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

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► Abbreviations

BF	Better Factories
BGMEA	Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BKMEA	Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association
BMZ	Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development)
BW	Better Work
CAMFEBA	Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations
CBA	Collective Bargaining Agreement
CPTPP	Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership
CTA	Chief Technical Advisor
DG INTPA	Directorate-General for International Partnerships
DIFE	Department of Inspection for Factories and Establishments (Bangladesh)
DWCP	Decent Work Country programme
EA	Enterprise Advisor
EU	European Union
EVFTA	European Union–Vietnam Free Trade Agreement
FY	Fiscal Year
GEAR	Gender Equality and Returns
GSP	Generalised Scheme of Preferences
GTEX/MENATEX	Global Textiles and Clothing programme / Middle East and North Africa Textiles and Clothing programme
HCSD	High Council on Social Dialogue
HR	Human Resources
HQ	Headquarters
IFC	International Finance Corporation
ILERA	International Labour and Employment Relations Association
ILO	International Labour Organisation

ILO-SDIR	Promoting Social Dialogue and Harmonious Industrial Relations in the Bangladesh Ready-Made Garment Industry
ILS	International Labour Standards
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
LDR	labour dispute resolution
LERA	Labour and Employment Relations Association
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoL	Ministry of Labour
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour - Invalids and Social Affairs
MoM	Ministry of Manpower
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NCCWE	National Coordination Committee for Workers Education
NTC	National Tripartite Committee (Bangladesh)
NTPA	National Tripartite Plan of Action (Bangladesh)
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
P&B	Programme and Budget
PAC	Programme Advisory Committee
PICC	Performance Improvement Consultative Committees
POSH	Prevention of Sexual Harassment (programme)
PPE	Personal protective equipment
RBM	Results-Based Management
RMG	Ready-Made Garment
RMPG II	Improving Working Conditions in the Ready-Made Garment Sector Phase II (programme, Bangladesh)
SASE	Society for the Advancement of Socio-Economics
SC	Safety Committee

SCORE	Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (programme, Ethiopia)
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SLAIRIE	Strengthening Labour Relations and their Institutions in Egypt
SLCP	Social & Labor Convergence Program
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SNEC	Supreme National Economic Council
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SST	Supervisory Skills Training
ToT	Training of Trainers
TU	Trade Union
UN	United Nations
US	United States
USD	United States Dollar
USDOL	United States Department of Labour
VCCI	Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry
WHO	World Health Organization

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This report is prepared for the independent ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL) by a team of independent evaluation consultants from PPMI Group, who had no prior association with the ILO Better Work programme. The evaluation consultants included Loes van der Graaf, Rimantas Dumcius, Radvilė Bankauskaitė, Tomas Armalys, and Lea Roswell. The project was also supported by national consultants in eight of the programme countries, namely Noor Dajani (Jordan), Bui the Dung (Vietnam), Sophorn Tous (Cambodia), Shahinoor Rahman (Bangladesh), Maria Epik Pranasari (Indonesia), Adel Ahmed (Egypt), Jonse Bonka (Ethiopia) and Melissa Solis Moises (Nicaragua).

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► Executive summary

Quick Facts

Countries: *Cambodia, Jordan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Nicaragua, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Egypt, and a less in-depth evaluation of Haiti*

Final Evaluation: *21 November 2022*

Evaluation Mode: *Independent*

Administrative Office: *Better Work*

Technical Office: *Better Work*

Evaluation Manager: *Magali Bonne-Moreau*

Evaluation Consultant(s): *PPMI Group: Loes van der Graaf, Rimantas Dumcius, Radvilė Bankauskaitė, Tomas Armalys, Lea Roswell*

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Donor(s) & Budget: *United States Department of Labour, Australia, Denmark, European Commission, Germany, The Netherlands and Switzerland – USD 35 million*

Keywords: *Capacity building, clothing industry, conditions of employment, decent work, freedom of association, gender equality, global supply/value chains, labour inspection, labour standards, occupational safety and health, productivity, social dialogue, workers' rights, working conditions.*

Background & Context

Summary of the project purpose, logic and structure

Better Work (BW) is a long-term programme to improve working conditions in the garment sector, which commenced in 2001 with Better Factories in Cambodia. During Phase IV (2017-2022), the BW programme is active in 12 countries – Cambodia, Jordan, Vietnam, Haiti, Indonesia, Nicaragua, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Egypt, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Madagascar.

The aim of the programme is to improve working conditions in factories by ensuring adherence to International Labour Standards and national labour law, including on working time and wage regulations, occupational health and safety (OSH) standards, gender equality in the workplace and strengthening social dialogue systems. Similarly, the project also seeks to address the needs of factory owners and managers through improving productivity and profitability. At a wider level, BW seeks to strengthen institutions and improve practices of global-level buyers and brands. To that end, it supports governments and constituents on policy improvements, influences brands and buyers and develops understanding of constituents regarding supply chain dynamics.

To achieve these goals, BW interventions take place at factory, sectoral, national and global levels:

At the **factory** level, BW assesses compliance with national and international labour standards, provides advisory and training services for managers and workers to support continuous improvements through equal representation and dialogue.

At the **sectoral** level, BW collaborates with global brands, retailers and manufacturers to improve business and purchasing practices which enable better working conditions across supply chains. Better Work also uses its experience in promoting effective social dialogue at the factory level to catalyse sound and productive labour relations at the sectoral level by working with employers' and workers' organisations to strengthen their capacity on compliance and social dialogue.

At the **national** level, BW supports public institutions, by sharing best practices with labour inspectorates and influencing policymaking to create an enabling environment for decent work and improved business competitiveness.

At the **global level**, BW aims to influence the global policy dialogue on decent work, by providing credible data and evidence to influencers and policymakers concerned with decent work in global supply chains.

In pursuit of these goals, the programme relies on different streams of funding. It has a unique cost recovery approach that enables BW to receive funds from factories and buyers which seek to participate in BW. The remaining funds come from donors such as the United States (USDOL), Switzerland (State Secretariat of Economic Affairs), the EC (DG INTPA), Australia (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade), Denmark (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Germany (Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development) and the Netherlands (Ministry of Foreign Affairs); from private sector grants, as well as contributions from host country governments in Jordan, Cambodia and Pakistan.

Purpose, scope, time frame and clients of the evaluation

As Phase IV of Better Work comes to an end in 2022, Better Work's framework for strategic use of evaluations envisions a comprehensive evaluation of the achievements and challenges that the programme witnessed during its implementation. To that end, this evaluation has a twofold purpose. For the purpose of accountability, the evaluation provides an overview of the main achievements and challenges of Phase IV. From a formative perspective, the evaluation provides recommendations for the ILO and Better Work staff to improve the programme and increase the potential of its impact in Phase V.

This evaluation is a cluster evaluation with a geographical scope spanning 9 out of 12 countries where the programme is active, namely Cambodia, Jordan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Nicaragua, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, and Egypt. While Haiti is also included as an area of focus, less data collection has taken place here as another evaluation of BW Haiti is currently ongoing. In addition, the evaluation reviews the work done and results at the global level. Alongside the geographical dimension, the evaluation features cross-national case studies that would allow for a deeper look at the programme's capacity to account for and promote gender equality, occupational safety and health, social dialogue, COVID-19 and sustainability.

Better Work staff are the primary client and user of the evaluation as it will inform the design of their future work. As a programme of the ILO, various ILO departments may also be interested to learn how Better Work has contributed to their fields of expertise. Similarly, as programme partner, the IFC can use this evaluation for internal accountability and lessons learnt for the next phase. Lastly, the evaluation will inform donors, partners, buyers and constituents on the progress made by BW during Phase IV, the main challenges faced, and the recommendations for a way forward.

Methodology of evaluation

The evaluation used qualitative and quantitative data collection methods to ensure that information provided in the following report is accurate while also providing staff, constituents, partners and donors of the programme the opportunity to voice their perceptions and experiences regarding the programme.

Desk research initially sought to identify information gaps and clarify the evaluation's objectives. The in-depth research phase aimed to provide a starting point for primary data collection as well as answer the evaluation questions. In both cases the desk research efforts ensured that stakeholder fatigue is reduced, and that the same questions are not posed to stakeholders, given the recent implementation of several BW evaluations.

Interviews took place in two stages. In the Inception Stage, the research team conducted 13 interviews with BW staff at global and country levels to better understand the evaluation context and ILO/BW's expectations. During the main data collection phase, the evaluation team conducted 44 interviews with global and national BW staff and 12 interviews with key global-level stakeholders (donors, partners, and buyers). Altogether 46 interviews were carried out in 8 countries (constituents, and beneficiaries, excluding Haiti as an evaluation there is ongoing).

The evaluation team developed **five case studies** to gather more in-depth information on specific topics of interest to the recipients of this evaluation. The topics included i) gender equality, ii) COVID-19, iii) Occupational Health and Safety, iv) Social dialogue, and v) Sustainability.

A **survey** gathered comparative data among a large number of stakeholders. The survey was translated into the main national languages in each country (except Haiti, due to the ongoing evaluation) and received 100 responses allowing to support evaluation findings and triangulate needed information (75 from BW/ILO staff and 25 from stakeholders).

Despite the **rigorous methodology** employed, the evaluation faced **certain limitations**:

- **Subjectiveness of information** – data collection through interviews and surveys helps inform the perspectives and beliefs of different stakeholders, yet this can introduce biases, requiring triangulation of information.
- **Limited comparability of information** – existing evaluations did not always follow the same approach and used different data collection methods. While this can create issues with comparability, the evaluation team observed trends holistically and avoided close comparison of country-level achievements.
- **Stakeholder interview and survey fatigue** – the ongoing consultations with stakeholders for evaluations and preparations for the next phase mean that some were unwilling to participate in consultations. To ensure that

stakeholders were not overburdened, the evaluation team carefully considered which consultations were necessary and worked on preventing duplication of data collection efforts.

