



International
Labour
Organization

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i-eval Discovery



ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality (2022–25)

Type of Evaluation: Thematic

Evaluation timing: Final

Evaluation nature: Independent

Project countries: Global

P&B Outcome(s): ILO P&B 2022-2023 /Outcome 6: Gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment in the world of work

ILO P&B 2024 – 2025/ Outcome 5: Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all

SDG(s): 5 and 8

Date when the evaluation was completed by the evaluator: 08 October 2025

Date when evaluation was approved by EVAL: 14 May 2026

ILO Administrative Office: Gender Equality Team within the Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch (GEDI)

ILO Technical Office(s): Gender Equality Team within the Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch (GEDI)

Joint evaluation agencies: n/a

Project duration: 2022- 2025

Donor and budget: n/a

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Evaluation budget: US\$22,900

Key Words: [Use the ILO Thesaurus](#)

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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1. Executive Summary

Background

The ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022-2025 (Action Plan) operationalises the ILO gender equality policy. It identifies internal mainstreaming strategies for which progress is measured on staffing, substance and structure. The ILO Action Plan is the main tool to support ILO's Strategic Plan and its Programme and Budget outcomes. The Action Plan's integrated approaches focus on promoting commitment, collaboration, and accountability among ILO staff, raising awareness, and fostering knowledge sharing.

The Office has a long-standing responsibility, based on a requirement in the ILO gender equality policy, to keep the Governing Body and constituents fully informed of progress in implementing the ILO gender equality policy. In terms of roles and responsibilities for enhancing gender equality and mainstreaming in ILO work, the Action Plan stipulates that all staff are accountable for contributing to mainstreaming, while the Director-General holds ultimate responsibility for policy development and organizational performance on gender equality. The Deputy Directors-General, and Regional Directors oversee implementation and resource allocation, with support from the Strategic Programming, HR, Partnerships and technical (or policy) departments. Action Plan indicator custodians are responsible for identifying specific strategies related to their area of concern, including accelerating performance. Key roles including Senior Gender Specialists, Coordinators, and Focal Points, supported by the Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch (GEDI) and the Gender Network, serve as catalysts for mainstreaming efforts throughout the ILO.

Purpose and Scope

The evaluation serves several key purposes: to provide an independent assessment of progress towards the goals of the Action Plan, assessing performance against established indicators, strategies, and management arrangements. It also aims to evaluate the extent to which ILO's Policy Outcomes are gender mainstreamed in accordance with the Action Plan, provide strategic recommendations, and highlight good practices and lessons learned to inform the development and implementation of the next multiannual Action Plan (2026-2029). The evaluation serves as a basis for reflection and dialogue among key stakeholders, including ILO Senior Management, staff, and custodians of the indicators, to ensure continued support and innovation for gender equality. The evaluation covered the duration of the Action Plan, and explored the institutional, operational, programmatic, and policy outcomes at global, regional, and national levels, with a thematic focus on gender equality.

The evaluation took place from mid-May to early-October 2025.

Approach

The evaluation leveraged project documents, evaluation and audit reports, and other documentation prepared for the implementation and monitoring of the Action Plan. It employed a mixed-method approach, triangulating between qualitative and quantitative data. Data collection methods included document reviews and 33 key informants across the ILO, constituents, and external partners. The evaluation adopted a summative and formative approach, aiming to provide insights into the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, and efficiency of the Action Plan's design and implementation. It also offers forward-looking findings, lessons learned, and emerging good practices for improved decision-making within the context of the next Action Plan. The evaluation was participatory, utilizing a utilization-focused

approach to engage stakeholders throughout and also took an intersectional approach covering the key aspects of non-discrimination as they related to gender equality.

Clients of the evaluation

The main clients for the evaluation are:

- The ILO and its staff, responsible for implementing the Action Plan.
- ILO staff from the Gender Equality Team GEDI.
- ILO senior management, including the Director-General and members of the Senior Management Team at Headquarters and in the field (Regional Directors).

The evaluation also serves as a source of information for ILO staff working on both mainstreaming and gender-specific issues, ILO staff participating in gender-mainstreaming related networks (such as the ILO Gender Network), ILO constituents (government representatives, workers' and employers' organizations at country and global levels), the ILO Staff Union, and the ILO Governing Body. The evaluation may also be of interest to development partners and policymakers.

Summary of Key Findings

Relevance and Strategic Fit

Key finding 1: Internationally we are at a key moment for human rights, including gender equality. Key informants recognized the additional challenges of promoting gender equality in the current context, particularly related to LGBTIQ+ rights, but expressed strong views concerning the need for ILO to continue advocating for gender equality as a core element of its work. As the ILO revises its value proposition on gender equality and mainstreaming, and assesses the need to update its Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Policy, it must ensure that these initiatives align with its core values and mandate.

Key finding 2: While the Action Plan serves as an operational tool for implementing the ILO Policy on Gender Mainstreaming and Equality, the Action Plan's limited visibility has hindered its own impact and attention to the ILO Policy on Gender Mainstreaming and Equality itself. Nevertheless, ILO's gender mainstreaming strategies were viewed by constituents as relevant and valuable, particularly in helping align with international labour standards.

Key finding 3: Understanding of the ILO's "transformative" gender equality agenda is uneven, with most staff lacking clarity on its practical meaning, and context-specific communication challenges further hindering consistent interpretation and engagement. This is common across the UN system.

Key finding 4: The Action Plan is mainly aligned with the second United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP 2.0), with all seven functional areas of the UN-SWAP 2.0 reflected in the Plan, with some concerns around reporting. Alignment with UN-SWAP 3.0 is feasible. The biggest challenges for future alignment may be setting up a dedicated senior level Steering Committee on gender equality and gender mainstreaming, and setting/meeting targets for resource allocation, the latter a weakness across the UN system.

Coherence

Key finding 5: The ILO's gender architecture has undergone notable changes in recent years, with strengthening of coordination, clarification of roles, and enhanced support for gender mainstreaming. However, the gender architecture remains somewhat fragmented, with roles that could be clearer, inconsistent expertise, and limited formal recognition of gender responsibilities, undermining overall effectiveness.

Key finding 6: Implementation of the Action Plan was hindered by the Gender Network being dormant for about one and a half years and largely inactive since 2018, and vacant staff positions at Regional and HQ levels. The revitalization of the Gender Network and additional staffing in place has increased attention to the Action Plan, which may lead to improved performance.

Key finding 7: Custodians for the Action Plan/UN-SWAP indicators are engaged in reporting, but do not appear in all cases to have become advocates for gender equality and mainstreaming.

Key finding 8: ILO is working towards a more intersectional approach, particularly including gender equality and disability inclusion, and is aware of the need to increase focus on intersectionality at regional and country levels, but gaps remain.

Effectiveness

Key finding 9: There has been steady improvement in meeting/exceeding UN-SWAP indicators between 2022 and 2024, however the quality of reporting on these indicators is uneven, and ILO is lagging behind both similar agencies and the UN system as a whole.

Key finding 10: The ILO has expanded institutional capacity development for gender equality and mainstreaming, achieving measurable gains in staff knowledge. Current efforts largely concentrate on specialists rather than fostering organization-wide skills development.

Key finding 11: Significant improvement for gender parity at senior levels (P5 and above) has been achieved, but regional, departmental, and grade-specific gaps highlight the need for tailored interventions to support equitable career progression and consistent outcomes across the organization.

Key finding 12: Although ILO is under-performing on mainstreaming indicators vis-a-vis equivalent agencies and the UN system as a whole, it is performing reasonably in terms of achieving results on gender equality. A greater focus on mainstreaming could plausibly be assumed to lead to stronger results.

Key finding 13: There appears to have been a stronger focus on meeting/exceeding the Action Plan indicators than on wider institutional dynamics, e.g. ensuring the Gender Network plays an advocacy as well as a technical role.

Efficiency

Key finding 14: Despite progress, accountability for gender equality in the ILO could be stronger, with uneven leadership engagement, inconsistent ownership of the Gender Action Plan, and over-reliance on GEDI rather than fully shared organizational responsibility. This perpetuates uneven

implementation across headquarters and field offices. ILO, like much of the UN system, appears to be caught in an “Accountability Deficit Cycle” where changes in senior management lead directly to less, or more, focus on gender equality and mainstreaming. Mainstreaming to date has not allowed ILO to escape from this cycle.

Key finding 15: The heavy reporting load related to the Action Plan and UN-SWAP has diverted attention from wider institutional dynamics and the need to bring in champions, and use of the UN-SWAP as a negotiation tool with senior managers. The ILO Disability Champions Network appears to have been more effective in this area.

Key finding 16: The ILO’s gender marker and related resource-tracking systems are underutilized, with inconsistent application, and limited integration into monitoring, planning, and budget allocation. As a result, marker scoring risks becoming a tick-box exercise, with potential gaps between ratings and actual gender mainstreaming.

Key finding 17: Staffing gaps, low budget allocations to gender outcomes (some 6.4 percent vs. the UN’s 15 percent target), and limited programmatic incentives continue to constrain full implementation of the Action Plan, despite some recent positive results from targeted funding through RBSA.

Key finding 18: Partnerships have helped to improve the implementation of gender equality and mainstreaming efforts and achieve the objectives of the ILO Action Plan. The ILO has actively leveraged global partnerships and alliances to advance gender equality, particularly in care work, equal pay, and just transitions. Through initiatives such as the Global Alliance for Care, EPIC, Generation Equality, and South-South and Triangular Cooperation, the ILO has strengthened collaboration, advocacy, and knowledge-sharing to amplify its influence and advance progress on gender equality and mainstreaming.

Sustainability and Impact

Key finding 19: Although the ILO holds a unique position within the UN and the wider multilateral system, grounded in its normative mandate, tripartite structure, and labor market expertise, these comparative advantages are not being fully leveraged or strategically articulated across the organization or to external partners

Key finding 20: ILO has been establishing the grounds for sustainability through increased staffing and profile for the Gender Network, however these gains could potentially be lost under UN reform. One scenario involves considering what can be salvaged from these gains.

Key finding 21: : ILO has been partly successful to successful in relation to results on gender equality, and these results are on par with or better than other thematic areas.

Conclusions, Lessons Learned and Emerging Good Practices

The ILO's implementation of its Action Plan has seen partial success, particularly recently, though previously hampered by under-investment. ILO achievement in relation to gender equality results has

been between partly successful and successful. While the Action Plan shows potential, its effectiveness is limited by issues such as siloed responsibilities, insufficient resources, and uneven leadership engagement. Enhanced coordination, accountability, and resource allocation are needed to fully realize the ILO's leadership potential in gender equality and mainstreaming.

To achieve meaningful and lasting progress in gender equality, shared ownership and accountability are paramount. It is essential that gender equality objectives are not only integrated into action plans but also fully embedded within the ILO's operations, influencing all aspects of resource allocation, program design, and performance metrics. This requires moving beyond traditional approaches to strategic alignment and fostering a culture of shared accountability. Senior management, regional directors, and all staff must actively engage in advancing gender equality. Creating internal champions and enhancing management support through the advocacy of the Gender Network will be crucial to significantly boost internal awareness and action, ensuring that gender equality is recognized as a fundamental priority throughout the organization.

Effective interventions rely on leveraging data and maximizing partnerships. Consistent application of gender equality markers and resource-tracking systems, combined with enhanced data disaggregation, is crucial. Collaborations with UN agencies, governments, social partners, and the private sector can amplify the reach and impact of initiatives. Moreover, it is important to not treat gender initiatives as an add-on to existing projects.

Positively, the evaluation identified several emerging good practices, including leveraging data-driven interventions through strategic partnerships, the revitalization of the Gender Network, and increasingly integrating gender approaches, activities, and gender-related result monitoring, with gender-disaggregated reporting.

Recommendations

1. Values Proposition on gender equality and mainstreaming: To facilitate the ILO's strategic positioning and enhance and promote the visibility and impact of its programmatic outcomes, ILO should develop and disseminate internally and externally a clearer values proposition which explicitly showcase the ILO's foundational strengths, emphasizing international labor standards, rights at work, social dialogue, and decent work. It should pay renewed attention to core gender-related conventions, particularly those addressing non-discrimination, maternity protection, and work-family balance.

2. Review the status and relevance of the ILO Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming: ILO should consider the advantages and disadvantages of updating its Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming as well as its Action Plan following the outcomes of the 114th Session (2026) of the Conference's general discussion on advancing the transformative agenda for gender equality at work.

3. Develop and implement a renewed ILO gender equality and mainstreaming accountability framework: Develop and implement a robust accountability framework for gender equality and mainstreaming that includes clear roles, regular reporting mechanisms, and a whole-of-organization approach.

Leadership at all levels, including Country and Regional Directors, should be held accountable for results, and gender equality should be integrated into the core business of the organization. Strengthening leadership buy-in, avoiding excessive bureaucratic layering, and ensuring field-level ownership are critical to achieving transformative and sustainable change.

4. Strengthen ILO's Gender Architecture: Establish clearer mandates and coordination mechanisms between GEDI, focal points, gender specialists, and custodians to improve coherence, reduce duplication, and enable a more strategic approach to gender mainstreaming.

5. Enhance institutional capacity for gender equality and mainstreaming: Further develop and implement an organization-wide, costed capacity development framework, utilizing results of recent gender equality and gender mainstreaming assessments, to guide learning and link competencies to performance expectations.

6. Accelerate efforts to attain the equal representation of women and develop a more enabling work environment: Develop tailored interventions, enhance monitoring of promotion and recruitment, leverage manager dashboards to assess gender parity, prioritize protection against exploitation and harassment, and strengthen male allyship through inclusive initiatives

7. Ensure coherence, oversight and comprehensiveness in relation to planning and reporting: Align Action Plan performance indicators with UN-SWAP 3.0 more fully than in the past, integrate evaluation findings into Programme Budget reporting, and implement a quality assurance system with peer reviews and audit oversight.

8. Align with UN-SWAP 3.0 Performance Indicators on resource allocation and tracking: Strengthen the Gender Equality Marker (GEM) in line with the UN Data Standards for United Nations system-wide reporting of financial data. An indicative target of 15 percent for GEM 3, and 100 percent for GEM 2 (i.e. all funds other than GEM 3) should be set for extra-budgetary resources, with incremental progress to be established in the next Action Plan; and similar targets should be set for core budgetary resources going forward.

2. Introduction

2.1 Gender equality and mainstreaming in context

The International Labour Organization (ILO) is devoted to promoting social justice and internationally recognized human and labour rights, pursuing its founding mission that social justice is essential to universal and lasting peace. It is the only tripartite United Nations agency bringing together governments, employers' and workers' organizations of 187 Member States.

The ILO sets international labor standards through conventions and recommendations, and leads UN efforts to promote "decent work for all" (SDG 8). It conducts labor research, provides technical assistance, and supports countries in drafting laws, strengthening institutions, and aligning policies with international standards. The ILO also promotes dialogue among governments, employers' and workers' organizations, and monitors the application of labor standards.

Gender equality and women's empowerment are central to the ILO's mission of promoting decent work for all and are crucial to achieving the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, particularly those on gender equality, decent work, and reducing inequalities. From its founding in 1919 to its 2019 Centenary Declaration, the ILO has prioritized equal opportunities and treatment in the workplace. Its efforts are aligned with a broader international consensus, supported by global instruments such as the UN Charter, the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The ILO's 1999 Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Policy, updated in 2016, underscores the organization's responsibility to lead global gender equality initiatives by integrating gender perspectives across its operations and technical work.

Following a 2021 high-level evaluation of its gender equality and mainstreaming efforts, the ILO adopted an Action Plan for Gender Equality for the period 2022–2025 (Action Plan) and an office-wide Theory of Change towards a transformative agenda for gender equality in the world of work. These initiatives aimed to address root causes of inequality and foster systemic change through a transformative agenda. The Action Plan was intended to align with the ILO's Strategic Plan and the UN-System-Wide Action Plan for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP), with specific goals for staffing, program substance, and institutional structures. The Plan's direct audience comprises ILO staff and management at all levels, in headquarters and in regional and field offices, in order to better support constituents. Stakeholders include UN staff, development and implementing partners, academics and experts, and representatives of civil society. The ultimate beneficiaries of this action plan are the ILO tripartite constituents.

The Action Plan's aims and strategies were to operationalize its Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Policy, which prescribes a results-based approach for mutually reinforcing priorities. The Action Plan aimed to contribute toward the fair, inclusive and secure delivery of decent work through a transformative agenda to achieve gender equality at work. Strategies of the Action Plan – based on the cross-cutting and critical nature of gender equality for decent work – comprise integrated approaches in order for gender equality to be internalized throughout the ILO and reflected in its technical work, operational activities and support services. Strategies in the Action Plan were designed to also help promote commitment, collaboration and accountability among ILO staff and management and contribute to UN efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, including by aligning with the UN-SWAP.

This evaluation takes place at a turbulent time which influenced its focus and methodology. As the UN marks its 80th anniversary, it stands at a critical crossroads shaped by internal and external challenges. The UN80 Initiative represents a sweeping reform effort aimed at modernizing the organization's

structures, priorities, and operations to better meet the demands of the 21st century. Building on ongoing initiatives like UN 2.0 and the Pact for the Future, the UN80 initiative emphasizes decentralized decision-making, procedural simplification, greater transparency, and investment in data and digital capacity to boost efficiency and impact. Given this context, UN entities and specialized agencies, are being called upon to assess the potential impact of these changes and determine how best to prepare for them.

2.2 Purpose and Scope of the Evaluation

Purpose

The Action Plan stipulated that its implementation be independently evaluated at the end of 2025. This evaluation took place from mid-May to early-October 2025. The timing of the evaluation is intended to support the development of the next multi-annual action plan, and inform strategic decision making in the development of the proposed ILO Strategic Plan 2026-2029.

An independent evaluation of the gender mainstreaming strategy is also a requirement of the UN-SWAP. The UN-SWAP stipulates that organizations aiming to reach the evaluation “Exceeds Requirement” category should conduct “at least one evaluation to assess corporate performance on gender mainstreaming or the equivalent every 5-8 years”.

The evaluation's main purposes, as detailed in the Terms of Reference (Annex 5), included:

- Provide an independent assessment of progress towards the goals of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022-2025, assessing performance as per the established indicators vis-à-vis the strategies and implementation modalities chosen and management arrangements;
- To assess the extent to which ILO’s Policy Outcomes are gender mainstreamed (in accordance with the Action Plan)
- Provide strategic recommendations, highlight good practices and lessons learnt to inform the development and implementation of the next multiannual Action Plan (2026-2029);
- Serve as a basis for reflection and dialogue amongst key stakeholders, including ILO Senior Management, ILO staff, and custodians of the indicators, to ensure continued support and innovation for gender equality.

Scope

The evaluation covers the duration of the Action Plan (2022-2025) and looks at the institutional and operational dimensions of the Action Plan, and the dimension of programmatic and policy outcomes at global, regional and national levels. It builds on the High-Level Independent Evaluation of ILO’s Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Efforts, 2016–21, conducted in 2021 which evaluated the broader effectiveness of the ILO’s gender equality mainstreaming (GEM) efforts, including alignment with the Decent Work Agenda and the ILO Centenary Declaration on the Future of Work.

3. Evaluation approach¹

3.1 Approach

The evaluation took a formative and summative approach, intending to provide insights into the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the design and implementation of the Action Plan (summative). It also provides forward-looking findings and lessons learned and emerging good practices for improved decision-making within the context of the next Action Plan (formative).

This evaluation was participatory, with a theoretical approach based on a utilization-focus to engage stakeholders throughout. This evaluation approach is also appropriate as one purpose of the evaluation was to support the development of the next Action Plan, which will require ongoing interaction with users. Utilization approaches, widely used in evaluation, stress the importance of working with evaluation users to ensure that results and recommendations are relevant, and followed up, while maintaining all the core evaluation elements, including evaluation independence. This participatory approach was supported by the range of data collection methods chosen, regular feedback loops from ILO representatives to the evaluation team, and direct input from a range of key informants directly involved in implementing the Action Plan. This evaluation also took an intersectional approach covering the key aspects of non-discrimination as they related to gender equality.

The original evaluation design included reconstructing a Theory of Change during the inception phase to clarify key programmatic and institutional elements of ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts. However, following discussions with key stakeholders during the inception phase, it was determined that reconstructing a Theory of Change should be pursued in a participatory fashion as part of the next Action Plan's development. This decision was further reinforced during the main evaluation, which revealed that the current Theory of Change towards a transformative agenda for gender equality in the world of work is neither widely known nor effectively utilized. Key informants also noted that future efforts should underpin the Theory of Change with a stronger articulation of ILO's value proposition for gender equality and mainstreaming, as well as a clearer definition of its transformative agenda.

3.2 Criteria and Questions

In line with the OECD/DAC Principles and the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation, this evaluation was based around six evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability) as defined in the ILO Policy Guidelines for Results-based Evaluation

OECD/DAC Criteria	Evaluation questions
Relevance and Strategic Fit	1. To what extent does the Action Plan support the ILO Policy on gender equality (its impact and visibility)? 2. Is the Action Plan for Gender Equality relevant and conducive to ILO's programme and policy frameworks (such as the Strategic Plan 2022-2025, relevant ILC resolutions and their plans of action, Programme & Budget, and Decent Work Country

¹ For further details see the evaluation Inception Report.

