between the ILO and the Ministry of Labour in developing Peru's digital wage regulations
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	The project worked with Peru's Ministry of Labour and Employment Promotion (MTPE), through its Normative Directorate, to support the development of further regulation to operationalise digital wage payments. The collaboration centred on a joint analysis of the electronic payroll *(planilla electrónica)* MTPE dataset to understand how wages are paid across sectors, regions, and enterprise sizes, with a specific focus on cash versus digital transfers. The findings helped identify regulatory gaps and supports the implementation of Decree-Law 1499 (2020), which encourages the use of electronic wage payments. During the research, the ILO provided guidance on research methods and helped align the work with Peru's Regulatory Quality Analysis (ACR) requirements. The project also brought in relevant international labour standards, including Conventions 95 and 117, and shared examples from other countries. Multi-stakeholder consultations hosted at the ILO helped review and validate the proposals. Although the official report is still unpublished (late 2025), it has served as the main technical input for the draft implementing regulation now released for public consultation.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The work took place in a context where Peru is modernising its labour administration systems and seeking greater transparency in wage payment practices in the post COVID era. The availability of the *planilla electrónica* allowed for detailed empirical analysis, although some data quality issues required additional attention. The MTPE's use of the ACR framework also helped integrate the research into the regulatory process. The approach is replicable in countries that have administrative wage data, active regulatory reform processes, and interest in strengthening wage payment rules. Conversely, in contexts with high levels of informality, implementing a similar approach may not be feasible, as the necessary administrative data may not be available. Collaboration between labour ministries, data specialists, and technical partners is important. Cross-national regulatory frameworks and international guidance can help to frame the analysis and support policymakers in interpreting national findings. Potential constraints include delays related to internal government review procedures and the sensitivity of reforms affecting wage payment methods.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	The analysis of wage payment patterns provided concrete evidence on where cash payments remain common and where regulatory clarification may be needed. This evidence fed directly into the drafting of the new regulation, shaping its focus and content. This collaboration between MTPE and ILO shows how empirical research and international standards can support the development of practical regulatory tools for digital wage payments.

Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Beneficiaries: employers, workers and trade unions, government agencies.
Potential for replication and by whom	Potential: moderate to high. The approach can be adopted by labour ministries, statistical units, or regulatory bodies in countries that have digital payroll systems or are working toward them. It is particularly relevant where governments aim to strengthen wage protection and modernise payment systems.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	This good practice contributes to: • ILO strategic objectives on decent work, including digital wages • P&B and DWCP priorities on strengthening labour administration and wage protection • SDG 8 on decent work
Other documents or relevant comments	The technical report, once released, is expected to support future regulatory work in Peru and may provide a useful reference for similar initiatives in other countries.