Main Findings & Conclusions

Relevance

Data show that in general constituents find BW relevant when it comes to addressing their needs. Governments noted that BW helped them tackle key issues regarding working conditions and non-compliance in the garment sector. Similarly, employer representatives have noted that given the weak presence of social dialogue in their countries, the presence of BW helped improve social dialogue mechanisms and strengthened the ability of trade unions to represent their members. Nevertheless, some improvements could be made to enhance relevance through clearer articulation of how the programme works as well as looking for opportunities to further the involvement of constituent organisations.

The design and services provided by BW also ensured a high level of relevance for beneficiaries. The programme's focus on improving compliance with national standards, gender equality, social dialogue and working conditions showed responsiveness to workers' needs. Similarly, in the case of factory owners, the focus of BW on ensuring compliance with national labour standards and increasing productivity allows companies to attract buyers and improve sales. In the case of factory management, their capacity building further cements the relevance of the programme. However, even with high relevance some challenges arose especially when it came to implementing compliance measures.

The relevance of the programme is also highlighted by its adaptability to not only the country contexts of where the programme operates but also to the impact and challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic. Phase IV of the programme allowed for increased liberty of country teams in adjusting their operations to the specific country context. This strengthened BW's capacity to bring together different actors in the country and convene them around important cross-cutting issues in the garment sector such as worker well-being and gender equality. Even during the pandemic, country programmes managed to adjust their priorities and provide a greater focus on health and safety related issues.

Coherence

Evidence shows that BW was able to ensure coherence with the organisational strategies of the ILO and the IFC. BW priorities aligned with the ILO's Programme and Budget (P&B) 2016-2017, 2018-2019, and 2020-2021. In the case of the IFC, alignment with BW was established due to a common focus on increased opportunities for decent jobs, formalisation of the informal economy and increasing workplace compliance. Flexibility was given to the country programmes to tailor the goals to their country's needs, which contributed to small divergences between country priorities and global priorities.

The programme contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 1, SDG 5 and SDG 8. BW's focus on improving working conditions, gender equality and decent working conditions in the workplace, and compliance with labour laws, is fully in line with SDGs 1, 5 and 8.

BW manages to position itself as an actor capable of providing unique value added to the work of other organisations. According to ILO and BW staff, as well as various stakeholders, the programme tends to complement the work of other organisations, a perception that is supported by survey results pointing to the alignment of the programme with the activities of national governments, worker and employer organisations.

The coherence with cross-cutting outputs tends to be positive, yet some aspects still need additional attention or deeper integration into programme priorities. BW paid detailed attention to some of the cross-cutting factors such as gender inequality and ensuring the promotion of social dialogue at factory level. However, inclusion of individuals with disabilities and environmental concerns were less integrated in the programme design and activities. Similarly, the ratification and implementation of international labour standards could have been more integrated within the programme.

Effectiveness

Evidence shows that BW managed to realise most outputs according to schedule at the global and country level despite some external challenges such as COVID-19. **The programme also achieved its outputs regarding ILO's cross-cutting themes on gender equality and social dialogue**, while disability and environmental concerns were not part of Better Work's stage IV strategy and hence received relatively little attention.

BW successfully achieved its expected outcomes even in the presence of certain challenges. Data show that the outputs of BW resulted in improved capacities and skills of factory workers, managers and staff representing national institutions. The programme also contributed to higher compliance, improved working conditions and increased

competitiveness in participating factories. Moreover, the programme achieved significant progress in improving factory-level social dialogue and empowerment of workers. BW also managed to improve buyer practices and support progress towards national-level and global outcomes. These outcomes and the extent to which they were achieved took place in at times difficult contexts given the global pandemic and complicated political situations in certain countries where BW operates.

BW achieved the expected outputs regarding COVID-19-specific activities, and initial findings show that the outputs were helpful in creating awareness on the pandemic and its risks.

Efficiency

BW efficiently utilised its available resources, especially through its cost recovery system. BW has been able to use financial and human resources effectively and ensure that the time made available is sufficient to create lasting change and societal impact. The pandemic accelerated the use of digital tools, that could not only make BW's activities more efficient, but also support sustainability and capacity building efforts (e.g. virtual assessments, to oversee the visit by the labour inspection).

The management of BW at global and country levels as well as coordination between global and country offices are seen as efficient allowing to support the achievement of targets and providing for regular exchanges of information. However, it was noted that room for improvement still exists in terms of improving communication between country- and global-level BW staff. In addition, the ability of BW to rely on other ILO units and departments, technical staff and ongoing projects differs by country and thematic area.

Impact

Desk review of Better Work's independent research and impact studies, interviews and survey data showed multiple areas where the programme had a positive impact across programme countries. Most notably the biggest impact was observed in the improvement of working conditions, changed behaviours and practices in factories, and enhanced productivity and competitiveness. Impact was also visible in terms of improvements in gender equality. Impact was facilitated by the involvement of buyers, trade agreement incentives and the commitment of stakeholders (related to the reputation of ILO and BW).

Various barriers to impact were found. Difficult political contexts in some countries where BW operates, the pandemic, lack of enforcement of compliance, and gaps in scalability of the programme hinder the long-term impact.

Sustainability

In Phase IV, BW introduced sustainability guidelines and increased attention to sustainability at the country level. Certain factors such as interest and commitment of constituents as well as the unique funding model of the programme, offer opportunities for sustainability.

However, the evaluation shows that stakeholders currently have limited capacity and ownership to embed the BW activities into national systems. Survey respondents believe that at least 5 years are needed for any country to be ready for BW to phase out. The programme's predominant focus on factory-level activities, limited focus on the capacity of stakeholders, and lack of clear sustainability strategies in the programme's design hinder BW's sustainability.

Conclusions

The BW programme has many positive aspects according to the gathered data as well stakeholder and constituent feedback. The programme plays an **important and valuable role** in the garment sector by bringing together constituents and stakeholders and improving various aspects related to the garment sector. Similarly, the design of the programme which relies to a large extent on fees from factories and buyers provides the **important added benefit of cost recovery**, which enhances factory and buyer engagement, efficiency, and opportunities for sustainability. The BW programme has achieved visible **success in achieving expected outputs and outcomes, particularly regarding gender equality, while also creating signs of impact.** Achievements were not as strong, however, in other cross-cutting areas. It must also be noted that even in challenging contexts such as that of the COVID-19 pandemic, the staff managed to adapt their activities to address changing needs.

Despite these successes, certain **challenges persist, mainly in the realm of sustainability.** This is due to the **lack of focus on capacity building of constituents**, as the programme focused on other aspects such as assessment and advisory services over the years. This makes stakeholders dependent on BW's presence as they lack the needed capacities and ownership of the project. Another challenge relates to the **focus of BW on factory services, meaning that achievements at factory level did not always translate into national-level policies.** The **insufficient links**

between the BW programme and the work of other ILO departments also undermined sustainability and efficiency gains.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Reallocate (some of the) resources from implementation of factory-level services to capacity building of constituents and stakeholders with the aim of enabling them to take over these activities. Currently, stakeholders rely on BW for assessment and advice, limiting the sustainability and impact beyond participating factories. Having trained and trusted institutions that can continue the work of BW would enable a smooth transition of ownership from BW to national governments and contribute to spillover effects in other sectors.

Addressed to:	Priority:	Resource:	Timing:
Better Work staff at global and national level	High	Medium (reallocation)	Short term

Recommendation 2: Enhance the alignment and coordination between Better Work and the ILO as a whole. There are multiple benefits to be gained from increased cooperation, in particular with ILO experts on social dialogue and tripartism; these are crucial to expand the impact of Better Work in the participating countries.

Addressed to:	Priority:	Resource:	Timing:
Better Work Global and country staff, as well as ILO country teams	Medium	Low	Medium term

Recommendation 3: Increase attention to sustainability of the programme, within its design, both in terms of its current results and in terms of continuation of its activities. The current evaluation did not find significant evidence that country-level stakeholders possess the capacity, ownership, resources, and willingness to take over factory services themselves were BW to exit the country.

Addressed to:	Priority:	Resource:	Timing:
Better Work Global and country staff	High	Medium	Short and medium term

Recommendation 4: Continue enhancing the engagement of buyers in the BW programme, especially in terms of their capacity building and assessment of working conditions in factories outside the scope of BW. Evidence shows that buyers contribute to enhanced compliance of factories and enable impact spillover. Moreover, buyers also affect factory stability during times of crisis, highlighting their role in supporting factory resilience.

Addressed to:	Priority:	Resource:	Timing:
Better Work Global staff and relevant ILO units	Medium	Medium	Medium term

Recommendation 5: Assess the opportunities provided by recent technological development and invest in updating BW technological resources and technological skills of staff. The pandemic revealed potential for efficiency gains by using virtual tools in management and project implementation. Furthermore, this would create opportunities to support national stakeholders as they start taking over factory assessments.

Addressed to:	Priority:	Resource:	Timing:

Better Work staff	Medium	Medium / high	Medium term
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Recommendation 6: Explore the further integration of cross-cutting concerns in the design, implementation and monitoring of BW. Some interviewees highlight the growing interest of BW stakeholders in environmental sustainability. The work on gender has been highly successful, but various gaps and challenges still remain to be addressed further and deeper. Opportunities to include persons with disabilities in the scope of BW can be explored further.

Addressed to:	Priority:	Resource:	Timing:
Better Work Global and national staff	Medium	Medium	Medium / long term

Good practices

The clear, evidence-based targeted approach to gender equality, through the Global Gender Strategy, gender-based monitoring and specific activities targeting female workers and women in management, has significantly enhanced the impact of the programme on women. The global strategy included specific focus areas for the global and country BW teams to address, as well as indicators against which progress on gender equality could be measured.