	Programmes)? 3. To what extent is the Action Plan 2022-2025 relevant and contribute to (and vice versa): a. priorities, needs and capacities of constituents (i.e. the ultimate beneficiaries) b. priorities, needs and capacities of staff (i.e. the direct audience) 4. To what extent has the Theory of Change informed and contributed to the effective implementation of the Action Plan 2022-2025? 5. To what extent does the Action Plan 2022-2025 support the mainstreaming of gender equality in the design and implementation of development cooperation projects? 6. To what extent was the Action Plan 2022-2025 aligned with the UN-SWAP?
Coherence	7. How well has the ILO coordinated the design and implementation of the Action Plan 2022-2025 across HQ departments and between HQ and the field including ITC-ILO, to ensure coherence, adaptable and timely implementation? Is there evidence of mutual leveraging and complementarity? 8. How appropriate and useful is the Action Plan 2022-2025 for “staffing and...management structure” (considered the enabling institutional mechanisms for gender equality in the Office both HQ and at field offices) 9. To what extent are there synergies between the Action Plan 2022- 2025 and other ILO priorities of disability inclusion and non-discrimination?
Effectiveness	10. To what extent did the Action Plan 2022-2025 achieve the expected results at ILO Headquarters and country offices? In which areas/components of the Action Plan 2022-2025 was the ILO able to make the most progress on (as per established targets) and in which ones the least, including the identification of bottlenecks? What are the most significant elements to-date that can be identified to explain this? 11. To what extent did the Action Plan 2022-2025 directly contribute to increasing the quality of results with ILO constituents? 12. To what extent has the Action Plan 2022-2025 contributed to major results/achievements related to gender mainstreaming in the ILO (for the period 2022-2025)? Which key success factors, mechanisms and circumstances can be identified? Which key inhibiting factors can be identified that could be addressed in the future? 13. To what extent does the Action Plan 2022-2025 serve as a strategic tool for increasing the outreach and credibility of ILO? 14. Does the current monitoring and reporting allow for tracking the progress and informing the implementation of the Action Plan? How effective were the indicators (baseline and targets) in these regards, and what could be done in the future to make

	them more useful for informing management decisions?
Efficiency	15. To what extent have the Action Plan's implementation mechanism(s) proven to be efficient in achieving the expected objectives? 16. To what extent were the financial and human resources (management arrangements), at global and country levels, adequate to achieve the expected results? 17. How well have the ILO's resource mobilization efforts supported its capacity to deliver the Action Plan 2022-2025? 18. Were the right partnerships identified to promote and implement the Action Plan? To what extent development partners' and funding partners' priorities offer opportunities for resource mobilization and partnerships to achieve the objectives of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality?
Sustainability and Impact	19. To what extent has the ILO as an institution enhanced its ability to support further work on gender equality in support of ILO staff, and also ILO constituents? 20. To what extent is the Action Plan 2022-2025 integrated in ILO's results framework in a manner that leads to sustainability of gender responsible results? 21. What factors have facilitated or hindered the long-term sustainability of the gender equality measures introduced through the Action Plan? What are the lost opportunities, lessons learnt and good practices for the ILO to consider for the next Annual Plan?

3.3. Methods for the evaluation

The evaluation adopted a mixed method approach triangulating between qualitative and quantitative data, acknowledging the complexity inherent in any work to promote gender equality and mainstreaming.

The methodology followed the ILO's *Policy Guidelines for Results-Based Evaluation* (4th edition, 2020), the UN Evaluation Group *Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System*, *Guidance on Evaluating Institutional Mainstreaming*, and *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations*.

This evaluation utilised two primary methods of data collection: A document review and key informant interviews.

Document Review:

Document review informed an integral part of the evaluation's analytical framework. This was conducted in two phases, beginning during the scoping and inception, and continuing throughout the main evaluation. Documents reviewed included key internal strategic planning documents covering the period, reports to ILO's governing body on the implementation of the Action Plan, UN-SWAP reports, previous evaluations of ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts, UN system-wide frameworks and guidance for gender mainstreaming, including accompanying tools and guidance, and a sample of 17 of

the most recent appropriate global evaluations reports and meta-analysis reports to focus specifically on results achieved.² A number of additional documents were scanned briefly for relevant information.

Key informant interviews and Focus groups:

Stakeholder consultation involved 33 informants across the ILO, constituents and external partners (see Annex 1 for a list of stakeholders interviewed). Interviews were conducted with ILO staff from headquarters, regional and field Offices, ranging from the Professional to Assistant Director General levels. Representatives from ILO partners as well as workers' organizations and employers' organizations were also interviewed. The key informants interviewed for this evaluation were identified by GEDI. The majority of key informants identified for the evaluation were female (30 out of 33).

The purpose of the interviews was to conduct a deep dive into specific topics and review the different capabilities, motivations and opportunities facing ILO employees, partners and constituents, identify the value-added contributions of the Action Plan, and explore dynamics related to the challenges, roadblocks and lessons learned related to its design and implementation. Interview questions were adapted for each interview/focus group from the questions in the Evaluation Matrix. Questions were designed to elicit information that is not available from published documents, and where relevant, to triangulate or clarify information from published documents.

In light of ongoing UN reform and increasing resistance of gender equality efforts, as outlined in the "context" section of this report, and as noted above, interviews with ILO senior managers and other staff explored their views on ILO's value proposition in advancing gender equality and mainstreaming, highlighting its distinctiveness relative to other UN organizations, and ways it can strengthen its partnerships across the UN system.

3.4. Evaluation Limitations and Constraints

Limitations faced by the evaluation team included:

Limited access to key informants and stakeholders: The evaluation was undertaken during a time when a number of staff and constituents were not available for interviews due to the International Labour Conference which ran from June 2nd to June 13th, 2025. Participation and scheduling of key informants interviews was also affected by summer holidays in the months of July and August. Despite lack of availability and delays for interviews, the evaluators were still able to interview their target number of key informants (a minimum of 30 individuals) and engagement levels and the quality of their inputs were still very high.

Participation of constituents in the evaluation was limited to interviews with representatives of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and International Organisation of Employers (IOE), identified by the Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch of ILO (GEDI). Representatives from government constituents of the ILO were not identified for interviews.

Turnover of stakeholders during the reporting period: A number of key informants identified for the evaluation were new to their roles. To supplement lack of institutional knowledge and understanding of

² The evaluation has originally intended to review a representative sample of Decent Work Country Programmes and Country Programme reviews, however it was determined that the meta-evaluations and sample of global evaluations provided better quality data on results.

context for the full reporting period (2022-2025) the evaluators triangulated data through the means outlined above.

Imbalanced sex ratio of key informants: The majority of key informants identified for the evaluation were female (30 out of 33). While efforts were made to expand the scope of interviewees to include additional males, this was challenging due to lack of responses, likely due to summer months and extra coverage duties for staff away, as well as a broader lack of male representation within the ILO Gender Network and the increase of females to senior positions in recent years.

Self reporting: Many of the documents reviewed, with the exception of ILO's independent evaluations (see below), including UN-SWAP reports, are internal self-reports, which tend to highlight the particular successes of a project, period or general institutional gender mainstreaming efforts. These reports were therefore triangulated with additional data including independent evaluations.

The evaluation team did not consider these limitations to have affected the overall analysis and findings.

4. Main Findings

4. 1 Relevance and Strategic Fit

Relevance and Strategic Fit
Key finding 1: Internationally we are at a key moment for human rights, including gender equality. Key informants recognized the additional challenges of promoting gender equality in the current context, particularly related to LGBTIQ+ rights, but expressed strong views concerning the need for ILO to continue advocating for gender equality as a core element of its work. As the ILO reviews its value proposition on gender equality and mainstreaming, and assesses the need to update its Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Policy, it must ensure that these initiatives align with its core values and mandate
Key finding 2: While the Action Plan serves as an operational tool for implementing the ILO Policy on Gender Mainstreaming and Equality the Action Plan's limited visibility has hindered its own impact and attention to the ILO Policy on Gender Mainstreaming and Equality itself. Nevertheless ILO's gender mainstreaming strategies were viewed by constituents as relevant and valuable, particularly in helping align with international labour standards.
Key finding 3: Understanding of the ILO's "transformative" gender equality agenda is uneven, with most staff lacking clarity on its practical meaning, and context-specific communication challenges further hindering consistent interpretation and engagement. This is common across the UN system.
Key finding 4: The Action Plan is mainly aligned with the second United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP 2.0), with all seven functional areas of the UN-SWAP 2.0 reflected in the Plan, with some concerns around reporting. Alignment with UN-SWAP 3.0 is feasible. The biggest challenges for future alignment may be setting up a dedicated senior level Steering Committee on gender equality and gender mainstreaming and setting/meeting targets for resource allocation, the latter a weakness across the UN system.

Value Proposition

The evaluation identified several interrelated challenges that have limited the effective use and communication of the ILO's distinct value proposition on gender equality and mainstreaming. Although the ILO holds a unique position within the UN, grounded in its normative mandate, tripartite structure, and labor market expertise, these comparative advantages are not being fully leveraged or strategically articulated across the organization or to external partners.

Members of the ILO Gender Network demonstrated a strong and consistent understanding of the organization's unique contribution to gender equality. They emphasized that the ILO's value lies in its ability to bring together governments, employers, and workers through its tripartite structure, embedding gender equality in inclusive governance and social dialogue. Its longstanding normative framework, from Maternity Protection Convention 2000 (No. 183) to the Violence and Harassment Convention 2019 (No.

190), offers a legal foundation for advancing gender equality in the world of work and distinguishes the ILO from other UN entities.

The ILO's technical expertise in labor market analysis further strengthens its position. Both internal and external key informants noted that its capacity to examine gender disparities in employment, wages, labor force participation, care responsibilities, and social protection provides essential insights for evidence-based policymaking, coupled with a clear focus on rights at work, such as non-discrimination, maternity protection, work-life balance, and decent work, making the ILO is well positioned to drive systemic change. Moreover, its ability to generate and disseminate robust data and analysis underscores the importance of women's economic empowerment in promoting labor market resilience and inclusive growth.

Despite this strong internal understanding, the ILO's value proposition is less clear outside of the Gender Network and remains underutilized in broader organizational and external engagements. The organization has struggled to consistently communicate its distinctive contribution to gender equality, both internally outside of the Gender Network and to external stakeholders.

Another critical issue is the perceived prioritization of donor-driven agendas over the ILO's normative commitments, which has, in some instances, weakened appreciation for its unique role among constituents. Additionally, informants noted that other UN entities, particularly UN Women, are becoming more involved in areas traditionally handled by the ILO, frequently engaging with similar issues and constituents such as domestic work and violence against women in the world of work, leading to overlapping efforts, role confusion, and reduced visibility of the ILO's comparative advantage. Informants pointed to a lack of coordination and clarity of roles as contributing factors, underscoring the need for the ILO to more sharply define its niche within the multilateral landscape.

Under UN Reform many UN agencies are attempting to clarify their value proposition (e.g. UNDP's Strategic Plan evaluation which carried out a comparator study of seven agencies³). They are also potentially moving towards seeking greater private sector funding to make up shortfalls from traditional donors. Key informants stressed the need for ILO to focus on its technical expertise, that is to continue to promote its rights and gender equality based approach which was viewed as a specific system-wide niche of the UN, even in the current challenging financial context.

Some key informants noted that the Action Plan reflects high-level bureaucratic commitments to gender mainstreaming and functions more as a symbolic document. Most informants were unfamiliar with its contents due to limited dissemination of the Action Plan and noted that it plays little role in guiding their day-to-day work.

Assessing how well the ILO coordinated the initial design of the Action Plan across headquarters departments and between headquarters and the field is challenging, given the turnover of Gender Specialists, GEDI staff, and other members of the Gender Network, including Focal Points. Several key informants who were in their roles during the design phase recalled that their offices and departments—both at headquarters and in the field—were consulted on aspects of the Action Plan. However, they noted that this consultation did not necessarily extend to the full document, and indicator custodians were not always in full agreement on the indicators.

³ <https://www.undp.org/evaluation/publications/undp-strategic-plan-2022-2025>

Similarly, the ILO's Theory of Change towards a transformative agenda for gender equality in the world of work, developed in 2022, was not widely known among staff. Among those who had reviewed it, some described it as "overly technical" or not sufficiently focused on the world of work and ILO's specific mandate or not directly applicable to regional and country contexts. This suggests a potential gap between the framework's theoretical orientation and the practical needs of staff across the organization.

It was also observed that the Action Plan is primarily an internal document intended for ILO staff, with limited practical relevance or visibility among constituents. It is not commonly used by constituents as a reference to assess the ILO's work on gender equality, and few are likely aware of its existence or content. Informants recommended that the next iteration of the Action Plan more clearly articulate mechanisms for capturing how the ILO supports its constituents in advancing gender equality.

In terms of alignment with the ILO Strategic Plan 2022-2025, Programme and Budgets and Decent Country Work Programmes, key informant perspectives and the evaluators own assessment is that the Action Plan is a standalone document meant mainly to support gender mainstreaming, while the agency wide strategic planning documents focus on programmatic results to which ILO can contribute. Alignment between an Action Plan for implementing a cross-cutting organizational theme and an ILO's main strategic planning documents, therefore, would not be expected. Rather alignment would be expected between the thematic area policy and these documents. The current ILO Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Policy however is a short Annex to the Action Plan, effectively dating from 1999.

While the Action Plan supports the ILO Policy on Gender Mainstreaming and Equality as an operational tool for the implementation of gender mainstreaming, it has not increased the ILO Policy's impact or visibility, given the Action Plan's own limited visibility. The evaluators discussed the implications of updating the 1999 Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Policy (updated in 2016). Across the UN Gender Equality Policies are generally updated every five years, and then accompanied by an updated Action Plan, usually aligned with the UN-SWAP. In the case of ILO the reverse appears to be the case, with limited updates to the Policy while the Action Plan is regularly updated. This may be one of the reasons for the other evaluation findings related to the need for a stronger value proposition, and the focus on meeting indicators potentially to the exclusion of wider institutional dynamics.

Key informants were divided as to the timing for an update to the Policy. Some considered a current update as appropriate, given the need to consistently promote a rights based agenda, that the last update was 2016, and the Policy may not be well known. Others pointed to the political environment and the pushback from some quarters on a focus on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity (SOGI) suggesting that a Policy update would necessitate a focus on SOGI, which might be detrimental to ILO's overall work on gender equality.

The understanding of ILO's definition of "transformative" for its gender equality agenda is uneven across the Office. While most gender specialists and focal points interviewed consistently understand it to mean that the ILO is committed to addressing the root causes and structural challenges rather than just the symptoms of gender inequality, it was noted that most staff do not understand its meaning in practice. It was noted that the high turnover of constituents and staff in recent years has also affected understanding of ILO's transformative agenda for gender equality. Informants noted that terms such as "transformative agenda for gender equality" can be challenging to communicate to constituents in some regions and may lead to confusion. In some contexts, gender equality concepts, such as the "transformative agenda", are misunderstood or politicized, making effective engagement more difficult. It was suggested that messaging be adapted to emphasize clear, widely understood concepts such as equal treatment and opportunities with an emphasis on concrete labor standards language.

This lack of understanding may also be tied to the somewhat narrow focus on meeting/exceeding the Action Plan indicators. Lack of understanding of what “transformative” means is an issue more generally across the UN system, and needs attention in relation to the new requirements of UN-SWAP 3.0 that have an increased focus on the transformative agenda. Recent work on defining more clearly what the transformative agenda means in practice could usefully feed into ILO’s strengthening of its “values proposition”.⁴

The Action Plan is mainly aligned with the second United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP 2.0). In assessing the extent to which the current monitoring and reporting allow for tracking of progress and the quality of the indicators, baselines and targets, the evaluation found the design of the Action Plan to be somewhat confusing. Specifically, it presents the UN-SWAP Performance Indicators alongside the ILO Action Plan indicators related to the UN-SWAP performance areas, with the corresponding UN-SWAP rating (approaching, meets or exceeds) highlighted. However, Action Plan reporting to the ILO Governing Body is done by Action Plan indicators, creating inconsistencies and confusion. Similarly, UN-SWAP reporting also mixes UN-SWAP and Action Plan indicators. Furthermore, the rationale for the changes to some UN-SWAP indicators, as recommended by constituents, is unclear as the Action Plan provides only a brief reference (on page 14) without adequately explaining why these changes make the indicators more relevant to the ILO context.

Observations on some of the Action Plan indicators, which suggest generic issues to be strengthened in the next Action Plan, are:

- Action Plan indicators differ from the UN-SWAP minimum standards of “meets expectations” in the case of strategic planning, leadership, financial resource allocation, equal representation of women, organizational culture, capacity development, knowledge and communication and coherence. Why they differ and how the Action Plan indicators are specifically useful to ILO is not set out. In the biennial Programme and Budget framework, ILO reports on results that address gender equality as the primary objective, as well as gender-mainstreamed results, across all Policy Outcomes. Meanwhile, ILO’s reporting in the frameworks of its Gender Action Plan and the UN-SWAP focuses on the corporate performance in terms of gender mainstreaming efforts across different areas of operations. This reporting should be well-aligned and coherent, without any unnecessary overlap / duplication.
- The focus of the Action Plan indicators is on mainstreaming, without an adequate focus on programmatic results. Through UN-SWAP 2.0, launched in 2018, the UN system, with active participation of ILO, agreed to move its accountability framework towards a focus on results, tied to the SDGs, and away from processes, the logic being that there are extensive reporting requirements across the UN, and if results were being achieved then adequate mainstreaming was also taking place. In this context, an Action Plan indicator on capturing the capacity of the DWCPs to measure changes in gender equality through sex-disaggregated and gender inclusive indicators is important and aligned with the requirements of the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard but should be used in combination with indicators that assess actual results.

⁴ IFAD. Guidelines for measuring transformative change in the context of food security, nutrition and sustainable agriculture. 2023; UNFPA-UNICEF Global Programme to End Child Marriage. A Synthesis Paper on the Gender Transformative Accelerator. 2022; Mehrotra, A. et al Negotiating space for gender equality: how and why gender mainstreaming is working in the UN system, and what to do next. Mimeo.

- Reporting to Governing Body is not broken down by individual Action Plan indicator, making progress difficult to assess without reviewing the more detailed assessment carried out by GEDI. The most recent Governing Body report also notes the danger of an over-focus on compliance with indicators to the exclusion of attention to ILO's transformative agenda:

it is essential to take stock of other gender-related activities conducted outside of the framework of the Action Plan 2022–25, such as significant technical work that advances gender equality in the world of work, and which might not be reported or captured within the reporting mechanisms of the Action Plan. This, coupled with similar limitations resulting from the framework of the programme and budget, obscures some of the critical work on gender equality carried out by the ILO at the global, regional and country levels..... the ILO needs to challenge itself to build on its success to ensure that meeting performance indicator targets does not become a perfunctory exercise.⁵

This evaluation also concludes that the focus on meeting/exceeding the UN-SWAP and Action Plan indicators needs to be complemented by greater attention to institutional dynamics and processes. This is further elaborated in the Section on accountability below.

The next Action Plan will need to be updated to reflect UN-SWAP 3.0, which was amended to upgrade performance Indicators where a significant majority of entities were meeting requirements; upgrade performance indicators focused on gender-related SDG results; and incorporate performance indicators emanating from the Gender Equality Acceleration Plan (GEAP). Overall ILO custodians thought aligning with UN-SWAP 3.0 was feasible, and the ILO 2024 UN-SWAP report already includes partial reporting against UN-SWAP 3.0. The most problematic areas are likely to be the establishment of a senior level Gender Steering and Implementation Committee or equivalent (UN-SWAP Indicator 7) given ILO's organizational structure and meeting a financial allocation target (UN-SWAP Indicator 10).

4.2 Coherence

Key Findings
Key finding 5: The ILO's gender architecture has undergone notable changes in recent years, with strengthening of coordination, clarification of roles, and enhanced support for gender mainstreaming. However, the gender architecture remains somewhat fragmented, with roles that could be clearer, inconsistent expertise, and limited formal recognition of gender responsibilities, undermining overall effectiveness.
Key finding 6: Implementation of the Action Plan was hindered by the Gender Network being dormant for about one and a half years and largely inactive since 2018, and vacant staff positions at Regional

⁵ ILO. Mid-term report on the implementation of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022–25. 2024.

and HQ levels. The revitalization of the Gender Network and additional staffing in place has increased attention to the Action Plan, which may lead to improved performance.

Key finding 7: Custodians for the Action Plan/UN-SWAP indicators are engaged in reporting, but do not appear in all cases to have become advocates for gender equality and mainstreaming.

Key finding 8: ILO is working towards a more intersectional approach, particularly including gender equality and disability inclusion, and is aware of the need to increase focus on intersectionality at regional and country levels, but gaps remain.

Gender architecture

This section covers the evaluation questions on how well the ILO has coordinated the design and implementation of the Action Plan across HQ departments and between HQ and ITC-ILO and the field, to ensure coherence, adaptable and timely implementation, and on implementation mechanisms for the Action Plan. The ILO's gender architecture has undergone notable changes in recent years, with efforts to strengthen coordination, clarify roles, and enhance support for gender mainstreaming. However, persistent structural and operational issues continue to undermine the full potential of the system.

In 2024, the GEDI Branch successfully filled three vacant Regular Budget positions—at the P3, P4, and P5 levels—bringing it to full staffing capacity in terms of human resources. Additionally, in 2024, a P5 position for a Senior Specialist, Gender Equality Coordination and Mainstreaming was funded by the Office for the current biennium to further strengthen its gender mainstreaming and gender equality efforts. In the same year, several Regional Gender Specialist vacancies were filled, notably in the Asia-Pacific, Arab States, and Southern Africa regions. As of December 2024, Regional Gender Specialists (P4 and P5 level) were in place for the following regions: Europe and Central Asia, Central Europe, Arab States, West Africa, Southern Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia-Pacific.