Increased use of virtual tools in the BW programme can lead to efficiency gains and opportunities for programme sustainability. Efficiency gains were mostly noted in the increase in communication and exchange that took place, without financial and time expenses related to travel. However, virtual assessments of factories using online tools also led to more efficient execution of core services, e.g. when labour inspectorates conduct the actual visits, and BW staff monitor the visit online.

Closer integration of BW into overall ILO country programmes, such as the ONEILO approach, can lead to efficiency gains and enhance impact. In some countries, Ethiopia most prominently, the BW programme has been integrated within the overall approach of the ILO country office – The “ONEILO approach”. This approach has ensured that Better Work activities are integrated into the holistic support to the country, rather than acting as a stand-alone programme.

During Phase IV, Better Work has achieved promising results to combine environmental sustainability with working conditions. For example, Better Work Vietnam has collaborated with IFC on environmental services, which included a Pilot Environmental Compliance Assessment. While the IFC’s input focused more on compliance with environmental legislation, Better Work focused on OSH and the use of harmful chemicals that can affect workers’ health. This clearly showed that environmental concerns can be a part of Better Work/ILO’s overall interventions regarding working conditions.

Lessons learnt

While BW has worked with, and engaged, buyers throughout the programme implementation, the pandemic showed that BW had limited leverage to convince buyers not to suspend their contracts. There is a clear need to focus not only on factory compliance, but also on purchasing practices, accountability, and compliance with ILS by buyers and brands themselves.

The absence of a clear sustainability and exit strategy during the programme design phase has led to a disproportionate reliance of national stakeholders on Better Work to implement all factory services. As a result, there are no possibilities for the exit of Better Work in the programme countries, without undoing the progress that has been made in recent years.

The current financial model of BW may not be sustainable enough to withstand changes in donor priorities (e.g. due to current crises), fluctuations in the global economic situation, and shifts in programme activities (e.g. less factory activities so less cost recovery). This may not only affect availability of funding, but also the volume of funding needed in the future. Namely, the programme may lose income from factories (by shifting these activities to stakeholders) while increasing capacity-building efforts. To finance those, reliance on donor funding may increase.

► 1. Better Work Phase IV – Programme Background

1. The Better Work programme is a comprehensive global programme led by ILO and IFC, established at the global level in 2007, based on the Better Factories Cambodia model which was launched in 2001. The programme aims to address the issue of **poor working conditions in the garment industry**, which affects 60 million workers across the developing world who rely on this sector for their livelihoods, 80% of them female. Better Work is currently active in 12 countries – Cambodia, Jordan, Vietnam, Haiti, Indonesia, Nicaragua, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Egypt, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Madagascar.

Table 1. Overview of BW countries

Countries covered in the evaluation	Program start	No. Factories involved	No. Workers involved	Type of Enrolment	Linkages to other ILO projects
Bangladesh	2014	377	1,062,168	Voluntary	Improving Working Conditions in the Ready-Made Garment Sector (RMGP II)
Cambodia	2001	557	615,035	variable ¹	
Egypt	2022 (with pilots in 2017-18)	About 30	54,119	Voluntary	SLARIE (ONEILO)
Ethiopia	2019	47	54,804	Voluntary	SIRAYE (ONEILO)
Haiti	2009	41	53,634	Mandatory	
Indonesia	2011	216	437,128	Voluntary	
Jordan	2009	97	68,455	Mandatory	
Nicaragua	2011	30	39'401	Voluntary	
Vietnam	2009	392	675'202	voluntary	

Source:

2. The Better Work intervention includes activities at factory, sectoral, national and global level, aimed at supporting garment-producing countries to strengthen their policy and enabling environment for decent work, gender equality and competitiveness:
 - At the **factory** level, Better Work assesses the compliance with national and international labour standards and provides advisory and training services for managers and workers to support continuous improvements through equal representation and dialogue.
 - At the **sectoral** level, Better Work collaborates with global brands, retailers, and manufacturers to improve business and purchasing practices that foster improved labour conditions across their supply chains. Better Work also uses its experience in promoting effective social dialogue at the factory level to catalyse sound and productive labour relations at the sectoral level by working with

¹ Mandatory for assessments in the garment and travel goods sector (voluntary for footwear) – and voluntary for advisory and training services.

employers' and workers' organisations to strengthen their capacity on compliance and social dialogue.

- At the **national** level, Better Work reinforces public institutions, shares best practices with labour inspectorates, and influences policies that create an enabling environment for decent work and improved business competitiveness.
- At the **global level**, Better Works aims to influence the global policy dialogue on decent work by providing credible data and evidence to influencers and policymakers concerned with decent work in global supply chains. However, Better Work Phase IV has been significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought a lot of challenges and restraints and forced the BW staff to adapt their work.

3. The Better Work programme has focused on different topics. These topics include working time and wages, gender in the workplace, occupational safety and health, and others. The most prominent topics are presented in the table below, together with the specific activities the programme focused on.

Table 2. Specific topics and activities Better Work programme focused on during Phase IV

Topic	Specific activities Better Work programme focused on
Improvements in factory-level conditions	
Working time and wages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Helping firms improve compliance with legal regulations on working time - Ensuring compliance with minimum wages - Ensuring that wage setting, piece rate wages, and workplace outcomes are designed and implemented as a pay incentive system
Occupational health and safety (OSH)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Conducting factory assessments focusing on OSH and providing advisory services to improve OSH in the factories - Implementing OSH management systems to help factories reduce harmful environments that can produce worker injuries.
Gender equality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementing the gender strategy developed by Better Work in close collaboration with ILO focusing on: i) discrimination, ii) women's voice and representation, iii) paid work and care, and iv) leadership and skills development
Industrial relations and workplace communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fostering workplace collaboration, workplace communication and strong industrial relations - Strengthening management systems through focusing on grievance mechanisms, OSH management systems, wages, HR, and similar topics - Encouraging workplace unionisation and collective bargaining
Transparency and working conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encouraging factory-level transparency reporting to increase compliance with labour standards
Productivity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting factories to achieve higher levels of productivity
Profitability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Highlighting the potential increase in average revenue for the factories in the Better Work programme
Strengthened institutions and improved practices of global-level buyers and brands	
Supply chain dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educating constituents about supply chain dynamics and highlighting the evidence of unbalanced power relations in supply chains having negative spillover effects for compliance and workplace conditions in the garment industry. - Highlighting the need for more focus on well-being of workers through data and evidence showing that in factories where managers are most concerned with sourcing pressure, these same factories are less likely to comply with workplace safety and health requirements.
Influencing brands and buyers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Engaging brands and buyers in factory advisory services - Enhancing their knowledge and capacity on working conditions and the importance of workplace dialogue through the BW Academy - Supporting buyers and brands to enhance their own purchasing practices
Support to governments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consulting and supporting governments in the design and implementation of policies and laws that improve working conditions - Providing capacity-building activities for various government departments, including labour inspectorates, on working conditions and labour standards

and
constituents

- Providing capacity building for all constituents to engage in social dialogue and negotiate policies to improve working conditions

4. The programme operates in five-year strategic cycles. Prior to the current Phase IV, there have been three past phases of the Better Work programme since 2007, each with its own particular goals and strategies. The programme is managed by a global Better Work team spread between Geneva and Bangkok, who are responsible for the overall BW strategy, contact with international buyers, partners, donors and stakeholders, and who provide support to country offices. Each country has a BW country team responsible for the implementation of BW on the ground.
5. In pursuit of these goals, the programme relies on different streams of funding. It has a unique cost recovery approach that enables BW to receive funds from factories and buyers which seek to participate in BW. The remaining funds come from donors such as the United States (USDOL), Switzerland (State Secretariat of Economic Affairs), the EC (DG INTPA), Australia (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade), Denmark (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Germany (Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development) and the Netherlands (Ministry of Foreign Affairs); from private sector grants as well as contributions from host country governments in Jordan, Cambodia and Pakistan.
6. The Better Work framework for strategic use of evaluations foresees a **global, final independent evaluation of Phase IV in the first half of 2022** for the current funding cycle. The evaluation adopts a “clustered approach”, namely, the work of the Better Work Global team as well as the global cluster of Better Work country interventions were examined, with a focus on results for the current implementation phase, from July 2017 to June 2022.

► 2. Evaluation background

7. As Phase IV of the Better Work global programme ends in 2022, the Better Work framework for strategic use of evaluations foresees a comprehensive evaluation of the achievements and challenges during the implementation of Phase IV. Given that multiple country- and regional-level evaluations have taken place recently, the current **cluster evaluation** provides a comparative and global-level perspective, by building on prior evaluations and complementing them with additional primary data collection.
8. The current evaluation identified how Better Work activities contributed to the achievement of established outcomes at country and global levels (e.g. Decent Work Country programmes, Country programme Outcomes and ILO programme and Budget Strategic Objectives), and examined Better Work's contributions to progress towards the SDGs. In addition, the evaluation integrated a focus on ILO's cross-cutting themes gender equality, environmental sustainability, disability inclusion, promotion of labour standards, and social dialogue throughout the evaluation.
9. As Better Work will enter its fifth phase in 2023, **the purpose of the evaluation is twofold**. Firstly, the evaluation has a summative perspective for accountability, to take stock of the achievements and challenges that occurred during this phase. Secondly, the evaluation provides recommendations for ILO and Better Work staff to improve the programme and expand its impact during the next phase.
10. The **geographical scope** of the evaluation comprises 9 out of the 12 countries in which Better Work is currently active, namely, Cambodia, Jordan, Vietnam, Indonesia, Nicaragua, Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Egypt, and a less in-depth evaluation of Haiti, where a separate mid-term evaluation is already underway. The **time period** covered in this evaluation is July 2017–June 2022, namely "Phase IV".
11. Since national evaluations have already taken place, the evaluation focuses on cross-national comparisons and on specific topics of interest for the targeted audience of this evaluation. Based on initial scoping interviews during the Inception Stage, the following five themes were selected for **cross-national case studies**:
 - *Gender equality*: What has been the impact of the Global Gender Strategy and enhanced focus on gender equality during Phase IV?
 - *Occupational Safety and Health*: What progress has been made in the field of OSH and how has Better Work dealt with non-compliance of factories in terms of OSH?
 - *Social dialogue*: To what extent have factory and sectoral-level activities focusing on social dialogue contributed to enhanced social dialogue at national level and participation of social partners in policymaking?
 - *COVID-19*: How has the pandemic disrupted the progress of Better Work, and have any good practices or lessons learnt emerged that can inform the future of the programme?
 - *Sustainability*: What are the main challenges and opportunities regarding Better Work's sustainability and what measures has Better Work taken in this regard?
12. Better Work's staff are the **primary clients and users of the evaluation** as it will inform the design of their future work. As an ILO programme, various ILO departments may also be interested to learn how Better Work has contributed to their fields of expertise. Similarly, as programme partner, the IFC can use this evaluation for internal accountability and lessons learnt for the next phase. Lastly, the evaluation will inform donors, partners, buyers and constituents on the progress made by BW during Phase IV, the main challenges faced, and the recommendations for a way forward.
13. The Phase IV cluster evaluation commenced in May 2022. Most of the data collection took place in July and August, while the survey was launched in early September 2022. The draft evaluation report was prepared and submitted to the ILO in early October 2022, and the Final Report was submitted on 4 November 2022.