The Gender Network was described as inactive with minimal meetings and no real coordination for a portion of the period under review (2022-2023), and previous to this possibly dating back to 2018. In 2024, with the introduction of a Senior Specialist, Gender Equality Coordination and Mainstreaming and accompanying formal responsibilities to coordinate and support the Gender Network, the Network was revitalized with an increase of activities including bi-monthly virtual meetings and a new channel for informal exchanges and to share tools and resources.

The terms of reference for gender focal points were updated in 2022 around the same time the Theory of Change towards a transformative agenda for gender equality in the world of work was being developed. They were again updated in 2024/2025 and gender focal points were either reconfirmed or new ones were nominated by Department/ Office Directors. In 2024, terms of reference for gender coordinators were also updated “to reflect their role of catalyst in supporting respective departmental colleagues’ responsibility for – and management’s accountability on – gender mainstreaming”.

The revitalization of the Gender Network and the recent efforts to improve coordination and support between GEDI and its members has been well received. GEDI's role in providing technical guidance, advocacy, and networking support to the Gender Network was widely appreciated by informants. Nonetheless, key informants noted that the level of technical support received by members of the

Network from GEDI varied by region.

Despite recent revitalization efforts, ILO's gender architecture remains fragmented and complex, involving gender focal points, gender specialists, GEDI, and Action Plan custodians. The structure is not well understood with some overlap in roles and responsibilities leading to inefficiencies. A lack of clear leadership, including for Action Plan indicator Coordinators, can also contribute to passive participation.

Many gender focal points are assigned the role on a voluntary basis and struggle to balance gender responsibilities with other duties. Their gender-related contributions are rarely reflected in job descriptions or performance appraisals, and there is no consistent or formal selection process to ensure relevant expertise.

The Gender Network includes participants with varied backgrounds and responsibilities. This diversity, while inclusive, makes it difficult to identify common work areas and ensure meetings are relevant to all. Some members reported that while meeting frequency has increased, the content is not always applicable or useful.

The broad distribution of gender responsibilities has resulted in a dilution of technical expertise. There is also a perception that gender work is sometimes assigned based on identity rather than qualifications, with no clear criteria guiding focal point appointments outside of the written criteria that the appointed person should be P4 or NOA level or above. Dispersing responsibility for gender work without adequate support risks undermining the quality of technical engagement and mainstreaming.

Several key informants spoke favorably concerning the Disability Champions Network. This is a voluntary network of approximately 100 staff which meets regularly and has also met with and received commitments from the Global Management Team (made up of the Senior Management Team and Heads of Regional Offices). Key informants noted the network was well coordinated and its coherence and advocacy capabilities offered lessons for the continued revitalization of the Gender Network. Including the term "Champions" suggests that the Disability Inclusion network has an advocacy as well as a technical role, and the fact that the network is made up of volunteers, may mean that they are more active, although Gender Network members are often selected because of their particular interest in the theme.

Intersectionality

GEDI covers a number of cross-cutting themes, including gender equality and mainstreaming, disability inclusion, race, ethnicity, indigenous status, and HIV status. Of these themes the first two appear to be most prominent, possibly because there has been increased focus on these themes in the UN as a whole as a result of their system-wide action plans.

In general intersectionality is mentioned four times in the P&B 2024-2025 but it could be better covered in ILO strategic planning documents and guidance. It is not referenced directly in the Strategic Plan 2022-2025, although there are three references in the 2022-2023 Programme and Budget, and four in the 2024-2025 Programme and Budget. The 2020 ILO Decent Work Country Programme Guidance has no references to intersectionality. ILO's meta-evaluation of Decent Work for 2023 evaluation includes a reference: "A few evaluations noted that an intersectional analysis of specific groups, women in particular, was missing."⁶; and the meta-evaluation of Decent Work for 2022 found: "A few projects recognized the importance of intersectionality and inclusivity, and aimed to address these intersectional challenges, and

⁶ Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: An ex-post meta-analysis of development cooperation evaluations, 2023. 2024, p. 43.

some recognized the need for further inclusion of the LGBTI+ community.”⁷

The Action Plan does not provide significant detail on intersectionality, with one general reference which usefully alerts readers to the importance of the area but gives no practical support (p.12): “When possible, intersecting factors for discrimination should be disaggregated such as disabilities, HIV, or ethnicity such as indigenous or tribal peoples. Other factors can include age, rural or urban context, religion or caste, sexual orientation or gender identity, and education.” Since the 2020-21 biennium a tagging function to indicate multiple grounds of discrimination has been part of the ILO marker on gender equality and non-discrimination in the [Decent Work Results dashboard](#), however key informants noted this function is underused.

The evaluation of the ILO Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy (2020-2023) found a general lack of an intersectional approach:

There is limited attention to gender equality in the Strategy, partly as a consequence of the Strategy focusing on initial entry points for working on disability inclusion. As such, there is greater potential in the second phase of the Strategy to have more focus on gender equality.... The intersectionality of different forms of discrimination has not been significantly addressed in the work on disability inclusion. The 2025-26 P&B has more significant references to intersectionality in the work done on the care economy and violence and harassment in the workplace but to date there has been limited interaction on the intersection of discrimination faced by different groups such as persons with disabilities, women, and other marginalised groups. Coordination within GEDI could be enhanced to address this.⁸

The 2023 Supplementary Guidance Note: Integrating gender equality in ILO monitoring and evaluation on the other hand includes detailed guidance on assessing intersectionality, and methods to an intersectional approach are included in other recent ILO guidance.⁹ ILO has also contributed significantly to the Guidance Note on Intersectionality, Racial Discrimination and Protection of Minorities.¹⁰ Key informants in general noted the importance of taking a more intersectional approach, as well as the potential competing demands of thematic areas in an era of budget cuts.

UN-SWAP 3.0 now requires an intersectional analysis as part of the strategic planning process (Performance Indicators 1 and 2), and has much more detail on intersectionality than UN-SWAP 2.0, and refers to the 2025 Inter-Agency Network on Women and Gender Equality toolkit on Intersectionality Informed Gender Analysis.¹¹ The evaluators view based on document review and key informant interviews is that ILO recognizes the importance of intersectional programming, including the requirement for adequate funds to promote this.

⁷ Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: An ex-post meta-analysis of development cooperation evaluations, 2022. 2023, p. 34.

⁸ ILO Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy (2020-2023): Independent Evaluation. 2023, pp 6-7.

⁹ Supplementary Guidance Note: Integrating gender equality in ILO monitoring and evaluation. ILO Evaluation Office, November 2023. And e.g. ILO Transforming enterprises through diversity and inclusion. 2022.

¹⁰ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/documents/issues/minorities/30th-anniversary/2022-09-22/GuidanceNoteonIntersectionality.pdf>

¹¹ <https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/2025-07/ianwge-intersectionality-informed-gender-analysis-toolkit-en.pdf>

4.3 Effectiveness

Key Findings
Key finding 9: There has been steady improvement in meeting/exceeding UN-SWAP indicators between 2022 and 2024, however the quality of reporting on these indicators is uneven, and ILO is lagging behind both similar agencies and the UN system as a whole.
Key finding 10: The ILO has expanded institutional capacity development for gender equality and mainstreaming, achieving measurable gains in staff knowledge. Current efforts largely concentrate on specialists rather than fostering organization-wide skills development.
Key finding 11: Significant improvement for gender parity at senior levels (P5 and above) has been achieved, but regional, departmental, and grade-specific gaps highlight the need for tailored interventions to support equitable career progression and consistent outcomes across the organization.
Key finding 12: Although ILO is under-performing on mainstreaming indicators vis-a-vis equivalent agencies and the UN system as a whole, it is performing reasonably in terms of achieving results on gender equality. A greater focus on mainstreaming could plausibly be assumed to lead to stronger results.
Key finding 13: There appears to have been a stronger focus on meeting/exceeding the Action Plan indicators than on wider institutional dynamics, e.g. ensuring the Gender Network plays an advocacy as well as a technical role.

Performance against Action Plan and UN-SWAP Indicators

Table 1: UN-SWAP reporting by Performance Indicator, 2022-2024

UN-SWAP indicator	2022	2023	2024 ¹²
PI 1	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds
PI 2	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds
PI 3	n/a	n/a	n/a

¹² Based on draft reporting provided by GEDI.

PI 4	Meets	Meets	Exceeds
PI 5	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds
PI 6	Exceeds	Exceeds	Exceeds
PI 7	Approaches	Meets	Exceeds
PI 8	Meets	Meets	Meets
PI 9	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches
PI 10	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches
PI 11	Approaches	Approaches	Meets
PI 12	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches
PI 13	Meets	Meets	Meets
PI 14	Approaches	Approaches	Meets
PI 15	Approaches	Meets	Meets
PI 16	Meets	Meets	Exceeds
PI 17	Approaches	Approaches	Approaches

Table 2: Aggregate UN-SWAP reporting 2022-2024 (total number of indicators)

	Exceeds	Meets	Approaches	n/a
2024	7	5	4	1
2023	4	6	6	1
2022	4	4	8	1

ILO reports on its Action Plan including through the inter-agency UN-SWAP mechanism. Tables 1 and 2 demonstrate good progress towards meeting/exceeding the UN-SWAP indicators. In 2024 ILO met/exceeded 12 out of 17 indicators, up from eight in 2022. The same five indicators - financial resource tracking and allocation, equal representation of women and coherence - have approached in all three years, suggesting systemic barriers, however the financial resource tracking and allocation and equal representation of women are the lowest rated indicators across the UN system.

This reporting is complicated somewhat by ILO having included additional indicators in its Action Plan to those in the UN-SWAP. For example, in the case of Performance Indicator 1 on “Strategic Planning

Gender-Related SDG Results” the UN-SWAP requires agencies to meet or exceed, or be on track to meet or exceed, the targets in their strategic plans to rate the indicator accordingly. For ILO, the additional indicators are:

Percentage of ILO programme and budget policy outcomes that contribute to SDG 5 targets

Target 2022–23: 63%

Target 2024–25: 65%

Not all of the targets in the Programme and Budget are being met, so a more accurate rating might be “approaches” or “meets”, the latter if ILO could demonstrate that it is on track to meeting these targets. According to self-reporting (Mid-Term Review), ILO is meeting the target for this indicator. According to a key informant, UN Women, as the coordinator of the UN-SWAP, has confirmed the self-assessment of “exceeds” on UN-SWAP Indicator 1 for 2024.

In the case of UN-SWAP Performance Indicator 4 on evaluation a rigorous external review¹³ demonstrates that ILO is approaching UN-SWAP requirements although ILO has rated itself as meeting and exceeding. The rationale provided by key informants for this was that ILO conducted a more rigorous and external meta-evaluation than other UN agencies, with these other agencies then rating themselves as “exceeds”.

ILO’s UN-SWAP reporting may in some cases be performative. For example, the 2023 UN-SWAP report on Leadership notes: “one meeting where the Gender Action Plan was discussed by the SMT [Senior Management Team]” with no indication of the content of the discussion or any remedial action planned (SMT meetings minutes at ILO are not made public). ILO’s performance may therefore be lower than reported.

Comparative analysis of aggregate UN-SWAP reporting by other Specialized UN entities and for the UN system as a whole demonstrates that ILO is lagging the system and similar agencies on gender mainstreaming performance (WHO, UNESCO and FAO). By 2024, ILO met or exceeded 75 percent of UN-SWAP indicators, while all UN Specialized agencies met/exceeded 85 percent of indicators, and the system as a whole met/exceeded 80 percent of indicators, although the gap between ILO and other agencies is decreasing steadily over time. Given ILO’s long history of work on gender equality and mainstreaming and non-discrimination it might be expected that it should rather be leading the system.

The following covers specific areas in the Action Plan.

Capacity

Staff-focused capacity development

The ILO has made progress in strengthening capacity development for gender equality across its operations. During the period of implementation for the current Action Plan, capacity development support has been provided for both standalone gender equality initiatives and gender mainstreaming more broadly and gender equality content has also been integrated into broader staff development streams such as leadership and induction. The ITC-ILO also provides dedicated training opportunities for ILO staff related to gender mainstreaming, including its Participatory Gender Audit certifications, Gender

¹³ Data provided by ILO Evaluation Office and published in annual Think Pieces, [the latest from 2024](#) .

Academy, and gender mainstreaming modules in technical courses.

In 2022-2023, ILO introduced a new course, Gender Equality Matters: Achieving gender-transformative change, that builds knowledge on gender equality and provides practical tools to integrate gender perspectives into the workplace and daily work of the ILO. A training session on the gender marker was also delivered in 2024. Before the training, only 7 percent of participants rated their knowledge as excellent and 50 percent as good. Following the training, excellent ratings increased more than fourfold to 30 percent, while good ratings rose to 60 percent. This reflects a marked improvement in participants' confidence and understanding of the gender marker. Several capacity assessment initiatives were also undertaken in 2024, including an entity-wide technical skills mapping exercise which included gender mainstreaming (under the ILO Programme and Budget Outcome 5: Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all) and a needs assessment to better understand the development needs of Gender Coordinators and Focal Points.

In addition to specific courses on gender equality, the ILO is also mainstreaming gender equality in leadership courses. For example, gender equality is one important element of a course it offers on executive leadership and strategic management. Gender equality is a core competency of the standard managerial output against which managers are evaluated through an upward feedback system. Furthermore, the ITC-ILO has developed more than 15 different courses with gender-specific content including the course on "Promoting decent work and the care economy" and the Academy on Gender, Inclusion and the Future of Work, which guides participants through an agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment in the world of work. All courses are regularly attended by ILO staff and by constituents.

Despite these advances, key challenges remain. Many gender focal points report that they have not received formal training for their role, and current online modules are often brief, theoretical, and lack practical, context-specific application. Furthermore, interviewees noted that more technical gender training opportunities, often delivered by ITC-ILO or other providers, typically require a fee. Securing the necessary resources to cover these fees can be challenging, thereby limiting accessibility¹⁴. Several gender focal points reported that they have only been able to participate in these specialized trainings when project budgets specifically allocated funds for gender-related skills development. The low voluntary uptake of available gender training, particularly among male staff, and the limited integration of training requirements into staff performance frameworks hinders organizational coherence and learning. This points to limited integration of gender equality across the full staff cadre; current efforts largely concentrate on specialists rather than fostering organization-wide skills development.

Constituent focused capacity development

The ILO introduced a new indicator in the Action Plan 2022–25 on increasing constituents' capacity to deliver on gender equality initiatives, supported through region-relevant strategies, including a focus on pandemic recovery. The ILO held over 30 dedicated capacity-building exercises on gender equality for ILO constituents across all five regions in 2022–23, surpassing the target of at least one field office technical capacity activity to be held in two regions in 2022 and in three regions in 2023.

¹⁴ One key informant elaborated that ILO staff development funds are provided from the Regular Budget (RB) staff costs and as such there are limitations regarding access to these funds for personal development of individuals on development cooperation (DC) projects because RB funds cannot be used to subsidise DC projects. There is an expectation that staff hired on projects should already have the skills needed and if the project has specific skills requirements that are not available in the market, then the funds to train on these skills should be included in the project budget.

ILO's gender-related capacity development efforts have increasingly focused on priority areas such as the care economy, pay equity, and violence and harassment, reflecting both constituent demand and global policy developments. Key informants noted that with the ratification of Convention 190 there has been a notable rise in requests from constituents for capacity support towards the elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work, both at the policy level and organizational culture level. There is also growing interest from European countries in pay equity training, driven in part by the EU Pay Transparency Directive (Directive (EU) 2023/970), adopted in June 2023. The ILO has maintained a three-year running course on care work and the care economy in English, with a Spanish version offered but facing low enrollment. A pay equity certification program, launched in collaboration with Catalonia, has also expanded into projects in Portugal and Ukraine-Moldova.

In 2023, 679 participants in courses with gender-specific content were from governments (of whom 16 per cent were men), 417 were from trade unions (of whom 28 per cent were men) and 64 were from employer and business membership organizations (of whom 6 per cent were men).

These training initiatives have been well received by constituents, including capacity building for workers organizations, such as the work ACTRAV has undertaken, including the following.

It was noted that the International Labour Organization Bureau for Workers' Activities (ILO-ACTRAV) has made significant contributions to promoting gender equality and worker's rights through supporting workshops, conferences, training programs, and campaigns on a wide range of issues such as gender empowerment, OSH, violence and harassment, and sectors with women as majority. A key global accomplishment is ACTRAV's support and promotion of the ILO Convention No. 190 on Violence and Harassment in the World of Work (C190). They have been actively involved in supporting workers organisations in the ratification and implementation of this Convention, providing technical assistance, training, and resources to raise awareness and build capacity in this area.

ACTRAV also focuses on building capacity with national worker organizations in various regions. This includes promoting gender equality, mainstreaming, and raising awareness of OSH and fighting against violence and harassment. These efforts extend to specific sectors and occupations where women workers are the majority, such as domestic workers and nursing personnel.

The work extends to numerous activities reported from ACTRAV field colleagues. These activities span across various regions, including Europe and Central Asia, Asia and the Pacific, Africa, Arab States and the Americas and the Caribbean.

These training initiatives have been well received by constituents, including capacity building for employer organizations, such as ACTEMP's train-the-trainer program on violence and harassment and the ACTEMP-ITC-ILO "Malkia" project for women in management, which provides coaching and skills development opportunities.

Despite these gains, there remains room for improvement in ensuring greater involvement of employer organization representatives in co-developing training materials to strengthen relevance, ownership, and impact. Targeted measures are also needed to increase the participation of men as well as of representatives from employer and business membership organizations. Current training on gender equality and mainstreaming for constituents remains constrained by resource availability and therefore is often conducted on demand or on an ad hoc basis.

In addition to training initiatives, constituents noted that ILO's evidence-based research on women in business, gender-disaggregated labour market data, and guidance documents, were effective. They noted

that the business case for gender equality, framing it as a driver of innovation, talent attraction, and retention, resonates strongly with employers and should be regularly used by ILO in its work. Successful employer-led initiatives, such as the Female Future leadership programme, demonstrate the potential for scalable, cross-regional approaches that strengthen women's leadership capacity and create sustainable networks.

Despite these strengths, several challenges were identified. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which represent the majority of businesses globally, often lack the resources, capacity, and tailored tools needed to implement ILO's gender equality objectives. In some cases, employers perceive gender equality initiatives as secondary to productivity goals, indicating a need for clearer links between equality measures and operational performance. The informal economy, which in many countries employs large numbers of women, presents additional implementation barriers that are not yet fully addressed in current strategies. Key informants noted that competing priorities, limited financial and human resources, and variability in institutional relationships with the ILO also affect the reach and sustainability of gender interventions.

Opportunities exist to strengthen ILO support by making tools and resources more practical, accessible, and business-oriented, particularly for SMEs and underrepresented sectors such as STEM and leadership roles. Co-developing tools and training with employer organizations, using business-friendly language, and framing gender equality in terms of measurable business benefits were suggested as key improvements. Key informants recommended showcasing more employer-led success stories, expanding research to cover a broader range of sectors and skill levels, and addressing pipeline issues that hinder women's advancement.

Gender Parity and organizational culture

During the period of implementation of the Action Plan, the ILO responded to the Secretary General's call for all entities to achieve parity by 2028¹⁵, particularly at higher levels: Women in P5 and higher positions increased from 40 percent in 2022 to 47 percent in 2024, exceeding the 2024–25 target of 42 percent. This improvement is largely attributed by staff to gender sensitive outreach and recruitment efforts, leadership commitment (particularly where the DG has direct selection authority), the introduction of career mentoring for women and leadership programs (e.g. EMERGE and Malkia) and system-wide accountability frameworks with parity-related targets and measures such as the UN-SWAP and the United Nations-wide Gender Parity Strategy.

Despite the significant improvement at senior levels, parity at the P1-P4 level positions has remained mostly stagnant (the Percentage of ILO Professional positions (P1 to P4, regular staff) held by women was 55% as of 31.12.22, 54% as of 31.12.2023 and 55% as of 31.12.2024)¹⁶ and geographical and departmental disparities persist. While some regions and units are meeting and even exceeding gender parity, others continue to lag, especially in the Asia and Pacific region, where both professional and senior-level representation remains low. This uneven progress highlights the need for more tailored, region- and department-specific interventions, along with enhanced monitoring of internal promotion pathways and recruitment practices. Further, while a surplus of women at the P3/P4 levels can facilitate the creation of a pipeline for future P5 and higher roles, over-representation in lower grades may reinforce stereotypes that women are better suited for lower-level administrative and technical positions.

In terms of organizational culture and enabling environment, major updates to policies on parental leave

¹⁵ See the System-wide Strategy for Gender Parity: <https://www.un.org/gender/content/strategy>

¹⁶ GB.353/PFA/INF/8(Rev.1) Composition and structure of the staff at 31 December 2024.

and flexible work have been a significant success. In 2022, the ILO played a leading role in the discussions at International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) level to improve the parental leave provisions for the UN common system increasing leave for birthparents from 16 to 26 weeks with full pay which were adopted by the ICSC in January 2023. New parental leave provisions were adopted by the International Civil Service Commission effective as of 1 January 2023. In the same year, the ILO introduced flexible working arrangements that are widely used and well received. The new provisions for flexible work has increased telework significantly across the Office in all staff categories, types of work and grades with both men and women availing of it – previously it was more heavily used by women than men. Nonetheless, concerns have emerged around the impact of remote work on teamwork and delivery, prompting a need for clearer expectations around office presence.

Efforts to support staff development and create a respectful workplace have also gained ground through unconscious bias training, mentoring, relaunching the Gender Focal Point Network, and the development of tools related to anti-harassment. For example, a guidance note for managers on best management practices during ongoing investigations has been developed as well as a Code of conduct for prevention of all forms of violence and harassment at ILO events.

However, the policy and reporting framework around harassment remains fragmented, outdated, and overly complex, as is common across the UN¹⁷. There is a need to consolidate and modernize these systems, simplifying procedures, reducing reporting silos, and integrating a victim-centered approach that also ensures due process. Prioritizing revising its provisions related to Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH), will help ILO to ensure alignment to the new indicator on these areas under UN-SWAP 3.0 (indicator 14). The establishment of the ILO PSEA working group and its 2024 Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, are important steps to accelerate action in this area.

Despite overall positive momentum in advancing gender equality, some internal resistance and concerns have emerged, particularly around fairness and transparency in career advancement. While mentoring programmes and broader gender equality efforts are generally well supported, there is growing frustration among staff regarding the perceived prioritization of external female candidates over internal talent. This has led to perceptions, among both men and women, that certain appointments are being made based on gender rather than merit, and that internal staff have limited opportunities for career progression. Concerns have also been raised about external appointees lacking institutional knowledge of the ILO, further fueling dissatisfaction. These dynamics have contributed to a degree of backlash affecting staff across genders and underscore the importance of addressing perceived inequities in recruitment and promotion practices and strengthening fairness and transparency in career development. Again this is a common issue across the UN as it seeks to redress historical imbalances in staffing.

It's also perceived that recent senior female appointees, particularly at the P5 and above levels, may be experiencing backlash, navigating a deeply entrenched institutional culture, and facing common biases against female leaders, as well as resistance to change. To support their retention and well-being, ongoing targeted measures such as coaching, peer support groups and networking opportunities should be assessed for challenges and opportunities to provide further support.

¹⁷ Review of policies and practices to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse in the United Nations system organizations: Report of the Joint Inspection Unit JIU/REP/2025/2

Programmatic results

Programme and Budget reporting¹⁸

The 2022-2023 and 2024-2025 Programme and Budgets both include one dedicated outcome on Gender Equality and equal opportunities and treatment in the world of work, with four related outputs for the 2022-2023 biennium and three for the latter biennium. Indicators for the Gender Equality Outcome are equivalent in format to most other indicators in the Programme and Budgets, i.e. the bar for Gender Equality is set at the same level as other areas of ILO's work.

Results based on self-reporting (at <https://webapps.ilo.org/IRDashboard/index.jsp>) are available for the 2022-2023 biennium through the Programme Implementation Report ([ILC.112/Report I\(A\)](#)). Overall, the ILO met or exceeded the expected results in six of the eight output indicators, a significant improvement compared with the performance in 2020–21. The two output indicators where targets were not met were “Member States with policies to support the care economy” and “Member States with strategies to obtain disaggregated data”. The Programme Implementation Report demonstrates that the Gender Equality outcome met a similar number of indicator targets as compared to other outcome areas. While not all targets are being met, meeting and exceeding targets in 6 out of 8 indicators can be considered a good performance.

4.4 Efficiency

Key Findings
Key finding 14: Despite progress, accountability for gender equality in the ILO could be stronger, with uneven leadership engagement, inconsistent ownership of the Gender Action Plan, and over-reliance on GEDI rather than fully shared organizational responsibility. This perpetuates uneven implementation across headquarters and field offices. ILO, like much of the UN system, appears to be caught in an “Accountability Deficit Cycle” where changes in senior management lead directly to less, or more, focus on gender equality and mainstreaming. Mainstreaming to date has not allowed ILO to escape from this cycle.
Key finding 15: The heavy reporting load related to the Action Plan and UN-SWAP has diverted attention from wider institutional dynamics and the need to bring in champions, and use of the UN-SWAP as a negotiation tool with senior managers. The ILO Disability Champions Network appears to have been more effective in this area.
Key finding 16: The ILO's gender marker and related resource-tracking systems are underutilized, with inconsistent application, and limited integration into monitoring, planning, and budget allocation. As a result, marker scoring risks becoming a tick-box exercise, with potential gaps between ratings and

¹⁸ The evaluation reviewed the assessment carried out by GEDI against the Action Plan indicator on “Percentage of DWCPs that contain indicators of which at least 35% disaggregate by sex and/or are gender inclusive.” This assessment is titled a “scan” but does review each DWCP for the relevant year, and cross-checking against five DWCPs, appears to be accurate.

actual gender mainstreaming in projects.

Key finding 17: Staffing gaps, low budget allocations to gender outcomes (some 6.4 percent vs. the UN's 15 percent target), and limited programmatic incentives continue to constrain full implementation of the Action Plan, despite some recent positive results from targeted funding through RBSA.

Key finding 18: Partnerships have helped to improve the implementation of gender equality and mainstreaming efforts and achieve the objectives of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality. The ILO has actively leveraged global partnerships and alliances to advance gender equality, particularly in care work, equal pay, and just transitions. Through initiatives such as the Global Alliance for Care, EPIC, Generation Equality, and South-South and Triangular Cooperation, the ILO has strengthened collaboration, advocacy, and knowledge-sharing to amplifying its influence and advancing progress on gender equality and mainstreaming.

Accountability

Despite progress in gender mainstreaming, significant challenges remain in institutionalizing accountability and leadership engagement across the ILO. Key informants consistently described a lack of shared ownership of the Action Plan, which is often viewed as the sole responsibility of the Gender Network rather than a cross-organizational priority. Leadership support was seen as inconsistent, with uneven engagement from senior and middle management, especially in country offices. ILO has suffered, along with most other UN agencies, what might be called the “Accountability deficit cycle”, where senior managers support gender equality for several years, with their work then undone by succeeding senior managers who are less supportive. This sends mixed messages and is demoralizing for staff. Gender equality is frequently deprioritized compared to other areas such as employment and social protection, and efforts to advocate for gender mainstreaming are sometimes met with resistance. Despite a number of Action Plans and 14 years into the UN-SWAP support for gender work remains heavily reliant on the GEDI branch. Interviewees noted the absence of clear accountability mechanisms, performance-based incentives, or standardized expectations, resulting in reliance on individual interest and negotiation skills on behalf of staff working on gender equality. The disconnect between headquarters and the field, combined with insufficient dissemination and guidance, further limits the effectiveness and reach of the Action Plan.

At the same time, there are meaningful opportunities to strengthen accountability and embed gender equality into institutional practices. These include institutionalizing senior management engagement on gender equality, such as dedicated meetings to monitor progress; integrating gender metrics into performance management frameworks; and requiring Directors to report on gender-related results through a set of core questions. Building on existing models, such as replicating some of the Disability Champions strategies or UNDP's senior management approach, were viewed as useful strategies. Several stakeholders also emphasized the need to clarify GEDI's technical support role vis-à-vis other departments and avoid over-reliance on individual champions. A more systematic and transparent approach to accountability is needed, one that fosters consistent engagement and responsibility across all levels and functions of the organization.

As noted above ILO also needs to consider more strategically institutional dynamics that may be outside

of the Action Plan indicator framework. ILO has followed too technical a route and in future can pay more attention to liaison with senior managers, building advocacy into the Gender Network, bringing more champions and gatekeepers on board, and peer reviews, to help overcome the accountability deficit cycle when senior managers are not fully supportive of GEEW (as happens in most UN agencies at some point, and given the challenges of holding senior managers accountable). Recent literature on gender mainstreaming by feminists who have worked long-term in large multilateral agencies notes the importance of “micro-transformations” to support accountability, for example building advocacy networks to progressively support gender mainstreaming. Frameworks such as the UN-SWAP, because they are system-wide, are most effective when they are conceptualized as negotiation tools with key departments, and also as a means of comparison to the rest of the UN system. A recent paper sets out how the UN-SWAP has been utilized to lead to successes in gender mainstreaming and could usefully be drawn upon when ILO is developing its next Action Plan.¹⁹

Gender Marker

The Action Plan incorporates programmatic tools for results-based measurement, including the ILO marker on gender equality and non-discrimination. The marker is aimed to assess the extent to which ILO activities and results at country and global levels contribute to gender equality and non-discrimination goals, and ultimately to report progress thereon. As such, the marker is applied at the level of country programme outcomes (CPOs) and global products (GLOs) using a three-point scale.²⁰

A corresponding marker system is in place to categorize ILO’s development cooperation programmes’ and projects’ contribution to gender equality and non-discrimination. Those programmes and projects are directly linked to relevant country programme outcomes and global products, and through that linkage, achieved results are reported in an integrated resource framework on a biennial basis.

It was noted that the application of the ILO marker on gender equality and non-discrimination will be changed to the level of Programme and Budget Output link, in the 2026-27 biennium, so as to make it directly relevant for corporate results monitoring and reporting.

Results of application of ILO’s gender equality and non-discrimination marker for the 2022-2023 showed that gender equality and non-discrimination remain core objectives across all ILO programmes, with 7 percent of results in 2022–23 having gender equality as a principal objective and 50 percent making a significant contribution—figures consistent with the previous biennium, and meaning that ILO exceeded its Action Plan target of 48 percent. Most achievements were concentrated under Policy Outcome 6 (Gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment for all in the world of work), however, while other outcomes, such as employment, protection at work, and social protection, showed uneven integration, highlighting the need to strengthen gender mainstreaming across the Office’s work.

¹⁹ Mehrotra, A. et al Negotiating space for gender equality: how and why gender mainstreaming is working in the UN system, and what to do next. Mimeo.

²⁰ Marker 3 is applied when the promotion of gender equality and non-discrimination is the principal objective of ILO action and results. Marker 2 is applied when ILO action and results achieved in other policy areas make a significant contribution to the advancement of this goal by addressing root causes of gender inequality and discrimination. Marker 1 is applied when ILO action and results in other policy areas have some focus on the advancement of gender equality and non-discrimination but make a limited contribution to progress in this area. UN practice would include a fourth Marker, 0, where there is no attention to gender equality.

For 2024, as detailed in ILO's 2024 UN-SWAP report, ILO's programmatic contribution to gender equality and non-discrimination, based on the application of its gender equality and non-discrimination for 132 CPO/GLO, 27 percent had gender equality as a principal objective, a significant increase from 7 percent in 2022-2023 and 49 percent making a significant contribution to gender equality, relatively on par with the previous period.

Between 2022 and 2024, several guidance documents were produced to assist ILO personnel with the application of its gender equality and non-discrimination marker. For example, in 2022 a Guidance note on *Gender equality and non-discrimination marker in development cooperation* was released and another on *Gender equality marker and non-discrimination tags* was released in 2024. Additionally, in 2024, GEDI, in collaboration with the Strategic Programming and Management Department and the Department for Partnerships, delivered initial gender marker training.

Despite recent efforts to build capacities in the application of ILO's gender equality and non-discrimination marker, findings indicate that the tool is not being fully leveraged to drive meaningful change. Key informants reported that uptake remains inconsistent, and there is no strong enforcement mechanism or incentive structure to encourage accurate application. Concerns about whether projects that score highly as gender-responsive are effectively implementing gender equality in projects were also raised, suggesting a gap between marker ratings and effective measurement of actual gender integration. Current use of the markers risks becoming a tick-box exercise, with limited integration into monitoring systems or strategic decision-making. Additionally, tracking of both human and financial resources linked to marker scores is weak, and it was reported that data generated through the system is underutilized by senior management for resource allocation and planning.

While mechanisms exist to quantify disbursements of funds for gender equality and mainstreaming, tracking of regular budget resources remains partial. Positively, in 2024, the ILO developed an innovative system that enables staff to tag hours spent on gender-related work within projects, even when gender is not the project's primary focus. While this approach has improved financial reporting and resource management in some areas, it remains underutilized.

Key informants noted that an update to ILO's financial reporting system is planned for 2026 which will aim to allocate resources to specific outcomes and enhance tracking, but current limitations hinder effective management of cross-cutting priorities like gender mainstreaming. The absence of an outcome-based resource allocation mechanism for the regular budget continues to constrain planning and monitoring of gender-related activities across departments.

Resource Allocation

Key informants consistently highlighted that insufficient human and financial resources remain a major barrier to fully implementing the Action Plan. They noted that extended gender-related staffing gaps and position vacancies, including for gender specialist positions and positions within GEDI, lasting up to two years in some cases, due to HR backlogs and budget constraints have further limited the ILO's ability to effectively mainstream gender at both headquarters and field levels.

Global allocations to gender outcomes, representing some 6.4 percent of the ILO's programme budget ([ILC.112/Report I\(A\)](#)), are low relative to UN standards.²¹ The United Nations Gender Equality Acceleration Action Plan (GEAP) recommends that entities allocate at least 15 percent of expenditures to gender

²¹ It is likely that additional allocations to GEWE is being made through Policy Outcomes other than Policy Outcome 6 which are not being captured in the current reporting system.

equality as a principal objective. While the recent Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA) funding round introduced dedicated streams for gender equality and the care economy, producing notable and concrete results, these remain the exception rather than the norm. Internal stakeholders suggested that programmatic incentives, such as additional RBSA resources for Country Programme Offices achieving higher gender marker scores, could help drive stronger integration of gender equality across projects and offices.

Partnerships

ILO's support and contribution to the work of the Global Alliance for Care, since its inception in 2021, is a positive example of leveraging global partnerships to accelerate ILO's efforts to promote gender equality in care work, including equal pay and protection for care workers. Global Alliance for Care is a community of members from governments, civil society, union associations, the philanthropic sector, international organizations, and academia that aims to facilitate and foster spaces for collective action, advocacy, communication, and learning about care, its recognition as a right, as work, and as a need.

The Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) is a global initiative led by the International Labour Organization (ILO), UN Women, and the OECD. With a membership of 70, EPIC continues to expand, EPIC members include countries, employers' and workers' organizations, private sector, civil society and UN entities. EPIC continues to prove effective in helping ILO to deliver increased consensus on equal pay and related issues. Through the initiative, the ILO provides technical assistance, policy advice, and capacity-building to promote equal pay for work of equal value, reviews pay inequality trends, and supports a campaign for universal ratification of Convention No. 100.

ILO's role as both a Leader and Commitment Maker in the Generation Equality, the Economic Justice and Rights Action Coalition, convened by UN Women, is also evidence of its efforts to partner with governments, civil society, international organizations, and the private sector to ensure equal opportunities and treatment for women in the world of work. As a Commitment Maker, the ILO has committed to i) promote equal pay for work of equal value, ii) improving the job quality of women, iii) promoting inclusive economies and iv) advancing decent work in the care economy. As a Commitment Maker of this initiative, ILO is also helping South Africa with the inclusion of gender in its green economy transition. In 2024, the ILO also produced a Policy Guide on Gender, equality and inclusion for a just transition in climate action.

To build on partnerships and networks that enhance resilience to climate change and advance collective progress towards COP29 and beyond, in 2024, ILO launched the project *"Promoting a gender-responsive just transition through knowledge-sharing and peer learning under South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC) for COP29 (Azerbaijan) and COP30 (Brazil)"*. Through this initiative, governments and constituents will exchange experiences and learn from countries at different stages of development. SSTC aims to foster collaboration, mutual learning, and policy coherence by leveraging diverse innovations to strengthen gender-responsive strategies.

GEDI and the Cooperatives Unit (COOP) have also established a cross-regional program to support informal women workers in the care economy by leveraging the ILO's 5R Framework for Decent Care Work and the social and solidarity economy (SSE). The program, titled *"Cooperative Care Provision as a Gender-Transformative Decent Work Solution"*, is a multi-level program which aims to improve women's income and rights through the establishment or expansion of cooperatives, focusing on creating an enabling environment, strengthening institutional infrastructure through local partnerships, and empowering members of care-focused SSEs, while embedding effective monitoring and evaluation techniques and promoting a participatory approach to maximize capacity building. In June 2025, to support this effort,

the ILO has developed [two practical capacity building tools](#): Think.CareCoop and Start.CareCoop. aimed primarily at care workers – both unpaid and paid- who are interested in understanding how the cooperative model can be used to meet community care needs and/or establish a care cooperative.

Leveraging partnerships also offers clear potential to strengthen resource mobilization for gender equality, but results vary significantly by funding partner and region. Key informants noted that most ILO partners express a strong commitment to gender equality. Even where gender is not the top concern, many partners are motivated to demonstrate action on gender equality, suggesting opportunities for the ILO to position gender equality as an added value in project design. Larger projects (over \$1 million) may also be subject to more detailed gender assessments, creating additional incentives to integrate gender considerations at scale.

Key informants indicated that many donors generally prefer integrated gender components within broader projects rather than standalone gender initiatives. Regional and cross-regional projects, were also noted as especially attractive to donors and provide a platform to pursue shared priorities. However, while commitments to gender equality are frequently emphasized in partnership frameworks, projects often lack earmarked funding to translate these commitments into action.

4.5 Sustainability and Impact

Key Findings
Key finding 19: Although the ILO holds a unique position within the UN and the wider multilateral system, grounded in its normative mandate, tripartite structure, and labor market expertise, these comparative advantages are not being fully leveraged or strategically articulated across the organization or to external partners
Key finding 20: ILO has been establishing the grounds for sustainability through increased staffing and profile for the Gender Network, however these gains could potentially be lost under UN reform. One scenario involves considering what can be salvaged from these gains.
Key finding 21: ILO has been partly successful to successful in relation to results on gender equality, and these results are on par with or better than other thematic areas. ²²

In relation to the evaluation question on Action Plan’s integration with ILO results frameworks, the evaluation found, as noted, that the Action Plan is a stand-alone document not specifically tied to either the ILO Strategic Plan 2022-2025 or the Programme and Budgets. Some key informants considered that this would likely hamper sustainability, as institutional focus is generally on the main agency strategic plans. This is the trade-off with cross-cutting themes; if they are fully mainstreamed then they may

²² Using the same terminology as used in the ILO meta-evaluation of Decent Work results.

“disappear”, whereas if there are stand-alone plans they may not receive anticipated attention because they are not part of the central strategic plans – as appears to have occurred with ILO.

Programme results and impact

A nuanced assessment of results is available through ILO independent evaluations. ILO EVAL carries out an annual meta-analysis of its projects against 29 indicators, one of which is Gender Equality, on a four-point scale (unsuccessful, partly successful, successful, highly successful). Table 3, based on the annual meta-analysis reports, presents longitudinal findings from 2019 to 2024 on Gender Equality results

Table 3: Highly successful and successful Gender Equality results (%), 2019-2024

2019	34
2020	54
2021	56
2022	61
2023	53
2024	60

Table 3 demonstrates that the substantial improvement in successful or highly successful gender equality results since 2020 has been maintained. However it also shows the limited progress on gender equality results during the period of the current Action Plan.

The 2023 meta-analysis²³ based on 44 evaluations completed in 2023 (“ILO Decent Work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: An ex-post meta-analysis of development cooperation evaluations, 2023”, 2024) found that results on gender responsiveness were overall positive but mixed. Of the six cross-cutting policy areas reviewed (pro-poor focus, gender responsiveness, normative work/ILS promotion, tripartism and social dialogue, disability inclusion, and environmental sustainability), gender responsiveness performed relatively well, with no projects rated as “unsuccessful”, as opposed to some 50 percent for disability inclusion and environmental sustainability, with a pro-poor focus and normative work/ILS promotion having a higher successful/highly successful rating at some 70 percent.

The meta-analysis found projects successful in promoting gender equality demonstrated the following:

- Highly successful interventions were designed and implemented to be gender-responsive, with dedicated outcomes.
- Gender mainstreaming was prioritized, ensuring women’s active involvement in all project activities and providing training to project staff and key stakeholders. Projects also took into consideration gender representation in the constitution of project teams and in beneficiary populations, and formed alliances with organizations promoting gender rights as well as women’s cooperatives.
- An intersectional approach was taken, including most relevant social groups.
- Some projects supported advocacy and policy dialogues to reform directives targeting women,

²³ Detailed results of the more positive 2024 meta-analysis were not available during the period of the evaluation, so the 2023 results are discussed in more detail here.

and led to the development of key policy documents. There was also evidence of participation of key stakeholders in national, regional and global events. The participation of women in non-traditional sectors, such as construction and maritime work, was promoted in several instances, and equal pay was promoted.

- Factors of success included evidence-based research conducted before and during projects to identify specific gender-related needs and obstacles, and the use of gender-sensitive tools during implementation, monitoring and reporting.

The meta-analysis found that overall positive project results were achieved when projects displayed evidence of gender responsiveness. Also that: “Weak performance was associated with projects that did not perform gender analysis or did not have a gender strategy to address gender in project outcomes, outputs or activities.” (ibid. p. 43). Of the 13 evaluations reviewed in the 2024 meta-analysis that were rated “unsuccessful”, the main issues based on the meta-analysis scoring system were: limited evidence of gender analysis; little focus on gender issues in strategy; very limited coverage of gender-sensitive indicators; indicators rarely disaggregated by sex, age and socio-economic. The narrative assessment of the total sample of evaluations reviewed for 2023 and 2024 [data provided by EVAL] revealed limited attention to the gender transformative agenda.

A summary of the findings and recommendations of three independent high-level evaluations conducted during 2024 (ILO Development Cooperation Strategy 2020–25, ILO strategies and approaches for the development and use of labour statistics, and ILO’s Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) strategies and activities in Western Africa, GB.352/PFA/9) found similarly uneven performance on promoting gender equality and mainstreaming. The summary found policy outcomes on gender equality require further attention, and that the work on gender equality has progressed but remains under-resourced compared with the size of the agenda. In contrast a recent evaluation of the UN System-Wide Strategy on South-South and Triangular Cooperation (UNOSSC 2025) found that of six agencies working in this area only ILO had achieved equal participation of women and men in programming.