► 3. Evaluation methodology

3.1. Criteria and questions for the evaluation

14. Following the OECD/DAC approach, the evaluation criteria included relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. The research team developed the following evaluation questions to guide the evaluation (the detailed operationalisation of the questions can be found in Annexes 6 and 7):

Table 3. Evaluation questions for relevance

RELEVANCE
Was the Phase IV strategy and implementation of the Better Work project relevant for constituents, donors, and beneficiaries?
Did the Phase IV strategy consider lessons learnt from previous phases to enhance its relevance?
Was Phase IV relevant in the context of COVID-19?

Table 4. Evaluation questions for coherence

COHERENCE
Is Phase IV aligned with the general strategies and priorities of ILO and IFC?
Is Phase IV aligned with SDG priorities?
To what extent do country interventions align with the Phase IV strategy?
Is Phase IV aligned with other international initiatives on improving working conditions in the garment sector?
Does Phase IV align with ILO cross-cutting priorities?

Table 5. Evaluation questions for effectiveness

EFFECTIVENESS
Did Phase IV achieve its intended outputs?
Did Phase IV achieve its intended results / outcomes?
Did Phase IV contribute to the achievement of cross-cutting objectives?
Did Phase IV achieve its objectives with regard to COVID-19?

Table 6. Evaluation questions for efficiency

EFFICIENCY
Did Phase IV receive sufficient resources to achieve its objectives?
Was Phase IV implemented in a timely manner?
Was the internal management and coordination structure efficient?
Was Phase IV monitoring efficient?

Table 7. Evaluation questions for impact

IMPACT
Are there signs that Phase IV will have an impact on decent work, poverty, women empowerment, business competitiveness and inclusive economic growth?
What are the main barriers and enablers for impact?

Table 8. Evaluation questions for sustainability

SUSTAINABILITY
What is the likelihood that the results of Phase IV will be sustained?

15. The evaluation has paid particular attention to measuring the **integration and achievement of cross-cutting objectives** in the fields of gender equality, inclusion of persons with disabilities, environmental sustainability, tripartism and social dialogue, and promotion of International Labour Standards. These topics were considered in the review of prior evaluations, in the supplementary interviews and were integrated in the survey.
16. Social dialogue and gender equality received additional attention in the case studies. The evaluation reviewed the added value of the Global Gender Strategy presented in Phase IV on the programme's achievements in the field of gender equality, and reviewed to what extent the programme has contributed to social dialogue and tripartism at national level.
17. The results of this specific focus are presented throughout the report, predominantly under "coherence", "effectiveness" and "impact", as well as in the case studies added in the Annex.

2.3. Evaluation approach

18. Phase IV is a **cluster evaluation**, meaning that it provides a synthesis of the results, achievements and challenges across the nine participating countries. It provides mutual learning opportunities and sharing of experiences, without evaluating each country individually. The evaluation brings added value by providing a comparative and holistic perspective on the programme, also incorporating the role and achievements of Better Work Global.
19. As explained above, the evaluation team employed a **summative and formative evaluation** approach to ensure that the results can be used for both accountability and future planning.
20. The right to privacy and anonymity was maintained in line with appropriate ethical considerations (e.g., not interviewing workers and factory members together, ensuring private space for workers to share their opinions).

2.4. Data collection

21. Although the cluster evaluation relied to a large extent on prior evaluations, the evaluation team ensured that staff, constituents, partners and donors were still able to provide their input to the evaluation. In each country and at global level, stakeholders were given the opportunity to voice their opinion. Moreover, their right to privacy and anonymity was maintained in line with appropriate ethical considerations (e.g., not interviewing workers and factory members together, ensuring private space for workers to share their opinions).
22. Given that the evaluation was implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic, working arrangements were somewhat adjusted in comparison to other evaluations. Namely, no field visits were conducted by the evaluation consultants, who, instead, relied on national consultants already based in the BW countries. Additionally, the evaluation was implemented in line with the "Protocol on collecting evaluative evidence on the ILO's COVID-19 response measures through project and programme evaluations".²
23. The evaluation relied on the following data collection methods and sources:

2.4.1. Desk research

24. Desk research was implemented in two phases – initial desk research carried out in the inception phase and in-depth desk research that was carried out during the data collection stage. The initial desk research helped the research team better understand the gaps in the existing information and clarify the objectives of the evaluation. The more in-depth desk research served as a starting point for primary data collection. Considering that several evaluations of the Better Work programme were recently implemented, the desk research served to avoid stakeholder fatigue and ensured that the stakeholders were not asked same questions they had to report on recently.
25. The main desk research documents included:
 - Previous Better Work evaluations on the global and country level;
 - Donor reports, annual reports, monitoring data;
 - Notes from stakeholder consultations carried out during the evaluation period (most often in early 2022);

² https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_mas/---eval/documents/publication/wcms_757541.pdf

- Reports, policy briefs and other publications by Better Work/ILO;
- ILO strategic documents related to the Better Work programme;
- ILO research and impact studies;
- Academic literature (if relevant).

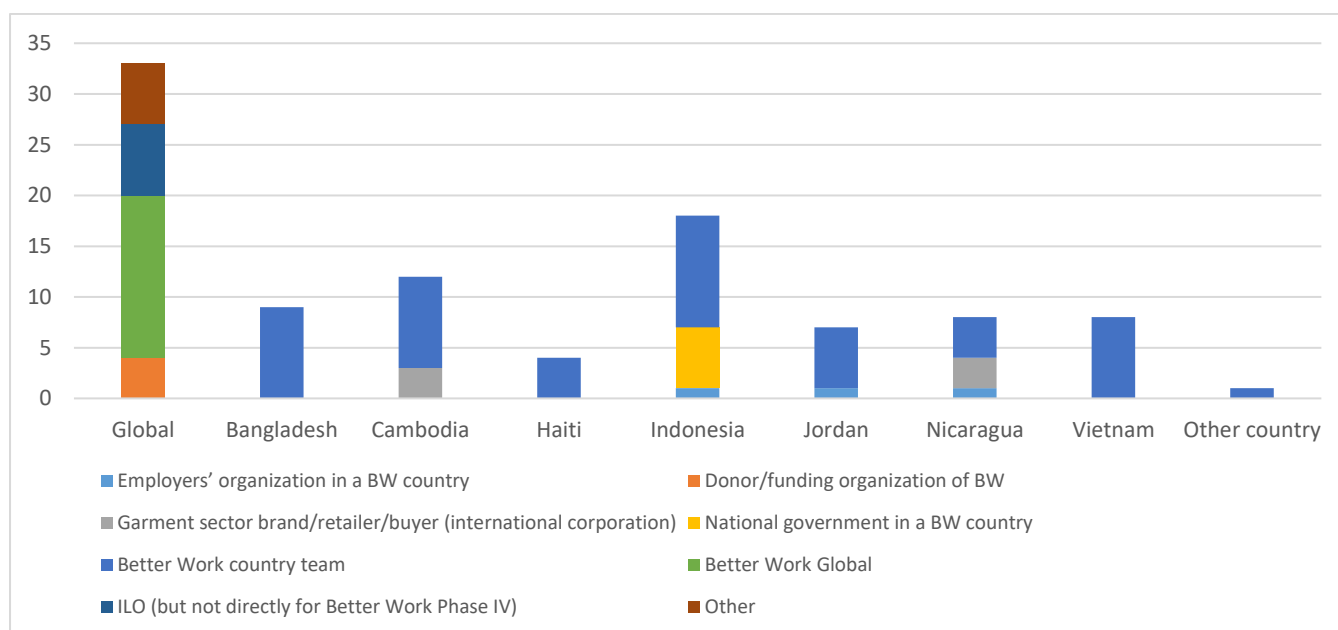
2.4.2. Interviews

26. The interviews were conducted in two stages as well. During the **Inception Phase**, the research team conducted interviews with 13 BW staff members working with the programme at global and country levels. During these interviews, the evaluation team aimed to better understand the specific evaluation context and ILO/BW's expectations regarding this evaluation.
27. During the **main data collection phase**, interviews were conducted with different groups of relevant actors, including global- and national-level Better Work staff, national constituents, beneficiaries (factory owners, workers), donors, global brands and buyers, and partner organisations.
28. In total, the evaluation team conducted 44 interviews with global and national BW staff and 12 interviews with key global-level stakeholders (donors, partners, and buyers). Altogether 46 interviews were carried out in 8 countries (constituents, and beneficiaries, excluding Haiti as an evaluation there is ongoing) during the main data collection phase.