This evaluation analysed a further 17 evaluation reports (Annex 3) for details on gender equality and mainstreaming based on a search of Global Evaluations since 2022 in *I-eval* Discovery, the ILO evaluation repository. Of these 17 evaluation reports five reviewed initiatives that preceded the introduction of the Action Plan, but did not differentiate between performance before and after 2021. The main findings of this analysis were:

Twelve of the 17 global evaluations (71 percent) found a good to very good level of gender mainstreaming and seven (41 percent) found that ILO had made a significant contribution to gender equality results. Among the constraints noted in the evaluations were lack of human and financial resources (five evaluations), lack of a strong gender strategy, weak implementation, issues related to gender diversity, and limited data. Generally the evaluations did not consider whether ILO’s work on gender had been transformative. The two evaluations which did had negative findings for this area. Summaries of the 17 evaluations findings can be found in Appendix 3.

Overall, the evaluation concludes, based on self-reporting through the Programme and Budget reporting and on independent evaluations, that ILO has been partly successful to successful vis-a-vis results in relation to gender equality, and these results are on par with or better than other thematic areas.

5. Conclusions

ILO has been moderately successful in implementing its Action Plan, particularly in the last 1.5 years, after a sustained period of under-investment in gender mainstreaming. The Action Plan implementation demonstrates varying performance on relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. While the Action Plan demonstrates relevance and is generally aligned to the ILO's broader strategic goals and constituents' needs, its effectiveness and efficiency are constrained by several factors, preventing the ILO from fully leveraging its potential as a leader in gender equality. Addressing these issues, including through a clearer articulation of its values proposition, is crucial to building on the Plan's successes and ensuring lasting impact.

Coordination between HQ departments, ITC-ILO, and the field, was generally adequate, but more coherence, adaptability, and mutual leveraging are needed. The Action Plan's usefulness for staffing and management structures showed promise, yet synergies with ILO priorities of disability inclusion and non-discrimination need further strengthening. The Action Plan's implementation mechanisms demonstrate room for improvement. Insufficient financial and human resources constrain full implementation. There is a risk of over-reliance on GEDI and the gender network, rather than shared responsibility across the organization. Better tracking of resources and enhanced financial resource allocation are also crucial for optimizing gender-related programs. The ILO has also utilized partnerships effectively to improve gender equality, specifically global partnerships that advance care work, equal pay, and just transitions.

The ILO's capacity to support further work on gender equality is evolving, with some progress in integrating the Action Plan into its results framework. However, this effort remains somewhat disconnected from central strategic plans, potentially hampering long-term sustainability. To improve long-term impact, the ILO should focus on enhanced reporting quality and analysis, robust accountability mechanisms, and tailored interventions to accelerate the progression happening towards equal representation of women. Additionally, addressing internal resistance, fostering greater leadership engagement, and promoting a culture of shared ownership for gender equality goals will be paramount to lasting change. In order to escape the "Accountability Deficit Cycle" that plagues many UN agencies the Gender Network also needs to complement its technical expertise with greater capacity in advocacy with senior managers and gatekeepers.

Based on Programme Budget and evaluation reporting, this evaluation concludes that ILO has been partly successful to successful in terms of gender equality results, and these results are on par with or better than other thematic areas covered by the Organization. However, evidence suggests that it is unlikely that ILO is close to working towards a transformative agenda, as required by its policy mandates.

Key success factors include a strategic focus on gender-related SDG results, effective partnerships in promoting gender equality, and clear focus on care work and equal pay. Key inhibiting factors include uneven engagement from senior management, limited integration into mainstream operations, a lack of clear accountability mechanisms, and inadequate capacity and resources.

6. Lessons Learned and Good Practices

6.1 Lessons Learned

Shared ownership and accountability is essential: While a standalone Action Plan can raise the profile of gender equality, its impact is limited without systematic integration into the organization's core strategic documents, budgetary processes, and performance frameworks. To ensure lasting change, gender equality objectives must be further mainstreamed throughout the fabric of ILO, influencing resource allocation, program design, and performance metrics at all levels.

Strategic alignment for gender equality and mainstreaming: Gender equality is often treated as the sole responsibility of specialized units such as GEDI and the Gender Network more broadly, hindering broad-based ownership and leadership engagement. A shift toward a shared accountability model, where senior management, regional directors, and all staff members are responsible for advancing gender equality, is vital for achieving transformative and sustainable change. Creating internal "champions" in leadership positions and ensuring that managers actively support gender equality can increase internal awareness and action.

Leveraging data for evidence-based interventions: The effective utilization of gender equality markers requires consistent application and integration into monitoring and evaluation processes. As the evaluation notes, ILO's gender marker and related resource-tracking systems are underutilized, with inconsistent application, and limited integration into monitoring, planning, and budget allocation. Enhancing the availability of disaggregated data at multiple levels (particularly sex-disaggregated data), building upon guidance notes on assessing intersectionality, and developing a financial narrative linking funding to specific gender-related results will enable more targeted and effective interventions.

Maximizing partnerships: Collaborations with UN agencies (such as UN Women on UN-SWAP), government bodies, social partners, and the private sector can amplify the reach and effectiveness of gender equality initiatives. Engaging external partners in co-developing training materials and showcasing employer-led success stories enhances ownership and relevance. Moreover, leveraging partnerships for resource mobilization, as exemplified by ILO's work with EPIC, can help overcome budget constraints and enhance program sustainability.

For sustainable results, gender cannot be seen as an "add" on to projects and programmes: Key informants noted that gender equality is sometimes seen as an "afterthought", with gender technical expertise regularly receiving last-minute requests for gender analysis and mainstreaming to be added to projects near completion. Evaluations demonstrate that to ensure sustainable gender equality results the following are needed: a clear and feasible conceptual framework; adequate capacity; and mandatory gender analysis requirements through the project cycle.

Promoting Transparent Career Progression: Despite significant and swift progress in the equal representation of women at some levels, backlash can emerge due to perceptions that certain appointments are being made based on gender rather than merit, and that internal staff have limited opportunities for career progression. To temper backlash, it is important to regularly communicate and emphasize the clear criteria and processes undertaken for recruitment and promotion, for example independent panel members and a review of the competition file by the the Recruitment, Assignment and Mobility Committee (RAMC).

6.2 Emerging Good Practices:

Embedding Gender Dimensions from Project Inception: The ADWA (Advancing the Decent Work Agenda in North Africa) projects highlight the benefits of integrating gender equality principles and considerations from the very outset of project design. This ensures that projects are tailored to address the unique challenges faced by women workers. These efforts can help reduce inequality and maximize the project's utility.

Dedicated Gender Budgeting and Disaggregated Data Collection: The GFP (*i-eval* Discovery), increasingly integrates gender approaches, activities, and gender-related result monitoring, with gender-disaggregated reporting and a dedicated budget in phase 2 for gender data visibility and help in the decision-making process for better targeted actions and strategies.

Leveraging Global Partnerships: The Global Alliance for Care and the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) continues to be seen as a successful partnership that has delivered momentum and impact to ILO and partner efforts in the area of equal pay, with a strong gender dimension.

Emerging good practices on results²⁴

The second phase of the ILO Global Flagship programme on Building Social protection Floors for all found the programme increasingly integrated gender approaches, activities, and gender-related result monitoring, with gender-disaggregated reporting and a dedicated budget in phase 2 for gender data visibility. The mid-term evaluation highlights significant contributions to addressing gender and inclusion issues.²⁵

The EU funded better work programmes effectively mainstreamed Gender and non-discrimination in the implementation of programme strategies, in particular through activities dedicated to gender equality such as GEAR, through studies into the position of women in the garment sector, and through insisting on having sufficient women among trainees. Resources have also been allocated strategically to achieve gender equality-related objectives, such as for GEAR, the work with female-led TU's in Sri Lanka, and two surveys related to women in the garment sector in Madagascar. As regards enhanced gender equality several indicators show that GEAR had a concrete impact on beneficiaries in terms of gender equality, e.g., through promotion and salary increases.²⁶

In relation to labour statistics globally, a high level evaluation found that at the strategic level, ILO has placed increased emphasis on the empowerment of women, youth and other vulnerable groups, as reflected across its policy and strategic documents and frameworks. With regards to the empowerment of women, the inclusion of a dedicated policy outcome aimed at gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment for all in the world of work (Outcome 6) into the P&B results framework since 2020 accompanied an increased focus on the issue of gender equality, in the broader framework of social justice adopted in the 2019 Centenary Declaration. This has resulted in statistical initiatives towards areas of work, such as the care economy, violence and harassment at work, equal remuneration for work, and non-discrimination, areas where there is need for increased quantity and quality of statistics. The ILO has

²⁴ These good practice examples were pulled from the review of 17 evaluation reports (Annex 3) for details on gender equality and mainstreaming based on a search of Global Evaluations since 2022 in I-EVAL Discovery.

²⁵ Independent Mid-term Evaluation of the second phase of the ILO Global Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection Floors for All (2021–2025.) September 2024

²⁶ Phase I Final Independent Evaluation of EU-funded Better Work Programmes in Sri Lanka and Madagascar . 2024. ILO DC/SYMBOL: GLO/18/38/EUR

made significant progress towards the continued improvement and refinement of methodologies for measuring issues of relevance for gender equality.²⁷

7. Recommendations

The recommendations below, based on the evaluation findings, have also been formulated taking into account the likely availability of future resources to strengthen ILO's work on gender equality and mainstreaming.

1. Values Proposition on gender equality and mainstreaming.

Develop and disseminate internally and externally a clearer values proposition, to facilitate the ILO's strategic positioning and enhance and promote the visibility and impact of its programmatic outcomes.

- This proposition should explicitly showcase the ILO's foundational strengths, emphasizing international labor standards, rights at work, social dialogue, and decent work. It should pay renewed attention to core gender-related conventions, particularly those addressing non-discrimination, maternity protection, and work-family balance.
- As part of the re-definition of its values proposition, the ILO should utilize the 114th Session (2026) of its Conference for a systematic discussion of what "transformative" means within the context of advancing the gender equality agenda at work, and subsequently clearly define and disseminate what the transformative agenda means in programmatic terms.
- As part of the re-definition of its values proposition ILO should clarify and disseminate its approach to intersectionality.
- Update the Theory of Change as part of the development of the next Action Plan, with a more specific focus on the labor and employment context in relation to the definition of the ILO's values proposition and its application across diverse regional and country settings, as well as different internal functional areas.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
<i>ILO Senior Management (Office of the Director-General (CABINET)), (policy departments), (ILO regions), (PROGRAM)</i>	High	Medium-term	Low

²⁷ High-level evaluation of the ILO's strategies and approaches for the development and use of labour statistics for promoting decent work and social justice, 2018-23. 2024

2. Review the status and relevance of the ILO Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming

ILO should consider the advantages and disadvantages of updating its Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming following the outcomes of the 114th Session (2026) of the Conference's general discussion on advancing the transformative agenda for gender equality at work.

- The decision on updating the policy should be made by the Global Management Team.

<i>Responsible unit</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Time implication</i>	<i>Resource implication</i>
<i>Global Management Team and GEDI</i>	Medium	Medium-term	Low

3. Develop and implement a renewed ILO gender equality and mainstreaming accountability framework

Develop and implement a robust accountability framework for gender equality that includes clear roles, regular reporting mechanisms, and a whole-of-organization approach.

Leadership at all levels, including Country and Regional Directors, should be held more accountable for results, and gender equality should be more fully integrated into the core business of the organization. Strengthening leadership buy-in, avoiding excessive bureaucratic layering, and ensuring field-level ownership are critical to achieving transformative and sustainable change.

To do so it is recommended that ILO:

- Clearly define gender-related responsibilities in job descriptions and performance appraisals to increase accountability and encourage greater engagement.
- Develop and implement a gender-responsive leadership programme to further strengthen leadership engagement and accountability for gender equality
- Ensure that at least 75 percent of Global Management Team meetings include a focus on gender equality and mainstreaming, with reporting to the Governing Body on an annual basis concerning the actions taken as a result of these meetings.

<i>Responsible unit</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Time implication</i>	<i>Resource implication</i>
<i>Global Management Team, supported by GEDI, ITC-ILO and HRD</i>	High	Short-term	Low

4. Strengthen ILO's Gender Architecture

Establish clearer mandates and coordination mechanisms between GEDI, focal points, gender specialists, and custodians to improve coherence, reduce duplication, and enable a more strategic approach to

gender mainstreaming.

To strengthen leadership, coordination, and strategic direction for the Gender Network, and to build on current momentum:

- The Senior Specialist for Gender Equality position should be extended beyond 2025.
- Greater support for regional gender specialists, particularly for those who are responsible for larger numbers of country teams should be provided. Examples include increasing opportunities for cross-regional learning and gender-specific technical exchanges through dedicated one-on-one communication channels to discuss field-level challenges, effectively addressing time zone and language barriers and increased consideration of regional needs in skills development initiatives.
- Organize a joint annual meeting of UN-SWAP custodians to discuss results and complementarities in advance of UN-SWAP 3.0 reporting.
- Ensure that the Gender Network has the advocacy skills to promote gender equality and mainstreaming with senior managers, through dedicated training if required. The need for dedicated training can be determined through meetings of the Gender Network.

<i>Responsible unit</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Time implication</i>	<i>Resource implication</i>
<i>GEDI</i>	High	Medium-term	Funding for Senior Specialist for Gender Equality, and training in advocacy if required.

5. Enhance institutional capacity for gender equality and mainstreaming

Develop and implement an organization-wide, costed capacity development framework, utilizing results of recent gender equality and gender mainstreaming assessments, to guide learning and link competencies to performance expectations.

- Make the “Gender Equality Matters” course mandatory for all staff, similar to the mandatory course on Disability Inclusion.
- Establish dedicated, practical training for gender focal points and coordinators.
- Training content should be regularly updated and contextualized to reflect evolving priorities, including on intersectionality.
- Core budget allocations for gender training should be increased to reduce reliance on project-based funding.
- Greater male participation in gender activities should be encouraged to strengthen allyship. Promote inclusive participation in Turin Centre activities, particularly among women and men.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
<i>ILO Senior Management (CABINET), Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch (GEDI), Human Resources Development Department (HRD), ILO regions, International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC-ILO), Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP), Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV)</i>	High	Short-term (equivalent to time frame for the formulation of the new action plan)	Medium

6. Accelerate efforts to attain the equal representation of women and develop a more enabling work environment

- Continue to implement tailored interventions aimed at accelerating the equal representation of women at all levels across all regions and departments including focussed outreach to men for lower grade professional positions and strengthening the internal pipeline of women leaders.
- Review the manager's dashboard functionality to see how it could be used within the recruitment process to highlight at various points the gender parity status for that grade within the department/office in which the hiring is taking place.
- To develop a more enabling work environment, continue to review and update where necessary provisions related to Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH), ensuring alignment to the new indicator on these areas under UN-SWAP 3.0 (indicator 14).
- Strengthen male allyship to reinforce shared ownership of gender goals and foster a more inclusive organizational culture, including through increased male participation in the Gender Network, gender equality trainings, and other capacity-building initiatives.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
<i>ILO Senior Management, Human Resources Development Department (HRD), Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch (GEDI), International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC-ILO)</i>	Medium	Long-term	Medium

7. Ensure coherence, oversight and comprehensiveness in relation to planning and reporting

- Align the performance indicators in the next iteration of the Action Plan closely with UN-SWAP 3.0 indicators, to make reporting processes more efficient. In particular focus on programmatic results included in the Programme Budget, rather than gender mainstreaming, in relation to UN-SWAP 3.0 indicators on results.
- Incorporate the findings from the EVAL meta-evaluation of Decent Work Results and Effectiveness into Programme Budget reporting.
- Set up and implement a quality assurance system for UN-SWAP reporting, through peer reviews and annual oversight by the Audit Office.

<i>Responsible unit</i>	<i>Priority</i>	<i>Time implication</i>	<i>Resource implication</i>
<i>GEDI and Evaluation Office (EVAL)</i>	High	During development of the next Action Plan and ongoing Programme Budget reporting	Low

8. Align with UN-SWAP 3.0 Performance Indicators on resource allocation and tracking

- Strengthen the Gender Equality Marker (GEM) in line with the UN Data Standards for United Nations system-wide reporting of financial data which defines the manner in which UN financial information (budget and expenditures) must be reported against the gender equality marker (UN GEM).²⁸
- As a first step an indicative target of 15 percent for GEM 3, and 100 percent for GEM 2 (i.e. all funds other than GEM 3) should be set for extra-budgetary resources, with incremental progress to be established in the next Action Plan.
- As a second step ILO should finalize and implement its draft methodology for capturing allocations to gender equality and mainstreaming in its core budget, with similar targets as above.
- Requirements under the forthcoming ILO Gender Action Plan for 2026- 2028 related to financial tracking through the GEM and the setting of financial targets, should be expanded to capture the full range of ILO's work and performance in these areas.

²⁸ https://unsdg.un.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/Data%20Standards%20for%20UN%20System%20Wide%20reporting%20of%20financial%20data_2023_Final_0.pdf

<i>Responsible unit</i>	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
<i>Financial Management (FINANCE) AND GEDI</i>	High	During the implementation of the next Action Plan	Low for implementing methodologies. Potentially significant for core and EXB resources.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1: List of Persons Interviewed

	NAME	ORGANIZATION	DESIGNATION	E MAIL	MODE OF INTERVIEW
	GEDI				
1	Ms. Chidi King	ILO	Branch chief GEDI	king@ilo.org	Skype based interview
2	Ms. Verena Schmidt	ILO	Senior Specialist, Gender Equality Coordination and Mainstreaming, GEDI	schmidt@ilo.org	Skype based interview
3	Ms. Emanuela Pozzan	ILO	Senior Specialist, Gender and non Discrimination, GEDI	pozzan@ilo.org	Skype based interview
4	Ms. Sofie Lambert	ILO	Gender and non-discrimination Officer	lamberts@ilo.org	Skype based interview
	Gender Specialists in the Field				
5	Ms. Özge Berber	ILO	Senior Gender specialist, DWT/CO Moscow	Berber@ilo.org	Group skype based interview
6	Ms. Maria José Chamorro	ILO	Senior Gender specialist, DWT/CO Budapest	chamorro@ilo.org	Group skype based interview
7	Ms. Paz Arancibia Roman	ILO	Senior Gender specialist, Regional Office, LAM	arancibiap@ilo.org	Group skype based interview
8	Ms. Ida Tsitsi Chimedza	ILO	Senior Gender focal point, DWT/CO Pretoria	chimedza@ilo.org	Group skype based interview
9	Ms. Fatime Christiane Ndiaye	ILO	Senior Gender specialist, DWT/CO Dakar	ndiayef@ilo.org	Skype based interview
10	Ms. Joni Simpson	ILO	Director of Country Office, Sri Lanka	simpson@ilo.org	Skype based interview
	Regional Offices				
11	Ms. Claudia Ruiz	ILO	Programming Officer, Regional Office, LAM	ruiz@ilo.org	Skype based interview
	Gender Focal Points				

12	Ms. Mélissa Bader	ILO	National Project Coordinator, Beirut	baderm@ilo.org	Group skype based interview
13	Ms. Ebru Ozberk Anli	ILO	Senior Programme Officer, Turkey	ebru@ilo.org	Group skype based interview
14	Ms. Diana Carolina Pava	ILO	Oficial Nacional de Género y no-discriminación. Lima	pavad@ilo.org	Skype based interview
Senior Management					
15	Ms. Manuela Tomei	ILO	Assistant Director General for Governance, Rights and Dialogue	ferranco@ilo.org	Skype based interview
16	Ms. Beate Andrees	ILO	Regional Director, Europe	andrees@ilo.org	Skype based interview
ITC-ILO					
17	Ms. Maud Ritz	ITC-ILO	Programme Officer, ITC-ILO	m.ritz@itcilo.org	Skype based interview
18	Ms. Luisa Guimaraes	ITC-ILO	Chief of Gender Programme, ITC-ILO	guimaraes@itcilo.org	Skype based interview
Custodians of indicators of the ILO Action Plan					
19	Ms. Naomi Asukai	ILO	Senior Evaluation Specialist	asukai@ilo.org	Skype based interview
20	Ms. Sharon Compton	ILO	Chief of the Talent Management Branch	compton@ilo.org	Skype based interview
21	Mr. Nicolas Grumbach	ILO	Chief - Finance/Strategic Analysis and Reporting	grumbach@ilo.org	Skype based interview
22	Ms. Yoshie Ichinohe	ILO	Programme Analyst in the Strategic Programming and Management Department	ichinohe@ilo.org	Skype based interview
23	Ms. Zeina Awad	ILO	Head of News and Multimedia	awadz@ilo.org	Skype based interview
24	Ms. Raquel Gonzales	ILO	Senior Adviser - Office of the Director-General	rgonzalez@ilo.org	Skype based interview
25	Mr. Victor Hugo Ricco	ILO	Senior Specialist in Workers' Activities at the Bureau of Workers'	ricco@ilo.org	Skype based interview

			Activities (ACTRAV)		
26	Ms. Jae-Hee Chang	ILO	Senior Relations Specialist, ACT/EMP Bureau for Employers' Activities	changj@ilo.org	Skype based interview
Additional ILO Staff					
27	Mr. Esteban Tromel	ILO	Senior Specialist, Disability	tromel@ilo.org	Skype based interview
28	Ms. Anita Amorian	ILO	Senior Specialist in Partnerships	amorim@ilo.org	Group Skype based interview
29	Ms. Anastasiia Pavlova	ILO	South-South Partnerships Officer	pavlova@ilo.org	Group Skype based interview
30	Ms. Feixia Li	ILO	Senior Emerging Partners' Relations Officer	life@ilo.org	Group Skype based interview
UN Partners					
31	Ms. Priya Alvarez	UN Women	Senior advisor for UN System coordination at UN Women	priya.alvarez@unwomen.org	Skype based interview
Constituents					
32	Ms. Maité Llanos	International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)	Director of the Geneva Office of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)	maite.llanos@ituc-csi.org	Skype based interview
33	Ms. Anelise G. de Araujo	International Organisation of Employers (IOE)	Gender Specialist	gender_specialist@ioe-emp.com	Skype based interview

Appendix 2: Bibliography

1. ILO, ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022–25, 2022
2. ILO, Independent Evaluation: ILO's Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Efforts 2016-2021, 2021.
3. ILO, Mid-term report on the implementation of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022–25, 2024
4. ILO, Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: An ex-post meta-analysis of development cooperation evaluations. Reports consulted: 2024, 2023, 2022, 2021 and (partial) 2022.

5. ILO, The ILO's Strategic Plan for 2022–23
6. ILO, Programme and Budget 2024–25
7. ILO, Programme and Budget 2022-23
8. ILO, Theory of Change towards a transformative agenda for gender equality in the world of work, 2022
9. ILO, UN-SWAP Report Card: 2022
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13. ILO, Skills Mapping for Outcome 5: Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all, 2024
14. Joint Inspection Unit, Review of policies and practices to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse in the United Nations system organizations: Report of the Joint Inspection Unit JIU/REP/2025/2
15. United Nations Network on Racial Discrimination and Protection Against Minorities, Guidance Note on Intersectionality, Racial Discrimination and Protection Against Minorities, 2022.
16. United Nations Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG) and High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM), Data Standards for UN System Wide reporting of financial data, 2023.
17. United Nations, The United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy, 2019.
18. UN Women, UN SWAP 2.0 Accountability framework for mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women in United Nations entities: Framework and technical guidance, 2019
19. UN Women, UN SWAP 3.0 Accountability framework for mainstreaming gender equality and the empowerment of women in United Nations entities: Framework and technical guidance, 2024
20. UN Women, International Labour Organization (ILO) UN-SWAP 2.0 PERFORMANCE 2018-2023

Appendix 3: Bibliography and summaries of seventeen Global Evaluations

1. ILO (2023). Mid-term Evaluation for "Public-Private Partnership for compliance with national law and respect for fundamental principles and rights at work in the electronics sector of Viet Nam." 2023, December. ILO DC/SYMBOL: VNM/20/02/APL. Project duration June 2021-August 2024
2. ILO (2025). Public-Private Partnership for compliance with national law and respect for fundamental principles and rights at work in the electronics sector of Viet Nam, Final Evaluation. January 2025. ILO DC/SYMBOL: VNM/20/02/APL; VNM/21/50/JPN; GLO/20/40/EUR; and VNM/22/50/J
3. ILO (2024). Independent Mid-term Evaluation of the second phase of the ILO Global Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection Floors for All (2021–2025.) September 2024
4. Measurement, awareness raising and policy engagement to address child labor and forced labor (MAP 16). April 2024. Project Duration Dec 2016 to June 2024

5. SCORE – _Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises, Phase 4 Mid Term. October 2023. ILO DC/SYMBOL: GLO/21/60/MUL (BOL/21/50/MUL, MMR/21/50/MUL, TUN/21/50/MUL)
6. Advancing the Decent Work Agenda in North Africa “ADWA (Phase 1) and Advancing the Decent Work Agenda in North Africa and the Levant “ADWA (Phase ii) Final Independent Cluster Evaluation. October 2024. ILO DC/SYMBOL: RAF/18/50/SWE and GLO/21/61/SWE, Project duration November 2018 to January 2025
7. Independent high-level evaluation of the ILO’s strategies and actions for promoting decent work in the rural economy (with a focus on rural employment), 2016–2023. August 2023
8. High-Level Evaluation of the ILO’s Decent Work Country Programme strategies and activities in Western Africa, with emphasis on Cote D’Ivoire, Nigeria and ECOWAS. 2024. Evaluation Period 2018-2023
9. High-level independent Evaluation of ILO’s development cooperation strategy, 2020-25. Evaluation period: 2018-2024. 2024.
10. Phase I Final Independent Evaluation of EU-funded Better Work Programmes in Sri Lanka and Madagascar. 2024. ILO DC/SYMBOL: GLO/18/38/EUR. Project duration 2021/2022-2024
11. Independent Mid-term Evaluation of the second phase of the ILO Global Flagship Programme on Building Social Protection Floors for All (2021–2025). 2024. Project duration: From 01/08/2021 to 31/12/2025
12. High-level evaluation of the ILO’s strategies and approaches for the development and use of labour statistics for promoting decent work and social justice, 2018-23. 2024. Evaluation period 2018-23
13. The ILO-Norway Programme Cooperation agreements on Skills Development (2016-2023). November 2023.
14. Sida-ILO Partnership Programme 2022-2025. Partnership Programme. May 2024. Project Duration 2022-2024
15. Independent high-level evaluation of the ILO’s post-conflict and recovery work in the Arab States region, with emphasis on Iraq and Yemen (2019-2023). August 2023
16. Independent high-level evaluation of ILO’s strategies and action on fundamental principles and rights at work, 2018-23. 2023.
17. Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) Programme Phase IV; and Support for Crisis Management for 100 SMEs in Tunisia (AGC Project). March 2025. ILO DC/SYMBOL: GLO/21/60/MUL, TUN/21/50/MUL, TUN/22/02/DEU. Project duration: 1 January 2022 to June 2025

# and time period	Summary	Overview
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1. 21-24	For Outcome 2, Hypothesis 3 <i>“Selected gender-responsive tools for compliance and social dialogue + Piloting the use of those tools + Training and capacity building of constituents + Advisory support for selected suppliers, will lead to upholding workplace compliance and social dialogue practices”</i> was partly confirmed. The project has contributed significantly and directly toGender equality and non-discrimination.	Contributed significantly
2.	the projects successfully integrated gender equality perspectives into broader business and human rights frameworks. However, a critical limitation was the absence of sex-disaggregated data in monitoring and evaluation, hindering a more comprehensive assessment of impacts, specific objectives and outcomes. issues related to the recognition of gender diversity do not appear to have been included in the capacity-building activities. Discussions with factory staff revealed that they have limited awareness of how to create a working environment that respects gender diversity. Some representatives from the interviewed enterprises shared that they find it difficult to develop an LGBTQI+ friendly organizational culture	Successful mainstreaming Absence of sex-disaggregated data Issues of gender diversity

3.	supports gender equality, non-discrimination, and the inclusion of people with disabilities, in line with the SDGs; . Emerging areas like climate change, gender-responsive protection, and coverage for informal workers highlight the need for stronger ILO technical capacities in these areas. The GFP increasingly integrates gender approaches, activities, and gender-related result monitoring, with gender-disaggregated reporting and a dedicated budget in phase 2 for gender data visibility. The mid-term evaluation highlights significant contributions to addressing gender and inclusion issues. Despite progress in raising awareness, challenges and inequalities remain in GFP-implementing countries. Ongoing efforts are needed to ensure inclusivity stays central and that the Programme benefits everyone, regardless of gender, age, or disability status.	Successful mainstreaming Significant contributions to addressing gender issues
4. 2016-24	The midterm evaluation found that the project design lacked coherence and missed opportunities for collaboration and did not incorporate a strong gender and inclusiveness strategy. To strengthen gender and inclusion, MAP 16 started to use the Gender, Diversity, and Inclusion tool to help ensure that these principles were incorporated into activities and outputs.... In addition, the project continued to report on the ratio of women and men participating in training activities	Did not incorporate a strong gender strategy

5.	On most of gender indicators positive changes are reported in terms of participation of women among the trainer population and in participation in training. Gender components are integrated in all modules and the trainers-population of SCORE is gender balanced. When comparing the gender specific indicators in the three SCORE countries subject to review in this evaluation in 2023, it can be observed that performance of the three countries is above average, which confirms other findings from KIIs that gender aspects have increasingly received attention in SCORE modules.	Good mainstreaming Positive changes
6. 2018-25	The ADWA projects have demonstrated potential for positive impacts in Egypt, Morocco, and Tunisia across various dimensions, including gender equality.... Gender equality initiatives empowered women entrepreneurs and supported legal reforms, such as advocating for the ratification of international conventions on violence, harassment, and domestic work. The ADWA projects have considered and integrated the principles of gender equality, tripartism, social dialogue, international labour standards, and a fair transition to environmental sustainability throughout and across the projects, from their design to the implementation This Second phase prioritized a focus on gender issues and highlighted the potential for a just transition to enhance job-creation in economic policymaking. During this phase the unique challenges faced by women workers in terms of employment quality, were also addressed, by focusing on gender equality elements of ILS.	Good mainstreaming Initiatives empowered women entrepreneurs and supported legal reform

7. 2016-23	Gender equality was effectively mainstreamed, but interventions did not always succeed in promoting it. By including women as key stakeholders, incorporating gender-sensitive and gender-responsive issues into the development of policies and strategies, and meeting the assigned targets for women beneficiaries for the provision of trainings and skills development, ILO was seen to have incorporated gender mainstreaming effectively into its projects focusing on promotion of DWRE. Gender was also sometimes integrated into specialized project activities.	Good mainstreaming Implementation did not always follow.
8. 2018-2023	Policy outcomes on gender equality and skills and lifelong learning provide room for stronger attention. The work on gender equality has progressed but remains under-resourced compared with the size of the agenda. Strategic frameworks such as DWCPs and CPOs are progressively integrating gender equality and non-discrimination, with some room for enhancement and better visibility of implementation guidelines, especially concerning disability inclusion.	Room for stronger attention Some progression but under-resourced Progressive integration into DWCPs and CPOs

9. 2018-24	The policy outcomes therefore embody a gender sensitive, inclusive and environmentally sustainable approach: the bedrock for building back better and leaving no one behind. ILO Annual Evaluation reports have underlined recurrent systemic issues where improvements are needed since 2018, with a particular emphasis on (a) Results-based management, adequacy of project design, monitoring and reporting; (b) Achievement and sustainability of results; (c) Constituents' engagement in project formulation and implementation; (d) Comprehensive poverty targeting and gender equality mainstreaming;	Gender-sensitive Further efforts required
10. 2022-2024	Gender dimensions were considered adequately in the design and in the problem analysis. Apart from the fact that women make up most of the workers in the garment sectors in both countries, dedicated interventions were developed, such as GEAR. <i>Gender and non-discrimination</i> were effectively mainstreamed in the implementation of programme strategies, in particular through activities dedicated to gender equality such as GEAR, through studies into the position of women in the garment sector, and through insisting on having sufficient women among trainees. Resources have also been allocated strategically to achieve <i>Gender</i> equality-related objectives, such as for GEAR, the work with female-led TU's in Sri Lanka, and two surveys related to women in the garment sector in Madagascar. As regards enhanced gender equality several indicators show that GEAR had a concrete impact on beneficiaries in terms of gender equality, e.g., through promotion and salary increases.	Good mainstreaming Strategic resource allocation Concrete impact on beneficiaries

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11. 2021-25	It supports gender equality, non-discrimination, and the inclusion of people with disabilities, in line with the SDGs. However, limited human resources hinder the full realization of its goals, particularly in in-country support and emerging areas of expertise. Emerging areas like climate change, gender-responsive protection, and coverage for informal workers highlight the need for stronger ILO technical capacities in these areas. Given the large informal sector globally, more effort is required in social protection for informal workers, alongside gender-responsive systems within social protection policy, as seen in Viet Nam and Rwanda. The GFP increasingly integrates gender approaches, activities, and gender-related result monitoring, with gender-disaggregated reporting and a dedicated budget in phase 2 for gender data visibility	Good mainstreaming Lack of human resources
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12. 2018-23	The HLE found that at the strategic level, ILO has placed increased emphasis on the empowerment of women, youth and other vulnerable groups, as reflected across its policy and strategic documents and frameworks. With regards to the empowerment of women, the inclusion of a dedicated policy outcome aimed at gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment for all in the world of work (Outcome 6) into the P&B results framework since 2020 accompanied an increased focus on the issue of gender equality, in the broader framework of social justice adopted in the 2019 Centenary Declaration. This has resulted in statistical initiatives towards areas of work, such as the care economy, violence and harassment at work, equal remuneration for work, and non-discrimination, areas where there is need for increased quantity and quality of statistics. The ILO has made significant progress towards the continued improvement and refinement of methodologies for measuring issues of relevance for gender equality. In addition, the HLE found that ILO pays particular attention to gender equality considerations in the area of informal economy, an area with disproportionate representation of women.	Increased emphasis on empowerment of women Outcome in the P&B has facilitated this Significant progress
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13. 2021-2031	Specific outcomes for Tripartism, Gender Equality and Social Inclusion, and Green Skills guided interventions were observed. Data reporting, however is limited, and there is a lack of systematic analysis regarding the extent of mainstreaming of these themes. More emphasis is needed in addressing gender equality and social inclusion as part of implementing the digitalisation strategy and to ensure that digitalisation promotes inclusion.	Limited data reporting More emphasis needed
14. 2022-24	By producing publications with global reach, developing action-oriented knowledge products, supporting contributions to global events and collaboration with international partners, the programme is influencing global discourse and practice in areas such as gender equality, decent work, environmental sustainability, violence and harassment at work, peace responsiveness. The gender component has contributed to developing action-oriented knowledge products, practical tools and capacity development on issues pertaining to care work, pay equity and violence and harassment	Influencing global discourse on gender Good results
15. 2019-23	At the project level, the ILO has made acceptable progress in mainstreaming cross-cutting issues as they relate to gender and non-discrimination Broader challenges relating to gender, non-discrimination and the environment in the Arab States are significant – with, for example, the lowest rates of female labour participation in the world. The ILO does not have the resources needed to alter such trajectories.	Acceptable progress in mainstreaming More resources required

16. 2018-23	Among noteworthy results on gender equality and non-discrimination , the Office successfully extended the Equal Pay International Coalition and the Global Business Disability Network. Nevertheless, except in the area of equal opportunities for persons with disabilities and other persons in vulnerable situations, the Office struggled to achieve its P&B objectives, which it attributed to the emerging nature of some workstreams (such as the care economy) and because gender and inclusion reforms were relatively low-priority policy areas during the COVID-19 crisis period. Budget objectives to further gender equality and non-discrimination, which were possibly too ambitious for the time frame and nature of the requisite reforms, especially those promoting the care economy and pay equity reforms. Nevertheless, during the period there were many examples of relevant research on issues related to gender equality and non-discrimination in the world of work. DWCP references to gender equality and inclusion in results frameworks still tend to be very broad, with some exceptions. Although the ILO set out a transformative agenda for gender equality that included reforming discriminatory laws, policies and practices, and eliminating violence and harassment from	Some successes but P&B objectives not achieved Greater budgets needed Not transformative
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	the workplace, it missed most of its related targets in the P&B 2020–21 biennium, some by a wide margin.⁷¹ Challenges that negatively affected progress include limited awareness and understanding of complex issues involved in ensuring “equal pay for work of equal value” and limited political will, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown period when Member States’ priorities were elsewhere.	
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17. 2022-25	The considerations of gender equality, international labour standards, and social dialogue relevant to the project context for all four countries were fully integrated throughout the entire project cycle, starting with project design, continuing through implementation, and merged into all M&E systems and project reporting. Gender mainstreaming was also embedded in the indicators, underscoring the need for gender-disaggregated data to be reported in these metrics, which occurred consistently. GENERALLY GOOD MAINSTREAMING While the project’s tailored approaches enhanced its relevance and alignment, some gaps in stakeholder engagement, gender equity, and resource allocation impacted its overall coherence, particularly in addressing systemic and cross-cutting issues comprehensively.	Good mainstreaming Some gaps addressing cross-cutting issues
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Annex 4: Evaluation Question Matrix

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
1. To what extent does the Action Plan support the ILO Policy on gender equality (its impact and visibility)?	Degree of alignment and support between Action Plan content and performance indicators and ILO Gender Equality Policy goals. Support for the policy's emphasis on what it describes as mutually reinforcing priorities: staffing, substance and structure. Perspectives on the quality of ILO's value proposition on GEEW .	ILO Policy on gender equality, Action Plan annual reports (including to the Governing Body) on results against targets set in the Action Plan. Interviews with staff, constituents and partners.	Structured/semi-structured interviews Document review	Internal ILO stakeholders
2. Is the Action Plan for Gender Equality relevant and conducive to ILO's programme and policy frameworks (such as the Strategic Plan 2022-	Objectives and targets set out in the Action Plan align with and support the gender-related elements of the strategic plans	Strategic Plan 2022-2025, relevant ILC resolutions and their plans of action, Programme & Budget, and	Structured/semi-structured interviews Document review	Internal ILO stakeholders

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
2025, relevant ILC resolutions and their plans of action, Programme & Budget, and Decent Work Country Programmes)?	(policy outcomes, cross-cutting policy drivers) indicators in the P&Bs, and Decent Work Country Programmes. Extent to which the approach is in line with national-level strategies: national development frameworks, UNDAF/UNCF, priority SDG targets and indicators. Complementarity and alignment with other ILO programme and policy frameworks	Decent Work Country Programmes Interviews with staff, constituents and partners. Guidance for Decent Work Country Programmes		
3. To what extent is the Action Plan 2022-2025 relevant and contribute to (and vice versa):	Relevance to constituents' needs and demands can be seen in the Gender Equality and	Capacity-assessment and development reports on gender equality and mainstreaming for	Document review	Internal ILO stakeholders

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
a. priorities, needs and capacities of constituents (i.e. the ultimate beneficiaries) b. priorities, needs and capacities of staff (i.e. the direct audience)	Mainstreaming (GEM) references to policy outcomes in ILO high-level and policy documents (i.e. SPFs and P&Bs) % of constituents indicating that ILO's GEM strategic objectives and policies are strongly relevant to the needs of constituents on GEEW, including relevance to national action plans, policies, strategies of programmes or frameworks. % of ILO staff consider that the ILO gender action plan (design and objectives) have responded to their needs.	constituents and staff Strategic plans, programme and budgets and annual reports Training records Surveys and interviews with constituents Staff engagement surveys Evaluations Meta-evaluations-reports and findings	Structured/semi-structured interviews Online survey	Representatives of tripartite constituents

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
	Targets and indicators related to staff capacity assessment and development in the Action Plan have been met or exceeded. Dedicated capacity-building exercises on gender equality for ILO constituents have taken place.			
4. To what extent has the Theory of Change informed and contributed to the effective implementation of the Action Plan 2022-2025?	Theory of change is anchored in the ILO's tripartite structure and normative mandate. Theory of change is informed by in-country realities and the needs of constituents and the transformative agenda for gender equality outlined in relevant high-level policy	Theory of change Interview with staff and stakeholders Programme/project documents	Mini-workshop with GEDI and Action Plan custodians to critique the current Theory of Change and support development of the next iteration of the Theory of Change Structured/semi-structured interviews	Internal ILO stakeholders

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
	documents and declarations approved by the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference. % of staff and stakeholders can describe or apply the ToC % of staff who perceive the ToC to be clear and relevant Evidence of ToC use in program/project design and planning processes Integration of ToC assumptions in decision-making		Document review Online survey	
5. To what extent does the Action Plan 2022-2025 support the mainstreaming	Alignment to ILO guidance	Instructions and checklists on drafting proposals on development	Structured/semi-structured interviews	Internal ILO stakeholders

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
of gender equality in the design and implementation of development cooperation projects?	Inclusion of gender indicators in programme and project development, strategy, guidance and monitoring frameworks Programme and project incorporation of gender analysis Consensus among constituents that ILO's development cooperation projects have been relevant in providing support and assistance to specific constituents to promote and adopt GEEW % of ILO development cooperation	cooperation programmes and projects; and guidance on drafting Decent Work Country Programmes. Gender marker results Interviews with staff Possibly using 2021 evaluation as a baseline	Document review Online survey	Representatives of tripartite constituents

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
	projects which specifically target gender equality and inclusion, promoting equitable representation of women and men in decision-making positions and addressing gender-based discrimination in the world of work. % of project and programme proposals meeting the ILO marker on gender equality and non-discrimination			
6. To what extent was the Action Plan 2022-2025 aligned with the UN SWAP?	All policy areas and 17 performance indicators of the UN-SWAP 2.0 are clearly reflected in the Action Plan with indicators, targets and reporting requirements.	UN-SWAP 2.0 framework and technical notes and annual results/reports from ILO to UN Women against all UN-SWAP performance indicators, annual letters and analysis from UN	Structured/semi-structured interviews Document review Online survey	Internal ILO stakeholders Partner organization stakeholders

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
		Women ED to ILO ED. Interviews with internal stakeholders and partners stakeholders		
7. How well has the ILO coordinated the design and implementation of the Action Plan 2022-2025 across HQ departments and between HQ and the field including ITC-ILO, to ensure coherence, adaptable and timely implementation? Is there evidence of mutual leveraging and complementarity?	Degree of consultation in Action Plan design process, including ILO and external stakeholder engagement at field and country office, regional and global levels Evidence of shared commitments and ownership to Action Plan among ILO employees Existence of an effective gender network Consistency of interpretation,	Interviews and surveys with internal stakeholders	Structured/semi-structured interviews Document review Online survey	Internal ILO stakeholders (from multiple levels and locations, inclusive of diversity dimensions)