2.4.3. Survey

29. To gather comparative data among a large group of stakeholders, the evaluation team prepared a short survey that was translated into the main national language of each of the countries (Haiti excepted; since the country is currently undergoing an evaluation with extensive coverage of constituents, they were not consulted to avoid fatigue.). The survey received a total of 100 responses, distributed across respondent groups as follows:

Figure 1. Respondents by organisation and country



Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff, constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=100). "Which Better Work programme country were you based in or most involved with between July 2017 and June 2022?"

2.4.4. Case studies

30. The evaluation team developed five case studies to gather more in-depth information on specific topics of interest to the Better Work team. Data for the case studies were collected using desk research and interviews. The team developed dedicated case study reports added to this report in Annex 1. Subsequently, the case studies were treated as source of information for the main evaluation report.
31. For the selection of case studies, the evaluation team conducted inception interviews with BW global and country staff to identify the main areas of interest that were not covered in-depth in previous evaluations,

and which would provide added value if explored from a cross-country perspective. Based on the interviews, the following topics were selected:

- **Relevance of the implemented gender strategy and enhanced attention to gender equality during Phase IV** – Phase IV stands out compared to previous phases due to its more targeted and holistic approach to gender equality, most prominently visible by the global gender equality strategy designed by Better Work in close collaboration with ILO GEDI (Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) Branch. The current evaluation provided an excellent opportunity to review the effectiveness and relevance of this strategy so far, and its adoption by national constituents.
- **Challenges and opportunities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic** – While the impact of COVID-19 on the Better Work programme has been evaluated in different countries, the results from different countries have not been compared yet and clear and generalisable lessons learnt were not formulated. The current evaluation explored the way forward, based on lessons learnt from the pandemic.
- **The contribution of Phase IV to improving occupational safety and health** – Occupational safety and health is a very important topic for the Better Work programme. While some prior evaluations touched on the topic, it has not received more systematic, cross-country attention. In particular, the topic of addressing non-compliance lacks a comprehensive review, which the current evaluation explored further.
- **Sustainability of Better Work's activities** – The Better Work programme has been in place for many years (starting with Better Factories in Cambodia in 2001), meaning that there is an interest to explore exit strategies and assess to what extent the programme has created sufficient capacity and willingness among constituents to move forward without Better Work support. The current evaluation assessed the current sustainability strategies in place as well as the main challenges to sustainability.
- **Social dialogue, including role of trade unions, and the tripartite discussions on governance of the garment sector** – Strengthening social dialogue and tripartism are a key objective of the BW programme, but also of ILO in general and are an important element supporting sustainability. During Phase IV, BW increased support to social dialogue, focusing (in some countries) specifically on the role and strength of trade unions, in light of freedom of association. This evaluation provides insights on the achievements and challenges towards social dialogue and the position of trade unions in particular.

2.4.5. Analysis

32. The evaluation team used qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse the data gathered through the primary and secondary data collection. Particular attention was paid to ensure that **the report reflects both the experiences of Better Work staff, as well as the views of other stakeholders**. Such triangulation has taken place for both the qualitative and quantitative data. For the qualitative data, the evaluation team relied mostly on the interviews it carried out with national and international stakeholders. However, given that many interviews and consultations had already been carried out in recent years, the team also included statements and perceptions of stakeholders expressed to other independent evaluators during recent country evaluations. For quantitative data, the survey was disseminated to all identified national and international stakeholders. As described below, the team verified for each survey question whether the perceptions differed between ILO/BW staff and BW stakeholders.
33. All **qualitative data** were coded into a data collection template. As a result, all data and information regarding a specific sub-question were grouped together and could be analysed and triangulated easily. However, the reliance on country evaluations carried out in years previous to the Final Evaluation (between 2019-2022) means that certain statements and findings are used outside the wider context of the evaluation. It also means that some examples are only available for a specific country (based on the specific evaluation questions posed in their evaluation). This does not mean that other countries did not experience the same trend, only that their evaluation did not measure it. It must also be noted that this evaluation was carried out in the second half of 2022, meaning that some conditions on the ground might have changed or some recommendations may have already been implemented by the time the evaluation was published.
34. The survey results were analysed using **SPSS for quantitative analysis**. The evaluation team created frequency tables for each question. The team also created cross-tabulations to determine whether different stakeholder groups answered differently. These results are only presented if a discrepancy was found.
35. As the current evaluation is a global and a cluster evaluation, the evaluators did not assess data per country for the purpose of evaluating the country-level results. However, **country-level examples have been included to provide practical insights into the achievements and challenges of BW** across its programme

countries. Short country examples have been provided in-text to support the main findings. Additional blue boxes have been included to provide larger examples to better contextualise the findings. The country examples only serve the purpose of illustration and evidence. The fact that a certain country is not mentioned as an example to support a finding does not mean that the finding / trend does not apply to them, or that they did not perform as well as highlighted countries.

36. Additionally, the report includes **personal stories of beneficiaries (workers and factory managers) who have explained the process and improvements their factories have undergone as a result of their engagement with Better Work**. These stories have been highlighted in the report in yellow boxes.
37. For the selection of country examples throughout the report, the evaluation team used a two-layered selection process:
 - Firstly, the team included **examples that most closely support the main finding** that a section aimed to present. This depends on the specific finding, and the detail of information available about a specific example.
 - Secondly, the evaluation team ensured that **the report includes examples from all nine countries** covered by the evaluation. Upon completion of the first draft, the team checked whether examples from all countries were included and – in some cases – replaced an example of an often-mentioned country with an equally strong example from a less-represented country.

2.5. Limitations

38. The planned methodology aimed to ensure that the data collected are extensive and cover the existing knowledge gaps. However, the chosen approach also had some limitations. These risks include:
 - **Subjectiveness of the information** – as a lot of information was collected through interviews and a survey, it will not only help better understand the perspectives and beliefs of different stakeholders, but may, however, also introduce some biases. This risk cannot be avoided as the information on the beliefs of the stakeholders cannot be validated. Consequently, all statements were triangulated with other data to ensure their validity.
 - **Limited comparability of the information** – the initial analysis of the existing evaluations revealed that countries did not necessarily follow the same approach as they are in different stages of maturity and have different needs and priorities. Moreover, initial analysis of the existing monitoring data revealed that data from different countries may have been collected using different data collection methods and templates. Consequently, it may be hard to compare the information available and also compare it with the data that will be collected during this evaluation. The trends that are observed in data, for example improvement in some variables, were analysed together and close comparison of achievements was avoided.
 - **Stakeholders' interview and survey fatigue** – many stakeholders have been consulted recently for ongoing evaluations or during the preparation for the upcoming phase of the programme. Consequently, the evaluation team encountered many occasions where national BW staff feared for unwillingness and fatigue of stakeholders. With this in mind, the evaluation team carefully considered which consultations were necessary and what specific questions needed to be asked so as not to duplicate the data collection efforts and ensure that stakeholders are still motivated to participate in different evaluations. Additionally, the survey resulted in a low number of responses among non-BW/ILO staff, despite active outreach by the PPMI team and country teams, and translation of the survey into the national languages. This can be explained by the fact that key BW stakeholders had been consulted recently for other purposes. Some BW country teams were also hesitant to share the survey due to stakeholder fatigue.

► 3. Evaluation findings

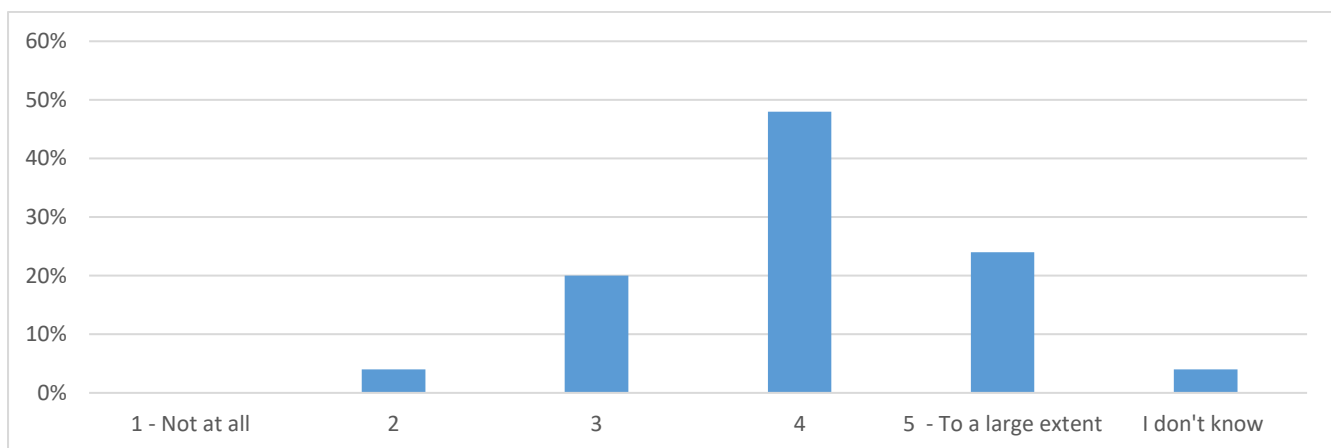
39. The following sections present the findings of the evaluation in relation to the evaluation criteria. The findings are based on a synthesis of desk research, interviews, case studies and the online survey.

3.1. Relevance

40. According to the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, relevance considers how well an intervention managed to address the needs and priorities of its constituents, stakeholders and relevant beneficiary populations, as well as how it was able to adjust if any changes took place during the programme implementation.³ This chapter will consider the extent to which Better Work was successful at being relevant for its tripartite constituents (government, trade unions and employer representatives) and other stakeholders of the programme (workers, factories, donors, buyers and partners). Additionally, this chapter will consider the extent to which Better Work was able to adjust to the country contexts and its capacity to navigate the global COVID-19 pandemic.