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
	utility and application of the Action Plan across ILO offices and functions Perceptions on the clarity, relevance and practicality of the Action Plan, including for different areas of work and for different geographical regions Evidence of programme and organizational employees adopting policy conceptually and practically in their work % of ILO staff that consider that coherence exists between the GEM policies and aims with ILO policies, strategies and frameworks			

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
	% of training sessions and capacity-building efforts related to the Plan, as well as briefings for management and newly-appointed staff and outcomes of trainings			
8. How appropriate and useful is the Action Plan 2022-2025 for “staffing and...management structure” (considered the enabling institutional mechanisms for gender equality in the Office both HQ and at field offices)	Implementation and tracking of gender-aware and family-friendly policies for the ILO workforce are enhanced, including flexible work arrangements, breastfeeding and infant feeding provisions, maternity, paternity and adoption leave, and prevention of abuse and harassment, including sexual harassment % of national, international and	UN-SWAP reports Global staff engagement survey results Reporting against the system-wide strategy for the equal representation of women	Structured/semi-structured interviews Document review Online survey	Internal stakeholders

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
	senior staff who are women % Percentage of respondents in the global staff survey who strongly agree or agree that ILO promotes inclusiveness in its work environment			
9. To what extent are there synergies between the Action Plan 2022- 2025 and other ILO priorities of disability inclusion and non-discrimination?	The extent to which the Action Plan supports ILO's commitments via System-wide frameworks and guides for inclusion: (i.e. United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP); the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Parity;	Staff and partner interviews ILO reporting against system-wide frameworks and guidance	Structured/semi-structured interviews Document review Online survey	Internal stakeholders Partner UN entities

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
	Enabling Environment Guidelines for the United Nations System; the United Nations Gender Equality Acceleration Plan; the United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy (UNDIS); UN Youth Strategy 2030; UN strategy for the protection of LGBTQIA+ personnel and the Strategic Action plan: Report of the Secretary-General's Task Force on Addressing Racism and Promoting Dignity for All in the United Nations Secretariat on Addressing Racism and the Geneva Alliance against Racism			

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
	The United Nations Office at Geneva Perceptions of the relevance of the Action Plan to current concepts and approaches (e.g. addresses intersectionality; gender transformative; inclusion and non-discrimination)			
10. To what extent did the Action Plan 2022-2025 achieve the expected results at ILO Headquarters and country offices? In which areas/components of the Action Plan 2022-2025 was the ILO able to make the most progress on (as per established targets) and in which ones the least, including the identification of bottlenecks? What are the most significant elements	Achievement against targets set out in the Action Plan	UN-SWAP reports Decent Work Country Programme reviews Development Cooperation evaluations Meta-evaluation and evaluation synthesis	Structured/semi-structured interviews Document review Online survey	Internal ILO stakeholders Representatives of tripartite constituents

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
to-date that can be identified to explain this?				
11. To what extent did the Action Plan 2022-2025 directly contribute to increasing the quality of results with ILO constituents?	Constituents' perception of improvement in programmatic quality Evidence of policy or institutional changes within constituents' organizations influenced by Action Plan activities Average share of women delegates and advisers accredited and registered in International Labour Conferences	Programme and policy evaluations and audits Interviews with constituents and internal staff Decent Work Country Programme reviews Development Cooperation evaluations Meta-evaluation and evaluation synthesis	Structured/semi-structured interviews Decent Work Country	Internal ILO stakeholders Representatives of tripartite constituents
12. To what extent has the Action Plan 2022-2025 contributed to	Evidence of results achieved by ILO's interventions in the expected	Decent Work Country Programme reviews	Structured/semi-structured interviews	Internal ILO stakeholders

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
major results/achievements related to gender mainstreaming in the ILO (for the period 2022-2025)? Which key success factors, mechanisms and circumstances can be identified? Which key inhibiting factors can be identified that could be addressed in the future?	results from targeted actions related to: promoting decent employment for women, assessing and promoting investments in the care economy, reducing the gender pay gap, and supporting its constituents to end violence and harassment in the world of work. Results achieved in gender mainstreaming and organizational processes, as outlined in the Action Plan Specific attention to sex- and age-disaggregated data, evidence of accountability to affected populations and gender analysis	Development Cooperation evaluations Meta-evaluation and evaluation synthesis Review of results achieved under relevant outcomes and output of the P&B	Document review Online survey	Representatives of tripartite constituents

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
	using a range of qualitative data collection methods			
13. To what extent does the Action Plan 2022-2025 serve as a strategic tool for increasing the outreach and credibility of ILO?	Promotion of Action plan on main ILO website and website of constituents Availability of reporting results against the Action Plan Emphasis placed on gender equality in the ILO Communication Strategy. Results of targets in this strategy regularly reported on. Knowledge sharing through global UN-SWAP conferences and other international forums	Communication Strategy Minutes and remarks of senior leaders ILO website content	Document review Interviews	Internal ILO stakeholders Representatives of tripartite constituents

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
	regarding the Action Plan Senior leader remarks include emphasis on GEEW			
14. Does the current monitoring and reporting allow for tracking the progress and informing the implementation of the Action Plan? How effective were the indicators (baseline and targets) in these regards, and what could be done in the future to make them more useful for informing management decisions?	Regular reporting to the Governing Body includes progress on gender mainstreaming in the organisation against the Action Plan Extent to which management capacities and arrangements put in place support the achievement of results % of reviewed Decent Work Country Programme reviews	Reports to the GB Capacity assessments Evaluation reports Results of marker on gender equality and non-discrimination, including assessment of quality assurance	Document review Interviews	Internal ILO stakeholders

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
	adequately covering GEEW % of reviewed Development Cooperation project evaluations adequately covering GEEW Evaluations and evaluation syntheses			
15. To what extent have the Action Plan's implementation mechanism(s) proven to be efficient in achieving the expected objectives?	Effectiveness of GEDI, the gender network and custodians in developing and implementing the Action Plan ILO's Decent Work Agenda is coherent with the strategic documents that established gender equality as one of ILO's cross-cutting objectives across the DWA and as a policy driver in the policy	Results of marker on gender equality and non-discrimination Meta-evaluation and evaluation synthesis UN-SWAP reporting results	Structured/semi-structured interviews Document review Online survey	Internal ILO stakeholders Representatives of tripartite constituents Representatives of partner-organizations

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
	outcomes of its P&B. Systematic inclusion of specific gender objectives in the Development Corporation projects and Decent Work Country Programmes and Country Programme Outcomes Changes in availability of sex- and age-disaggregated and gender-related data and analysis Extent to which country level offices are aware of the Action Plan and using it			
16. To what extent were the financial and human resources (management	% of financial and human resource targets set out in the Action Plan met	UN-SWAP reporting results	Structured/semi-structured interviews	Internal ILO stakeholders

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
arrangements), at global and country levels, adequate to achieve the expected results?	or exceeded requirements Increase in overall resource allocation to gender equality (GE) and gender-responsive (GR) actions during the period of review Growth in extrabudgetary development cooperation resources Stakeholder perception of funding adequacy and flexibility Stakeholder perception of human resource/gender architecture adequacy Changes in number of dedicated GEDI,	ILO financial reports/data Stakeholder interviews with GEDI and Finance	Document review	

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
	regional bureau and country office gender specialists and focal points (staff) in ILO by grade and type and duration of contract			
17. How well have the ILO's resource mobilization efforts supported its capacity to deliver the Action Plan 2022-2025?	Existence of implementation of a long-term resource mobilization strategy for GEEW Number of country offices with specific donor funding for targeted actions by year Reported influence of regular operational funding for gender mainstreaming relative to funding that supported targeted actions	ILO fundraising strategy documents Donor reports Budget documents	Document review Structured/semi-structured interviews	Internal ILO stakeholders

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
18. Were the right partnerships identified to promote and implement the Action Plan? To what extent do development partners' and funding partners' priorities offer opportunities for resource mobilization and partnerships to achieve the objectives of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality?	Number of multi-year funding agreements aligned with the Action Plan Extent to which strategic partnerships been identified and leveraged to advance gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women Number of donor-funded/ partner-funded projects aligned with Action Plan priorities	Donor agreements ILO fundraising strategy documents	Document review Structured/semi-structured interviews	Internal ILO stakeholders Representatives of tripartite constituents Representatives of partner-organizations
19. To what extent has the ILO as an institution enhanced its ability to support further work on gender equality in support of ILO staff, and also ILO constituents?	Demonstration that ILO leverages its mandate, its comparative advantages and identifies strategic partnerships needed to achieve its	UN-SWAP reporting results, particularly against capacity development indicator. Interviews with staff, partners and constituents	Structured/semi-structured interviews Document review Online survey	Internal ILO stakeholders Constituents UN partners

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
	gender-related goals Demonstration that ILO has strengthened its gender architecture and network since the inception of the Action Plan Demonstration that ILO has increased financial resources to deliver on its gender mandate.			
20. To what extent is the Action Plan 2022-2025 integrated in ILO's results framework in a manner that leads to sustainability of gender responsible results?	Integration of the Action Plan into the programme and budget in a manner that is durable and can be maintained or even scaled up	Programme & Budget documents (including reports to GB) Interviews with programme and budget staff	Structured/semi-structured interviews Document review	Internal ILO stakeholders

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
21. What factors have facilitated or hindered the long-term sustainability of the gender equality measures introduced through the Action Plan? What are the lost opportunities, lessons learnt and good practices for the ILO to consider for the next Annual Plan?	The existence/absence of internal and external factors, including: a. support for and prioritization from all stakeholders; b. support from and prioritization by senior management; c. funding to implement the Action Plan; d. adequate technical expertise; e. relevant and appropriate indicators and data collection methods; and, f. adequate accountability mechanisms g. effectiveness of GEDI, gender network and custodians	UN-SWAP reporting results Reports to the GB on Action Plan implementation Capacity assessments Results of engagement surveys Interviews with internal stakeholders and constituents	Structured/semi-structured interviews Document review	Internal ILO stakeholders Constituents

Question/Sub Question (if any)	Measure(s) or indicator(s)	Data sources	Data collection method	Stakeholders /Informants
	List of factors (with explanations) that have contributed positively or negatively to acceptance and implementation of the Action Plan			

Annex 5: Evaluation of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality (2022–25) Terms of Reference

Policy Outcome	ILO P&B 2022-2023 /Outcome 6: Gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment in the world of work ILO P&B 2024 – 2025/ Outcome 5: Gender equality and equality of treatment and opportunities for all
Contribution to SDGs	SDGs 5 and 8
Administrative Unit	Gender Equality Team within the Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch (GEDI)
Technical Backstopping Unit	Gender Equality Team within the Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch (GEDI)
Type of Evaluation	Independent
Period	2022-2025
Geographical Coverage	Global

Introduction

1. Gender equality and women's empowerment in the world of work are critical to achieving the ILO vision of decent work for all – especially in crisis response and recovery. Gender equality and women's empowerment in the world of work are key to achieving the vision of “Leave no one behind” in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to meeting all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). These include especially Goal 5 on “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”; Goal 8 on “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”; and Goal 10 on “Reduce inequality within and among countries”.

2. Gender equality, including equality of opportunity and treatment for women in labour markets, are at the heart of the ILO's mandate, beginning in 1919 with the ILO Constitution. The 2019 Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work adopted by the ILO's tripartite constituents, emphasizes the importance of achieving gender equality through a transformative agenda, among which includes equal opportunities, equal participation and equal treatment.

3. ILO efforts are based on and are part of global consensus about achieving equality between women and men. Some relevant international instruments include the United Nations Charter and Declaration of Human Rights, numerous UN General Assembly resolutions, the Economic and Social Council's Agreed Conclusions on gender mainstreaming, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), and the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (and its follow-up).

ILO's approach to gender equality

4. Gender equality and women's empowerment are reaffirmed in numerous international labour standards and in declarations, resolutions and ILO Governing Body decisions. Of particular relevance to gender equality are the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87), the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100), the Equal Remuneration Recommendation, 1951 (No. 90), the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Recommendation, 1958 (No. 111) as well as the Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 1981 (No. 155) and the Promotional Framework for Occupational Safety and Health Convention, 2006 (No. 187). In addition to these Fundamental Conventions are the and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156), the Workers with Family Responsibilities Recommendation, 1981 (No. 165), the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183), and the Maternity Protection Recommendation, 2000 (No. 191). More recent and relevant standards include the HIV and AIDS Recommendation, 2010 (No. 200); Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and the Violence and Harassment Recommendation, 2019 (No. 206).²

5. The gender equality and mainstreaming context in the ILO is set out in the ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming policy of 1999, which was updated in 2016. It states: “As an Organization dedicated to fundamental human rights and social justice, the ILO must take a leading role in international efforts to promote and realize gender equality”³. This policy requires that gender equality and mainstreaming is internalized across the ILO and its constituent departments and field operations, as well as being reflected in all of ILO's technical work, operational activities and support services.

6. The importance of gender equality in creating a fair, inclusive and secure future of work continues to be recognized in the ILO Strategic Plan 2022–25, and also provided for in the Programme and Budget (P&B) for 2022–23 the Programme and Budget (P&B) for 2024–25. These include strategic

policy outcomes including on gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment for all in the world of work, all of which were agreed by ILO constituents to help realize their relevant national and international commitments.

The forthcoming 2026 general discussion on advancing the transformative agenda for gender equality at work will provide an opportunity for constituents to elevate the focus on gender equality, take stock of measures that have proven to be effective, and would also serve as a timely discussion following the World Summit for Social Development and Beijing +30.

High-level evaluation of the ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts 2016- 2021

8. In 2021, a high-level independent evaluation of the ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts during 2016–21 was conducted including the ILO action plans for gender equality for the period 2016-2021. The final report included the following recommendation:

Strengthen the anchoring of, and support for, the ILO action plan for gender equality in the ILO's institutional processes, including a clear strategy-setting process to structure and guide the development of the action plan. This would include a more explicit strategic framework, dedicated strategic and management oversight and guidance, strengthened ILO leadership, on-call external advisory support as needed, and greater involvement of ILO departments and staff to increase bottom-up ownership and sustainability. (Recommendation 5, page 79).

9. The findings of the high-level evaluation, along with the Office's response were presented to the Governing Body in 2021. In its March 2022 discussion, the Governing Body requested the Director-General to:

(a) finalize and implement the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022–25, taking into account the guidance provided during the consideration of document GB.344/INS/10; and

(b) integrate its guidance in pursuing the ILO's mandate to achieve gender equality at work through a transformative agenda, taking into account the resolution and conclusions of the General Discussion Working Party on inequalities and the world of work, especially in implementing the ILO's Strategic Plan for 2022–25 and its two corresponding programmes and budgets.

10. In September 2022, the ILO also introduced its office-wide theory of change [towards a transformative agenda] for gender equality [in the world of work] that was anchored in the ILO's tripartite structure and normative mandate as part of its response to the high-level evaluation (recommendation 1). The Theory of Change “charts a path towards substantive gender equality and social justice, addressing the root causes of inequalities and systemic change, as well as a change in attitudes and mindsets. It reinforces a twin-track approach to mainstreaming gender equality throughout all programme and budget outcomes, while also ensuring that work is dedicated towards equal opportunities and treatment for women and men in the world of work” (GB 350/INS/4, paragraph 6). The Theory of Change towards a transformative agenda for gender equality in the world of work can be found here.

11. In March 2024, the Governing Body reviewed the implementation of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022–25 noting the areas where the Office was exceeding or meeting targets as well as the areas where improvements were required (GB.350/INS/4).

ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022-2025

12. The ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022-2025 operationalises the ILO gender equality policy. It identifies internal mainstreaming strategies for which progress is measured on staffing, substance and structure.

13. The ILO Action Plan is of the main tool to support the goals mentioned in the Strategic Plan and the P&B outcomes. The ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022–25 is linked to the SDGs to support a fair, inclusive and secure world of work. It also largely aligns with the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP), which aims to support implementation of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.

14. Strategies of this Action Plan – based on the cross-cutting and critical nature of gender equality for decent work – are informed by key policy documents, including the 2008 ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization, the 2009 International Labour Conference resolution on gender equality at the heart of decent work, the 2019 Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work, and the 2021 Global Call to Action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient.

15. The ultimate beneficiaries of this Action Plan are the ILO tripartite constituents. The direct audience of the Action Plan comprises of ILO staff and management at all levels, in headquarters and in regional and field offices, in order to better support the ILO tripartite constituents. Stakeholders include UN staff, development and implementing partners, academics and experts, and representatives of civil society.

16. Following the high-level evaluation and pursuant Governing Body discussions (referenced above), the Action Plan 2022–25 contains, among other new features, the following.

- Increased transparency in order to promote accountability;
- Adaptation and incorporation into the indicators of recommendations, based on the Office response, of the above-mentioned high-level independent evaluation of ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts during 2016–21.
- Increased capacity-building efforts, and more-empowered gender network members
- The 57 targets and indicators of the Action Plan 2018–21 are reduced to some 40 indicators in the Action Plan 2022–25.

17. The following features from the previous Action Plan remain in the Action Plan 2022–25.

- The ILO policy on gender equality and gender mainstreaming is included as an annex, along with all 2020–21 implementation results.
- Indicators are aligned with the elements of the UN Women-coordinated system-wide technical indicator notes (version 2.0) 9 for such action plans.
- CABINET-related indicators, which are instrumental in catalysing leadership on the action plan's support for the ILO gender-transformative agenda.

Alignment of the Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022-2025 with UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment (UN-SWAP).

18. Strategies in ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022-2025 also contribute to broader UN efforts to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment, including by largely aligning with the UN-SWAP. Indicators and corresponding targets in the Action Plan 2022–25 are grouped under the following UN-SWAP categories: results-based management; oversight; accountability; human and financial resources; capacity; and knowledge, communication, and coherence.

19. This action plan's results table with indicators and targets was largely aligned at the time of its drafting with the most up-to-date UN-SWAP 2.0 framework's technical requirements. However, "ILO-unique" indicators are also retained. Examples are targets for gender-transformative Decent Work Country Programmes, gender- transformative development cooperation, and training for the tripartite constituents.

20. In November 2023, discussions for upgrades to the UN-SWAP indicators (i.e. UN- SWAP 3.0) were held, and in 2024 the updated UN-SWAP 3.0 was introduced which integrates actions from the Secretary-General System-wide Gender Equality Acceleration Plan (GEAP) and elevating the accountability framework requirements on the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action and the SDG results for the run- up to 2030.

Rationale for the evaluation

21. In keeping with the long-standing expectation that evaluations of the action plan are needed to inform development of subsequent ones, at the end of 2025 an independent evaluation of the Action Plan 2022–25 is planned. (p. 17)

22. This independent evaluation will begin in May 2025, with the final report expected to be completed by August 2025. The timing of the evaluation is intended to also support the development of the next multiannual action plan.

Purpose of the evaluation

23. The Evaluation will serve the following main purposes:

- Provide an independent assessment of progress towards the goals of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022-2025, assessing performance as per the established indicators vis-à-vis the strategies and implementation modalities chosen and management arrangements;
- To assess the extent to which ILO's Policy Outcomes are gender mainstreamed (in accordance with the Action Plan)
- Provide strategic recommendations, highlight good practices and lessons learnt to inform the development and implementation of the next multiannual Action Plan (2026-2029);
- Serve as a basis for reflection and dialogue amongst key stakeholders, including ILO Senior Management, ILO staff, and custodians of the indicators, to ensure continued support and innovation for gender equality.

Scope of the evaluation

24. The evaluation will cover the duration of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022-2025. The evaluation will look at the institutional operational dimension of the Action Plan 2022-2025, and into the dimension of programmatic and policy outcomes at global, regional and national levels. Thematically, the evaluation will cover the area of gender equality.

25. The evaluation will use the project documents, past evaluation and audit reports, and other documentation as prepared for the implementation and monitoring of the Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022-2025.

26. The evaluation will be undertaken to include non-discrimination, disability inclusion, human rights, international labour standards, tripartism and social dialogue, and environmental sustainability as crosscutting themes throughout its deliverables and process. In this regard, it will be guided by ILO's evaluation guidance notes on gender, COVID-19, non-discrimination, disability inclusion, social dialogue and tripartism.

Clients of the evaluation

27. The main clients for the evaluation are:

- the International Labour Office, which is responsible for the implementation of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality, in particular, although not exclusively, ILO staff from the Gender Equality Team within the ILO's Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch (GEDI);
- ILO senior management, including the Director-General and members of the Senior Management Team at Headquarters and in the field (Regional Directors); and
- ILO constituents (government representatives, workers' and employers' organizations at country and global levels).

28. It should also serve as a source of information for:

- ILO staff working on both mainstream and gender-specific issues;
- ILO staff participating in gender-mainstreaming related networks (such as the ILO Gender Network);
- The ILO Staff Union; and
- the ILO Governing Body.

29. The evaluation might also be of interest to development partners and policymakers.

30. The Evaluation will serve as a key input for the development of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality (tentatively, 2026-2029).

Evaluation criteria and questions

31. Keeping in line with the OECD/DAC Principles and the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation, this final evaluation will be based on the six evaluation criteria (relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability) as defined in the ILO Policy Guidelines for Results-based Evaluation.

32. The questions will seek to address priority issues and concerns that will help to confirm and validate the objectives of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022- 2025, its strategy and achievements, being instrumental in developing and implementing the next multiannual action plan. When designing the questions, the evaluator(s) will consider availability and reliability of data, how the answers will be used and if the data are regarded as credible. Further evaluation questions will be proposed and refined by the evaluator during the inception report phase.

33. The proposed evaluation questions are available below. These questions could be subject to change during the evaluation's inception phase, as relevant.

OECD/DAC Criteria	Proposed evaluation questions
Relevance and Strategic Fit	1. To what extent was the Action Plan 2022-2025 useful for the ILO and strategic to advance its goals in relation to substantive gender equality? To what extent does the Action Plan support the ILO Strategy on gender equality (its impact and visibility)? 2. Is the Action Plan for Gender Equality relevant and conducive to ILO's programme and policy frameworks (such as the Strategic Plan 2022-2025, relevant ILC resolutions and their plans of action 3. To what extent is the Action Plan 2022-2025 relevant and contribute to (and vice versa):

	a. priorities, needs and capacities of constituents (i.e the ultimate beneficiaries) b. priorities, needs and capacities of staff (i.e the direct audience) 4. To what extent has the Theory of Change informed and contributed to the effective implementation of the Action Plan 2022-2025? 5. To what extent does the Action Plan 2022-2025 support the mainstreaming of gender equality in the design and implementation of development cooperation projects? 6. To what extent was the Action Plan 2022-2025 aligned with the UN SWAP? 7. Moving forward, what actions will the ILO need to prioritise to maximise the relevance of its next multiannual action plan?
Coherence	8. How well has the ILO coordinated the design and implementation of the Action Plan 2022-2025 across HQ departments and between HQ and the field including ITC-ILO, to ensure coherence, adaptable and timely implementation? Is there evidence of mutual leveraging and complementarity? 9. How appropriate and useful is the Action Plan 2022-2025 for i) “staffing, substance and management structure” (considered the enabling institutional mechanisms for gender equality in the Office both HQ and at field offices), and (ii) gender-responsive programmatic outcomes? 10. To what extent are there synergies between the Action Plan 2022- 2025 and other ILO priorities of standards, social dialogue and tripartism, disability inclusion and non-discrimination, environmental sustainability issues?
Effectiveness	11. To what extent did the Action Plan 2022-2025 achieve the expected results at ILO Headquarters and country offices? In which areas/components of the Action Plan 2022-2025 was the ILO able to make the most progress on (as per established targets) and in which ones the least, including the identification of bottlenecks? What are the most significant elements to-date that can be identified to explain this? 12. To what extent did the Action Plan 2022-2025 directly contribute to increasing the quality of results with ILO constituents? 13. To what extent has the Action Plan 2022-2025 contributed to major results/achievements related to gender equality in the ILO (for the period 2022-2025)? Which key success factors, mechanisms and circumstances can be identified? Which key inhibiting factors can be identified that could be addressed in the

	future? 14. To what extent does the Action Plan 2022-2025 serve as a strategic tool for increasing the outreach and credibility of ILO? 15. Does the current monitoring and reporting allow for tracking the progress and informing the implementation of the Action Plan? How effective were the indicators (baseline and targets) in these regards, and what could be done in the future to make them more useful for informing management decisions?
Efficiency	16. To what extent have the Action Plan's implementation mechanism(s) proven to be efficient in achieving the expected objectives? 17. To what extent were the financial and human resources (management arrangements), at global and country levels, adequate to achieve the expected results? 18. How well have the ILO's resource mobilization efforts supported its capacity to deliver the Action Plan 2022-2025? 19. Were the right partnerships identified to promote and implement the Action Plan? To what extent development partners' and funding partners' priorities offer opportunities for resource mobilization and partnerships to achieve the objectives of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality?
Sustainability and impact	20. To what extent has the ILO as an institution enhanced its ability to support further work on gender equality in support of ILO staff, and also ILO constituents? 21. To what extent is the Action Plan 2022-2025 integrated in ILOs results framework in a manner that leads to sustainability of gender responsible results? 22. What factors have facilitated or hindered the long-term sustainability of the gender equality measures introduced through the action plan? What are the lost opportunities, lessons learnt and good practices for the ILO to consider for the next Annual Plan? 23. Taking into account current results and potential impact, what areas and actions should the next action plan focus on – for long-term gender-responsive impact; for increased sustainability of its results?

34. These evaluation questions can be refined by the evaluation team at inception phase. In doing so, the evaluation team will consider availability and reliability of data, how the answers will be used and if the data are regarded as credible. Other evaluation questions can be proposed at inception phase too for the consideration of the Evaluation Office.

Approach and methodology and timeframe for evaluation

Approach

35. This independent evaluation will take a summative as well as formative approach. It will provide insights into the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and efficiency of the design and implementation of the ILO's Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022-2025 (summative). It will also be forward-looking and provide findings and lessons learned and emerging good practices for improved decision-making within the context of the next action plan (formative). A theory-based approach is recommended as the overarching framework for the evaluation to test and refine the causal logic of the ILO's Action Plan for Gender Equality, and its effects on individuals, programme outputs and policy outcomes. The (re)construction of a Theory of Change will be based on the understanding of the strategy gained from document reviews and interviews, and will be articulated in the inception report.

Methodology

36. The methodology will be based upon the ILO's evaluation policy and procedures, which adhere to international standards and best practices, articulated in the OECD/DAC Principles and the Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations System approved by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG). The evaluation will be participatory. Consultations will involve ILO staff at headquarters and in the field, senior management, the ILO Staff Union, ILO constituents, UN partners, and other stakeholders; to be done through quantitative and qualitative methods, mostly through electronic medium.

37. The ILO's tripartite constituents will be involved at all stages of the evaluation process. The ILO's tripartite character, its normative framework and social dialogue mandate will be considered as a cross-cutting concern throughout the methodology, deliverables and final report of the evaluation. The evaluation will integrate considerations around gender-equality and non-discrimination, especially in view of 11the SDG commitment of leaving no one behind. This implies involving men, women, and non-binary persons, as well as persons with disabilities in the consultation, evaluation analysis and evaluation team as possible.

38. Recommendations from the evaluation should be strongly linked to the findings of the evaluation and should provide clear guidance to stakeholders on how they can address them.

39. The methodology should ensure triangulation of information. The methodology should be selected for its ability to produce empirical evidence to meet the evaluation criteria, answer the evaluation questions and meet the objectives of the evaluation. It is strongly recommended that the methodology should allow stakeholders to assess the factors that led to success and outcomes. Different methodological tools may be required for this.

40. The specific methodology will be defined in consultation, and finalised in agreement, with the evaluation manager, and will be elaborated in detail in the inception report.

41. The ILO is looking into the possibility of establishing an evaluation reference group (ERG) for this evaluation, that will contribute to the relevance, credibility and utility of the independent evaluation by offering in an advisory capacity a range of viewpoints. The Evaluation Manager will liaise with the reference group, for them to provide comments to the different deliverables, and share with the evaluator. A separate ToR for the reference group will be prepared.

42. It is expected that the evaluation methodology will include the following:

a) Desk Review: Review of documents and its components materials, publications, data, among others.

b) Inception meeting with the Gender Equality Team within the Gender Equality Diversity and Inclusion Branch, and representatives of the ILO's Gender Equality Network to develop a common understanding on the technical and financial status of the project, the priority topics and questions for the final evaluation, the data collection process, the stakeholders to be consulted, and the outlines of the inception report and the final evaluation report. This meeting will be online.

c) Submission of an Inception Report with the final methodology and Work Plan. The Inception Report and the Work Plan will be subject to approval by the Evaluation Manager, GEDI's Evaluation Focal Point, and the ILO Evaluation Office. The report will indicate the steps/phases and dates of the process in which the evaluation will take place; the inception report should include interview guides and templates.

d) Data collection via online surveys and structured/semi-structured interviews (through virtual means) that reflects diversity and representation within the Office (technical unit, regions and country situations) as well as of the constituents, relevant partners and institutions that have been involved in the design, approval and/or implementation of the Action Plan, as well as other key stakeholders. The list of participants in the data collection will be drawn up by the GEDI team, in consultation with the evaluation manager, and the evaluator.

e) Draft evaluation report will be submitted to the evaluation manager, who will share it with the ILO, and key stakeholders for their feedback and clarifications (as required). The consolidated feedback will be submitted to the evaluator for consideration.

f) Participatory workshop where the evaluator will present the preliminary findings, validate any data gaps, discuss the lessons learnt and identify key recommendations with the key stakeholders of the project. The workshop with the stakeholders and reference group can take place online, simultaneous to the submission and review of the draft evaluation report. The workshop will be technically organized by the evaluator (i.e. setting the agenda for the discussions), in consultation with the evaluation manager, and with the logistic support of the GEDI team.

g) Final report will be submitted to the evaluation manager after the evaluator has addressed, as appropriate, the comments received to the draft report. The evaluation report will be shared with the key stakeholders, and uploaded in the EVAL public repository of evaluation reports.

Evaluation Timeframe

Tasks	Person responsible	# proposed working days required
1. evaluator(s) briefed on ILO evaluation policy and the project	Evaluation manager	0.5
2. Inception meeting	Evaluation manager, evaluation team, GEDI team	0.5
3. Submission of the draft inception report	Evaluator	5
4. Circulate draft report for feedback and share consolidated feedback to the evaluator	Evaluation manager	
5. revision, finalization and approval of inception report	Evaluator, evaluation manager	2
6. Fieldwork/Data collection	Evaluator, GEDI team	16

7. Presentation of initial findings from the evaluation to evaluation reference group and GEDI team	Evaluator, GEDI team, ERG, Evaluation manager	1
8. Submit draft report with findings, recommendation (with annexes)	Evaluator	7
9. Stakeholders' workshop	Evaluator, GEDI team, ERG, Evaluation manager	1
9. Circulate draft report for feedback and share consolidate feedback to the evaluator	Evaluation manager	0
10. Submit final evaluation report (with annexes) and summary	Evaluator	4
11. Review and approves the final report	Evaluation manager/EVAL	n/a
12. ILO EVAL approves the final report	EVAL	n/a
13. Final report is uploaded on iEVAL and shared with stakeholders	EVAL, GEDIE team	
Total no. of working days		37

Main evaluation outputs

43. The evaluation should comprise the following deliverables, which must be presented in English and submitted to the Evaluation Manager in electronic version compatible with Word for Windows:

- a) Inception report
- b) Draft evaluation report
- c) Final evaluation report
- d) Evaluation Summary
- e) Presentation materials for meetings
- a) Inception report

44. The inception report will be prepared following a review of the available documents and an initial discussion with the key stakeholders. The report should adhere to the ILO/EVAL Checklist 'Writing the Inception Report' (checklist 4.8).

45. The inception report should:

- Describe the conceptual framework that will be used to undertake the evaluation;
- Elaborate the methodology and questions to be used in the evaluation, based on what has been proposed in the terms of reference, with any changes as required;
- Set out in some detail the data required to answer the evaluation questions, data sources by specific evaluation questions, data collection methods, sampling and selection criteria of respondents for interviews (the instruments need to make provision for the triangulation of data wherever possible)
- Detail the work plan for the evaluation, indicating the phases in the evaluation, their key deliverables and milestones;
- Identify key stakeholders to be interviewed, the criteria for their selection (to keep a

- gender balance to the extent possible), and the tools to be used for interviews and
- discussions; and
- Provide an outline for the final evaluation report.

46. The draft inception report will be circulated with the ILO stakeholders for their feedback. The final inception report will incorporate and address any comments received from ILO, and other stakeholders involved in the review of the inception report.

47. The inception report should be approved by the evaluation manager before the evaluator proceeds with the field work and data collection.

48. The evaluation report must be prepared as per the ILO/EVAL Checklist 'Preparing the Evaluation Report' (checklist 4.2). In particular, the evaluation report must include future-looking, practical and specific recommendations, including the identification of the project approaches, materials, tools, products and intervention models that could potentially be replicated or scaled.

- Cover page with key project and evaluation data (please use checklist 4.3; the cover page should use the ILO cover page template)
- Executive summary (which contains the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations; it should follow the guidance provided)
- Acronyms and abbreviations
- Context and description of the project including reported key reported results
- Methodology of the evaluation (including limitations and ethical considerations)
- Findings, which respond to the all the evaluation questions
- Key results achieved by the project as per its objectives (including both expected and unexpected results). A table showing output and outcome level results through indicators and targets planned and achieved and comments on each, should be included.
- Lessons learnt and good practices (using the templates provided: template 4.1 for lessons learnt and template 4.2 for good practices)
- Clear set of conclusions, recommendations and possible future directions.
- Recommendations should clearly indicate the stakeholders to whom the recommendations are addressed.
- Annexes should include the TOR, the questionnaires, the interview details of the stakeholders (dates, place, and organisation affiliation), and timeline of the consultations (interviews/FGD schedules) with the beneficiaries, bibliography, evaluation matrix

49. The draft evaluation report will be reviewed by the evaluation manager, and circulated internally by the evaluation manager for review and feedback from ILO key stakeholders.

Final Evaluation Report

50. The final evaluation report will be submitted after the evaluator has addressed the feedback received from the reference group, and the comments received from the internal review of the draft evaluation report.

51. The final report, excluding annexes but including the executive summary (as per template provided in ILO Policy Guidelines for Evaluation) should not exceed 40 pages.

52. The quality of the report will be determined based on quality standards defined by the ILO Evaluation Office. The report should include a cover page. The final version is subjected to final approval by EVAL.

Evaluation Summary

53. A summary of the final evaluation report will be sent following the approval of the final report. The summary will be drawn on the executive summary, the findings, and the recommendations of the final evaluation report. The summary should adhere to ILO/EVAL checklist “preparing the evaluation report summary” (checklist 4.4 and utilise the ILO template)

Presentation materials

54. For the stakeholder workshops and presentation of findings, the evaluator will develop presentations (.pptx format) to summarise and share at the meetings.

Consultants should please note:

55. All the deliverables will be in English (unless specified otherwise), utilising the templates provided by ILO/EVAL prepared for this purpose. The quality of the reports will be assessed against the relevant ILO/EVAL guidelines.

56. All drafts and final outputs, including supporting documents, analytical reports and raw data should be provided in electronic version compatible for Word for Windows. All intellectual property rights arising from the execution of these Terms of Reference are assigned to the ILO. ILO will disseminate the final evaluation report to the project’s donor and other relevant internal and external stakeholders. Use of the data for publication and other presentation will only be made with prior agreement of the ILO. Key stakeholders will be able to make appropriate use of the evaluation report in line with the original purpose and with appropriate acknowledgement.

Management arrangements

57. The evaluation will be funded from the budget of the ILO’s Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch but managed by the ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL). The funds will cover the daily fees of the evaluator, any evaluation missions to Geneva (if applicable), and any expenses related to communication and data collection. The evaluation management arrangements are as follows:

58. Evaluation Manager: A designated ILO staff who has no prior involvement in the Action Plan will manage this independent evaluation with oversight and in close collaboration with the ILO’s GEDI Evaluation Focal Point and the ILO Evaluation Office. The ILO Evaluation Office will review and sign off on all deliverables.

59. The evaluation manager is the main point of contact for the evaluation team on all technical and methodological matters related to the evaluation. In addition, the evaluation manager is responsible for the following tasks:

- Prepare the evaluation TOR with inputs from key stakeholders; selecting and contracting an independent evaluator in coordination with ILO EVAL
- Brief the evaluator on ILO evaluation policies and processes; introduce them to the GEDI team.
- Review the evaluation criteria, questions and methodology with the evaluator and liaise with concerned stakeholders as necessary
- Monitor the implementation of the evaluation methodology, as appropriate and in such a way as to minimize bias in the evaluation findings
- Review the draft deliverables and provide initial comments
- Circulate the draft deliverables to all relevant stakeholders for their comments; forward the consolidated comments to the evaluator for their action

- Ensure that the final version of the deliverables addresses the stakeholders' comments (or an explanation why any has not been addressed) and meets ILO requirements
- Liaise with the GEDI team whenever their engagement is required to fulfil the requirements above
- Liaise with ILO EVAL on issues regarding the management of the evaluation.

60. Evaluator(s): The Evaluation will be conducted by one or possibly more evaluators.

61. The evaluator(s) will report to the Evaluation Manager and be responsible for the timely submission of deliverables, including the final evaluation report, which should comply with ILO's Evaluation Policy Guidelines and related checklists and templates.

62. The evaluator(s) will be selected through a competitive process as per the criteria identified in the section below. The cost of the External Collaboration Contract for the Evaluation consultant and, if applicable, the Service contract will be in accordance with ILO rules and regulations. If the evaluation is conducted by more than one evaluator through an External Collaboration Contract, each team member will get an individual contract with the ILO. The fees for one or more evaluators will be for a total of 37 days.

63. The evaluator(s) will be responsible for the following:

- Design and implement the evaluation using an approach agreed with ILO
- Draft and finalise the evaluation deliverables in accordance with the ILO's specifications and timeline
- Report to the evaluation manager, keep her apprised of all phases of the evaluation and consult with her in the preparation and finalisation of the deliverables
- Facilitate contact with the stakeholders; facilitate contact, liaise with, and seek clarifications from, the GEDI team, the ILO (including Headquarters, and country teams), other stakeholders, as required, to ensure the satisfactory delivery of the deliverables
- Make themselves available, if required, to take part in briefings and discussions, online or, if judged necessary, at the ILO Geneva Office or other venue, on dates to be agreed, in line with the work outlined in these TOR
- Develop the agenda of the stakeholder participatory group workshop; present the preliminary findings of the evaluation.
- Adhere to ILO's Code of Conduct for Evaluators at all times, and report any violation by team members to the evaluation manager.

64. The evaluator should note that all data and information received from the ILO for the purpose of this evaluation will be treated confidentially and are only to be used in connection with the execution of these TOR.

65. GEDI Team: The ILO GEDI Branch will be responsible for administrative contractual arrangements with the evaluator and provide any logistical and other assistance as may be required. The Gender Equality Team within GEDI will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Provide administrative assistance to the evaluation (issuing and administering contracts), provide feedback on TORs.
- Provide all relevant programme documents, materials and information to the evaluator and ensuring that all the documentation is up-to-date and easily accessible;
- Prepare a comprehensive list of recommended interviewees, providing their contact details, and facilitating introductions (as required)
- Support the coordination of the logistical arrangements of a possible mission to Geneva;

- Be interviewed and provide inputs as requested by the evaluator during the evaluation process;
- Review and provide comments on draft evaluation reports, as requested;
- Organize and participate in stakeholder consultations, other relevant briefings and discussions as appropriate; and
- Provide other logistical and administrative support to the evaluator(s) as may be required.

Desired profile of evaluator(s)

66. The evaluator will have:

- Contextual knowledge of the UN system in general and the ILO specifically;
- At least 7 years' experience in evaluating policies, programmes and projects at the international level related to gender equality, or comparative experience;
- Experience in conducting evaluations for UN organizations, including, ideally, strategy and programme evaluations across countries;
- Demonstrated knowledge of gender equality;
- Advanced understanding of ILO cross-cutting issues (international labour standards, social dialogue and tripartism, gender equality, disability inclusion, and non-discrimination, environmental sustainability);
- Excellent analytical and communication skills;
- Demonstrated ability to deliver quality results within strict deadlines;
- Advanced university degree in social sciences or related graduate qualifications;
- Expertise in qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods; experience of utilising online methodologies of data collection would be an asset.
- Familiarity with the ILO's procedures and tripartite structure, normative and social dialogue mandate, would be a significant advantage;
- Understanding of the UN system, the UN evaluation norms and standards is desirable.

67. The evaluator(s) must have no previous involvement in the delivery of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2022-2025.

Timeline, payment schedule and work plan

68. The evaluator(s) will be identified and recruited in May 2025, with an expected starting date for the evaluation in May 2025. It is envisaged that a final report will be submitted to the GEDI team mid-August 2025. It is anticipated that the evaluation assignment will require a total of 37 work days.

69. A tentative timeline for the evaluation is proposed as follows:

1. Drafting and validating the final evaluation terms of reference (TORs): This will be managed by an evaluation manager with no relation to the project. The draft TORs will be shared with the ILO Gender Equality Team from Gender Equality Diversity and Inclusion Branch for suggestions and inputs.
2. Call for proposals: March-April 2025. The call will be public, and widely advertised through relevant networks. The evaluator will be selected to conduct the evaluation in consultation with and under the supervision of the ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL). Below is a tentative timeline (subject to change) Recruitment of the evaluator May 2025.
3. Launch of evaluation: mid-May 2025
 - a. Submission of inception report: 29 May 2025
 - b. Presentation of initial findings: 16 June 2025
 - c. Submission of draft evaluation report: 21 July 2025

- d. Presentation of the draft report to the ILO team and key stakeholders: around 21 July 2025
- e. Submission of comments to the final report from the ILO team and the key stakeholders: 25 July 2025
- f. Submission of final evaluation report: 15 August 2025

4. Completion of the evaluation: mid-August 2025

Payment schedule:

- a) Submission of an inception report to the ILO by 29 May 2025 (20% installment)
- b) Submission of a draft report to the ILO by 21 July 2025 (30% installment)
- c) Submission of a final draft to the ILO, incorporating ILO feedback by 15 August (50% installment)

Ethical considerations

70. The evaluation will strictly comply with UN standards for evaluations as specified in the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation and be guided by the ILO Evaluation Policy. A copy of the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation in the UN system is attached to these terms of reference and the evaluators are expected to familiarise themselves with, and adhere to, the UNEG Code of Conduct for Evaluation.

71. The consultant should adhere to the highest level of technical and ethical standards. They should fulfil the criteria of professionalism, impartiality and credibility. They should not have any links to project management, nor any conflict of interest that would interfere with the independence of the evaluation. The evaluators are expected to disclose any possible conflicts of interest that could interfere with the independence of the evaluation. The evaluator will also commit to adhere to the ILO Code of Conduct.

72. The evaluation will observe confidentiality with regard to sensitive information and feedback obtained through individual and group interviews. The evaluation and the evaluator(s) will use respectful language and behaviour when communicating with, and about, persons with disabilities.