41. **Survey respondents (donors, buyers, constituents, factory owners, other stakeholders) generally perceive that Better Work was relevant to their organisational priorities**, as 72% scored the programme a 4 or 5 out of 5 in terms of its abilities to address the needs of the respondents' organisation.

Figure 2. Relevance to organisational priorities



Source: Evaluation survey among constituents, buyers, and other stakeholders (N=25). "To what extent do you agree or disagree that Phase IV of Better Work met the needs of your organisation?"

3.1.1. Relevance for constituents

42. This subchapter looks at the extent to which Better Work was responsive to the needs of its tripartite constituents. Overall, available data shows that **there are many aspects of the programme ensuring the relevance of the programme for the constituents**.

Governments

43. The data from country evaluation reports revealed that the presence of Better Work helped governments to tackle key issues regarding working conditions in the garment sector. For example, in **Indonesia** the government had few resources to tackle non-compliance issues. That is why the presence of Better Work, with its capacities and experience when it comes to ensuring compliance, allowed the Indonesian government to build up its ability to respond to such issues in the garment sector.⁴ Similarly, in **Ethiopia**, the mid-term evaluation pointed to the alignment of ONEILO SIRAYE's goals (including Better Work) with the government's priorities, once again exemplifying the relevance of the programme.⁵

³https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/543e84ed-en/1/3/4/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/543e84ed-en&_csp_=535d2f2a848b7727d35502d7f36e4885&itemIGO=oecd&itemContentType=book#section-d1e2474

⁴ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation.

⁵ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.34.

44. Another good example of BW's relevance to governments is seen in the case of **Egypt**. As explained in the programme document for the Strengthening Labour Relations and their Institutions in Egypt (SLAIRIE) programme, *"following the publication of World Bank governance indicators, Disney announced that if Egypt does not establish a Better Work program in the country it would be removed from their list of sourcing countries. At that time, the Government of Egypt passed a new law regulating trade unions (the Trade Union Law no. 213 of 2017) following discussions with the ILO and employer and worker organisations."*⁶
45. It is also worth noting that while being relevant, the Better Work programme still has room for improvement in this area. This is due to the misconceptions which might sometimes appear regarding the programme, leading to difficulties in positioning Better Work as a relevant opportunity. In the case of **Indonesia**, the government initially hesitated to work with Better Work as it was thought that the programme might want to take over the functions which are under the jurisdiction of the labour inspectorate.⁷ While this difficulty was eventually overcome through communication efforts, and Better Work is now seen as relevant by the government with both sites fostering good relations, this episode shows the importance of having well-articulated and understood intentions by all constituents involved.

Employer representatives

46. The work of the programme has mostly been relevant for employer representatives of the countries where it operates. The willingness of employer's representatives to participate in the programme shows that they were willing to bear the costs of change, which points to the fact that the work of the programme was relevant to them. Similarly, there are particular examples which point to the relevance of the programme for employers. In the case of **Cambodia** and **Indonesia** it was noted that Better Work has focused on supporting social dialogue and industrial relations which employer representatives find valuable and relevant.⁸
47. Furthermore, in **Vietnam** it was noted that the country programme, through allowing the employer organisations participate in programme activities enabled them to build their capacities through trainings, information sharing and participation in relevant activities.⁹ **Egypt** provides another example of relevance to employers. Given that there is a lack of trust in social dialogue in the country, Better Works expertise can provide benefits for employers to engage in more meaningful social dialogue.¹⁰
48. However, as noted by a representative of an employer organisation in **Vietnam**, the constituents, including employer organisations, are interested in participating in the Better Work activities on a greater scale than is available for them. They note that *"BW needs to involve the trained trainers from the Training-of-Trainers (TOT) activity of VCCI in training activities of BW. BW should also strengthen the training of the advisory personnel."* This also links to their concerns that the activities do not necessarily focus enough on sustainability (i.e. by transferring activities to Vietnamese stakeholders).¹¹
49. While the capacity-building efforts of the programme have been acknowledged to an extent, some employers' organisations remain not fully satisfied with the work that has been done so far. Some felt left out of the implementation of project activities.¹² Others expressed the opinion that Better Work should have done more, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic hit and some buyers cancelled their contracts.¹³

Trade unions

50. In general, the programme's work is relevant for the trade unions, as expressed by trade unions interviews for the current evaluation and previous country evaluations. In many countries where Better Work operates, unions have weak capacity to defend the interests of their members. The programme's work has been useful to ensure that the capacities of these organisations increase. For example, in **Vietnam** and **Indonesia** it was noted that Better Work was one of the key players in ensuring that unions have the capacities to represent their members.¹⁴ Meanwhile, in **Ethiopia**, few firms had unions in the factories (24%) and most of the factories where unions were present were found outside of industrial parks. Hence, while a report on the ONEILO SIRAYE programme in Ethiopia noted the limited nature of work with trade unions between 2019 and 2020,

⁶ Strengthening Labour Relations and their Institutions in Egypt – Development Cooperation Project Document, 2020.

⁷ BWI Phase III Midterm Evaluation, p.14.

⁸ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.18.

⁹ Interview with the Bureau for Employers' Activities, VCCI Vietnam.

¹⁰ Interview with BW Egypt staff.

¹¹ Interview with the Bureau for Employers' Activities, VCCI Vietnam.

¹² Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.15.

¹³ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.33.

¹⁴ BWI BWV Phase II Final Cluster Evaluation, p.iv.

due to activities mostly focusing on capacity building, this course of action is understandable given the difficult environment for trade unions in the country.¹⁵

51. Another good marker of relevance is the willingness of trade unions to participate in the work of the project. For example, in **Nicaragua**, trade unions worked together with other social partners to produce an Action Plan for the garment industry. This collaboration points to the fact that Better Work was seen as an opportunity by trade union representatives to work towards meeting their goals.¹⁶
52. Nevertheless, certain issues remain to be addressed to ensure even higher relevance for trade union organisations. In **Indonesia** and **Bangladesh**, mid-term evaluations pointed out that some worker's organisations felt they were either not viewed as important partners or that they were not given enough space for participation.¹⁷
53. Another issue is that while the work of unions can provide benefits to workers, the existence of negative preconceptions towards the programme sometimes affects how relevance is perceived by the beneficiaries. This was noted in **Bangladesh**, where reports and interview data point to some workers not trusting the programme by assuming it is against their interests (e.g., because it is perceived as supporting predominantly the employers). This is despite the fact that multiple cases exemplify that Better Work has tried to facilitate the process and empower actors for social dialogue.¹⁸

3.1.2. Relevance for beneficiaries

54. Relevance for beneficiaries considers the extent to which the programme was able to respond to the needs of beneficiary populations such as factory managers and workers. **In general, Better Work is viewed by various stakeholders as highly relevant to those involved in the programme's core services in factories.**

Workers

55. Based on programme reports, the needs of workers revolve around the improvement of working conditions in the garment sector, resulting in increased well-being of workers.¹⁹ Given that the programme focused on improving working conditions, compliance with national labour standards, gender equality and social dialogue, one can say that it was able to contribute to tackling the needs of workers by its design. Many statements on how BW managed to address their needs can be found in the chapter on Impact.
56. Among the many good examples of answering the needs of workers one can be found in **Bangladesh**. Here, some workers expressed their satisfaction with the programme as it was able to contribute to building social dialogue in the factory, improving health and safety standards and supporting gender equality by providing improved facilities for mothers all the while giving women the opportunity to voice any concerns they might have.²⁰
57. Furthermore, Better Work played a role in promoting social dialogue through the establishment of trade union offices and encourages workers to also maintain their agreements.²¹ Another positive example is **Jordan**, as here BW has focused on female workers and migrants, as especially in the case of the latter COVID had a disproportionately greater effect than on national workers.²² Thus, the country programme tried to address the needs of these workers as well.

Factory owners

58. In regard to the relevance of the programme for factory owners, the services provided to the factories are mostly considered as high quality, important and relevant to the work of the factories. These needs are in general related to ensuring compliance with buyer standards, increasing productivity which are factors that would enable the company to not only attract additional buyers but ensure greater sales.
59. Multiple examples exist that demonstrate the relevance of the programme for factory owners. For example, in **Ethiopia** it was noted that the programme addressed many issues such as compliance with labour

¹⁵ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.29.

¹⁶ Interview with BW Nicaragua staff.

¹⁷ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation. p.18, and Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.15.

¹⁸ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28 – March 31, 2021), p.vi.

¹⁹ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.16.

²⁰ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.vi, and Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.16.

²¹ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.25.

²² Interview with BW Staff.

standards, upkeep of health and safety and ensuring growing productivity.²³ Meanwhile, in **Bangladesh** factory owners also reported their satisfaction with the advisory and training services of Better Work, as this allowed them to attract new buyers.²⁴

60. An employer representative from **Jordan** stated that Better Work programme brings long-term benefits to the employers and factories because of its design. This applies equally to the other BW countries. Namely, the programme helps the companies understand minimum standards regarding working conditions and supports them in the implementation of the needed changes, ensuring that the company employees also develop their skills, capacity and knowledge in the process.²⁵
61. Moreover, the factory-level services of Better Work make the factories the main agents for change, helping them identify their own key compliance issues and develop an individualised improvement roadmap. These services are long-term and factory- and individual-level tailored. An employer representative from **Vietnam** expressed appreciation for Better Work as it enables the organisations to participate in its activities directly and in that way improve their knowledge about different processes. Due to this model, the beneficiaries can learn, improve their capacity and later apply their knowledge and skills independently.²⁶
62. Finally, the positioning of Better Work with other actors makes their services more relevant to the factories. An employer representative from **Jordan** noted that Better Work has close relations with the government and international brands, and their audits and advisory services are highly praised. Therefore, factories wish to work with Better Work to get reputational benefits from the collaboration.²⁷

Factory managers

63. It is important to consider how Better Work activities are relevant not only to factory owners, but also to a larger group of individuals responsible for factory management. The overview of the available evidence and the interviews with relevant stakeholders pointed to high relevance of Better Work activities to factory management as it focused on the needs of the factory managers and their capacity building.
64. Better Work tries to continuously monitor and ensure that the offered trainings are in line with the needs of the managers. For example, many managers in **Ethiopian** factories come from other countries and have different management cultures. The Better Work team designed a cross-culture management training to help them adjust.²⁸ In **Jordan**, in Phase IV Better Work also started offering capacity building activities focusing on mental health of workers. This was not offered under the framework of Better Work before but identified by the BW team (with stakeholders) as an important topic for the managers and workers.²⁹
65. Finally, the Better Work teams also try to ensure that capacity of managers is built to address issues that may arise at a later time. For example, in **Cambodia**, the challenge of linking trainings and advisory services with the longer-term capacity building objectives is included in the design of the trainings. The trainings and advisory services focus a lot on factory systems and helping middle management to better understand which actions and practices can contribute to lasting improvement and success.³⁰

Challenges

66. While in general factory-level interventions of Better Work teams are considered relevant and useful for the beneficiaries, some challenges were found. For example, in **Bangladesh**, factory representatives believed that the cost for Better Work membership is too high, and the perceived benefits do not outweigh it.³¹ Some of the stakeholders and beneficiaries, especially factory owners and managers, perceive the compliance audits as inflexible or unfair.³² For example, some complaints to the compliance assessments mentioned by factories, other stakeholders and BW staff themselves include:
 - Assessment reports did not present the full picture as their preparation process did not include sufficient consultations with union representatives and employers and the instances when workers and employers do not agree with the findings of the assessments are not properly addressed.³³

²³ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.31.

²⁴ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.42.

²⁵ Interview with Jordan Garments, Accessories & Textiles Exporters' Association (JGATE), Jordan.

²⁶ Interview with the Bureau for Employers' Activities, VCCI Vietnam.

²⁷ Interview with Jordan Garments, Accessories & Textiles Exporters' Association (JGATE).

²⁸ Interview with BW staff.

²⁹ Better Work Phase IV Fourth Annual Donor Report 2021.

³⁰ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.33.

³¹ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.12.

³² 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.20.

³³ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.64.

- The assessments also do not differentiate between small and large factories even though the capacities of these factories to address compliance issues differ.³⁴
- Some compliance checks, especially related to occupational health and safety issues, are designed in a way that it is hard for some factories to achieve compliance.³⁵
- Compliance assessments look into issues that go beyond the national requirements (e.g. by referring to ILS rather than national standards), resulting in a higher level of non-compliance.³⁶

3.1.3 Relevance for donors and buyers

Donors

67. Based on the available reports and interview data, **donors perceive the programme as relevant for their funding priorities**. This is due to the wide reach of Better Work and the comprehensive nature of the programme, creating space for donors to find ways to fulfil their own priorities regarding improved working conditions. One interviewed donor pointed out that the programme is relevant to their goals and objectives as there is an integrated focus on promoting decent working opportunities together with a focus on the aspect of gender.
68. Similarly, a mid-term evaluation report from Bangladesh revealed that donors value the work of the programme due to its wide reach, ability to work with various stakeholders when it comes to promoting social dialogue.³⁷ Meanwhile interviews highlighted the value of Better Work's capacity to generate a large amount of data which can then be used to inform the donors' position in public policy debates.³⁸
69. Additionally, over the last couple of years, the communication with donors has become increasingly active and holistic. For example, while meetings with donors would usually take place at most two times a year, now meetings tend to focus on specific thematic aspects. This is then supplemented by additional follow-up calls as well as more active work on the ground with country teams.³⁹ Hence, this enables better responsiveness to the needs of donors and enables Better Work to maintain a high degree of relevance in response to donor needs.

Global buyers and brands

70. The importance of Better Work for brands and buyers is twofold. Firstly, buyers are interested in the programme as it removes duplication of audits and data sharing, which makes the work of buyers more efficient (by relying on the BW audits instead of conducting audits themselves). Secondly, participation in Better Work helps brands build their reputation as agents interested in improving working conditions and workers' rights.
71. The mid-term evaluation of Better Work **Bangladesh**, which features a brand satisfaction survey, revealed that most respondents perceived the programme as "satisfactory" and one perceived it as "excellent".⁴⁰ The general satisfaction with the programme is also noted in interviews as it was pointed out that Better Work provided useful theoretical insights and provided help in terms of improving sourcing processes within supply chains.⁴¹
72. Similarly, as was noted in BW staff interviews and interviews with buyers, there is ongoing work with brands to improve the Social & Labor Convergence Programme (SLCP) that would align national and international labour standards and remove duplications in audits. This would make the work of buyers more efficient.⁴²
73. While the buyers find the Better Work activities, especially its work done through the Academy very beneficial and potentially impactful,⁴³ some shortcomings limiting the relevance of the activities targeting the buyers can be highlighted. For example, as the Academy is limited to buyers, other stakeholders, such

³⁴ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.22.

³⁵ Interview with BW staff .

³⁶ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28 March 31, 2021), p.19.

³⁷ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.46.

³⁸ Interview with BW staff.

³⁹ Interview with BW staff.

⁴⁰ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.16.

⁴¹ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, and Interview with a representative of a global buyer.

⁴² Interview with BW Staff and with a representative of a global buyer.

⁴³ Interview with a representative of a global buyer.

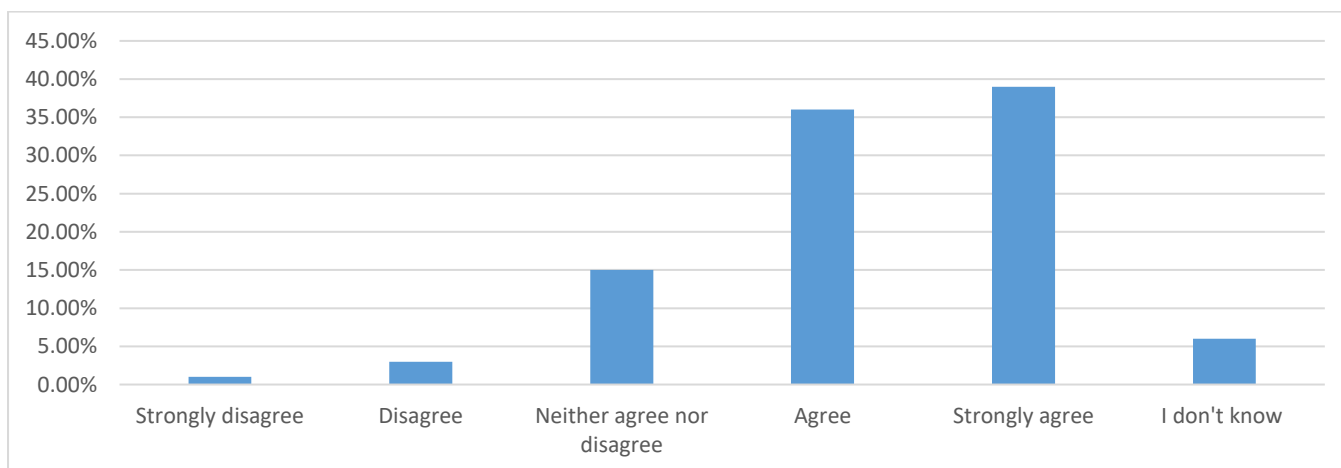
as governments or unions, cannot benefit from Academy activities, making the reach and potential impact of the Academy limited.⁴⁴ This was also a recommendation of the Mid-Term Evaluation.⁴⁵

74. Moreover, representatives of the brands consulted for this evaluation believed that even though the Academy provides training and support to brands, it does not reach its full potential as Better Work does not see the Academy as one of its priorities. To ensure better reach through the activities, the Academy, according to the stakeholders, should be professionalised and approached more strategically with a clearer vision and longer-term view.⁴⁶
75. Interviewed brands also suggested some options of how to make the work more relevant such as making the STAR system (Supply-chain Tracking of Assessments and Remediation) more user-friendly or assisting factories through the integration of a “management system” perspective.⁴⁷

3.1.4. Relevance considering the country contexts

76. The relevance considering the country context considers how well Better Work was able to answer to the specific needs of the countries it operates in. This can be reflected in the alignment with national priorities, adjustments to political changes and priorities, and specification of trainings based on the main challenges identified for the country.
77. In general, the **programme has shown to be responsive to the needs of the countries in which it is present, while remaining aligned with the global BW strategy and planned activities.** Phase IV was characterised by giving more flexibility to country teams to adjust activities to the specific country needs and country maturity in the programme. Representatives of IFC consulted for this evaluation highlighted the relevance of the research conducted by Better Work to national stakeholders and their ability to bring together different actors and show them the importance of different issues in the garment sector, including workers’ well-being and gender equality.⁴⁸
78. Survey responses from Better Work and ILO staff, constituents, buyers and other stakeholders, show that about 75% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the programme responds to country-specific needs.

Figure 3. Response to country-specific needs



Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff, constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=100). “To what extent do you agree or disagree that Better Work Phase IV addressed specific country needs and priorities?”

79. The evaluation found various examples of how BW aligns with country strategies to support their national agendas, allowing the countries to work towards better economic opportunities and improved working conditions for the citizens of the country.

In **Cambodia**, the programme supports and has links to the country’s Rectangular Strategy for Growth, Employment, Equity and Efficiency which is tied to job market development, business promotion and development of various economic sectors.⁴⁹

In **Bangladesh**, the programme has been one of the drivers supporting the implementation of the National Tripartite Plan of Action on Fire Safety and Structural Integrity in the garment sector and the 7th Five-Year Plan.⁵⁰

In **Jordan**, BW objectives aligned with the Jordan 2025 Vision for sustainable development, particularly to address poverty and low-waged employment, and to create decent jobs.⁵¹

In **Ethiopia**, the BW and wider ONEILO approach contributes to various government plans, such as:⁵²

- *Home-grown Economic Reform (HGER)*. The creation of decent jobs is a core priority, to be achieved through macroeconomic, structural, and sectoral reforms.
- *Programme Ethiopia 2030: The Pathway to Prosperity: Ten Years Development Plan (2021-2030)*. This programme focuses on the development of physical, human and institutional capital for income generation. It includes strategic pillars of improving competitiveness and productivity, and equitable participation of women.

80. In **Vietnam and Haiti**, it was noted that the flexibility provided by the programme in adjustability to the country context allowed for better project design at the country level. The country interview in **Haiti** particularly noted that the programme design enabled a focus on better representation of women in union leadership positions, an area that still needed further attention at the country level.⁵³
81. Another important focus of Better Work is the improvement of social dialogue and industrial relations. Given the sometimes more fragile state of social dialogue in many BW countries, the BW programme's focus on factory-and national-level social dialogue can benefit stakeholders beyond the participating factory, and address a countrywide, cross-sectoral challenge. A good illustration of this can be found in **Egypt**. Namely, at the start of the BW programme, freedom of association (and therefore social dialogue) was in poor condition due to legal restrictions. The efforts made by BW, in the context of the SLAIRIE programme, were therefore relevant not only within the scope of BW, but also to strengthen freedom of association in the wider country context.⁵⁴ The multi-programme approach (SLAIRIE, which includes BW and other programmes) has a strong potential to enhance the relevance of BW beyond its scope, as all programmes are building on each other. This is further elaborated in the section on efficiency.

3.1.5. Relevance in the context of COVID-19

82. Relevance in the context of COVID-19 considers how well the Better Work programme was able to address the immediate and more long-term needs when it came to tackling the problems posed by the global pandemic. This includes two dimensions, namely i) adjusting existing activities to remain useful in the pandemic and lockdown context, and ii) introducing new activities to address new needs and priorities during the pandemic.
83. **Overall, based on available reports and interview data, evidence points to a high level of relevance for constituents and stakeholders even in new and demanding conditions created by the pandemic.**
84. As the pandemic became an increasingly poignant issue, Better Work managed to react across multiple domains to ensure the resilience of the garment sector. It adjusted the work of country programmes, by increasing support on health and safety issues through information campaigns and trainings, which could help protect the well-being of workers. This effort was further supplemented through enhanced focus on social dialogue by bringing together constituents and stakeholders to craft joint responses that would be able to best address the crisis.⁵⁵ As interviews with Better Work staff revealed, the relevance of the steps taken was supported by the ability to adjust the course of the programme, through the integration of a well-centred lens on COVID-19. Hence, pandemic-related issues were not only addressed through new approaches to ensure the relevance of the programme, but also on an incorporation of COVID responses across many areas that Better Work focuses upon.⁵⁶
85. Given the widespread lockdowns that hindered dialogue and factory and national-level activities, the goals of the programme were at risk of being significantly undermined. However, as evidence shows Better Work was able to adjust and find solutions in a new context by moving activities to the virtual domain or relying on

⁴⁴ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV p.29.

⁴⁵ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV, p.42.

⁴⁶ Interview with a representative of a global buyer.

⁴⁷ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.16.

⁴⁸ Interview with IFC representatives.

⁴⁹ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation.

⁵⁰ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, pp.14-15.

⁵¹ Jordan. 2016. Sustainable Development Vision 2025. <https://www.greengrowthknowledge.org/sites/default/files/downloads/policy-database/JORDAN%29%20Jordan%202025%20Part%20I.pdf>

⁵² Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE, p.33..

⁵³ Interview with BW Vietnam staff, Interview with BW Haiti staff.

⁵⁴ Interview with BW Egypt staff.

⁵⁵ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV pp.16-17.

⁵⁶ Interview with a BW staff member.

partnerships with other ILO branches such as SCORE in **Ethiopia**.⁵⁷ Given the combination of these factors and openness to embracing digital technologies, the programme was able to remain flexible and able to tackle issues.

86. For the Better Work programmes in **Cambodia, Vietnam and Indonesia**, there is an overarching consensus that the programmes were able to react swiftly to COVID-19 related challenges.⁵⁸ This can be explained by the move of many services such as trainings and advisory services to virtual modes. Alongside these changes, the possible negative impact of the pandemic was recognised, prompting the country programmes to adjust their strategies and indicators to reflect possible changes and remain relevant in a new environment.⁵⁹

87. *More details on Better Work's performance regarding COVID-19 can be found in Annex 1, case study 2.*

3.2. Coherence

88. According to OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, coherence considers how well an intervention aligns with, and contributes to the goals and strategies of an organisation. Similarly, this criterion also considers the extent to which the intervention fits into the ongoing projects within the target country / region. Internal coherence accounts for the synergies between the intervention under evaluation and other interventions carried out by the same institution. External coherence, on the other hand, looks at how well an intervention fits into a wider web of related interventions implemented by other actors, in terms of coordination, harmonisation and complementarity.

3.2.1. Coherence with organisational strategies of ILO and IFC

89. Coherence with organisational strategies looks at how well the Better Work project aligned with the organisational goals and plans of the organisations leading project implementation. Overall, **the findings of this section reveal that Better Work was able to align itself to a great extent with the organisational strategies of both the ILO and the IFC.**

Coherence with overall strategy and priorities of ILO

90. As an ILO programme, Better Work addressed not only the needs of constituents and beneficiaries, but it should fit within the overall system of priorities and objectives of the ILO. The priorities and strategies of the ILO are reflected in the biennial Programme & Budgets of the organisation. Desk research of BW's objectives and ILO's P&Bs, as well as interviews with various staff, show that **BW priorities align with the P&B outcomes and thus contribute to ILO's general overall objectives.**

91. Based on the **2016-2017** and the **2018-2019 P&B** published by ILO, Better Work aligned with several of the main outcomes.⁶⁰

Outcome 1: This outcome addressed Better Jobs and workplace inclusion. BW contributed to this outcome through its focus on decent employment, support to policymaking on working conditions, and by preparing research on decent jobs in the garment sector.

Outcome 2: This outcome promoted the ratification and application of International Labour Standards. The BW programme focused on including ILS in international audits and assessments, and the ratification of ILS at national level.

Outcome 3: This outcome focused on social protection. BW tackled labour policy-related issues which would ensure better social protection and increased remuneration

Outcome 6: This outcome supported formalisation of the informal economy. BW supported the signing of contracts and inclusion of working conditions and benefits in contracts.

Outcome 7: This outcome focused on safe work and workplaces. This is a key priority of BW as it focuses extensively on OSH and compliance with OSH standards.

Outcome 10: This outcome supported strong and representative employers' and workers' organisations. BW contributed to this outcome through the support for workplace social dialogue and establishment of worker-

⁵⁷ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.54, and; Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.50.

⁵⁸ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.58.

⁵⁹ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.15; Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.39.

⁶⁰ programme and Budget for the Biennium 2016-2017 and Biennium 2018-19.

employer committees. Nationally, BW included capacity building for social partners and support to enhance social dialogue.

92. Regarding the **2020-2021 P&B**, Better Work continued to contribute to the strategies and priorities of the ILO.⁶¹

Outcome 1: This outcome focused on strengthening tripartite constituents and ensuring a more critical and inclusive role for social dialogue. Better Work was in line with this goal given its focus on developing and enabling social dialogue at factory and national levels.

Outcome 2: This outcome focused on upkeeping international labour standards and ensuring their implementation. In this area Better Work focused on the compliance of factories with national and international labour standards.

Outcome 6: This outcome focused on increased gender equality and equal opportunities in the workplace. This was one of the key aspects of the programme's global strategy which sought to improve equal gender representation and treatment within garment factories.

Outcome 7 and 8: These outcomes seek to provide protection at work as well as social protection. Hence, this relates to the work of the programme, given the steps it took to ensure compliance with OSH and promote social protection for workers.

Alignment of Better Work country strategies with Decent Work country programmes

93. Alignment of BW country strategies with Decent Work Country programmes (DWCPs) considers how well the BW programme contributes to the overall strategy of ILO for the country. In this area the coherence between the two appears to be overwhelmingly positive.

94. The available reports and evaluations show that in countries where Better Work is active it tends to support the implementation of DWCP. In particular, as exemplified by **Cambodia** the Decent Work Country programme was able to support BFC in pursuing priority 3 which relates to development of social dialogue and industrial relations as well as priority 2 which aims to increase access to better economic opportunities.⁶² Similarly in **Ethiopia**, the newly approved DWCP also focuses on ensuring economic prosperity and improved social dialogue and industrial relations.⁶³

95. It should be noted that among BW staff there seems to be a drive to align the BW country priorities more closely with the DWCP, to ensure that all ILO projects in a country contribute to similar objectives and therefore enhance each other's impact. The ONEILO approach is a good example of alignment of different ILO initiatives to achieve the same priorities outlined in DWCPs.⁶⁴

Coherence with overall strategy and priorities of IFC

96. Given that the IFC is the main partner in implementing Better Work, for them to meet their goals it is important that their internal strategies align with those of the programme. A review of IFC's priorities demonstrates that the **BW programme contributes to the objectives of IFC as well.**

97. Based on interview data and a review of IFC's Strategy and Business Outlook Updates, the strategy of the BW programme aligns with IFC's priorities in three principal areas:

Priority area 1: increased opportunities for decent jobs. This related to Outcome 3 in P&B 2018-2019 as well as Outcomes 7 and 8 in P&B 2020-2021 due to its focus on better social protection and remuneration.

Priority area 2: working towards formalising the informal economy. This aligned with ILO's Outcome 6 in P&B 2018-2019, which sought to reduce informality in the garment sector.

Priority area 3: increasing workplace compliance. This aligns with ILO's Outcome 2 noted in P&B 2020-2021 and Outcome 7 in P&B 2018-2019 both of which focused on increasing compliance.⁶⁵

98. It is also worth noting that the Fiscal Year (FY) 20-22 update, highlights that IFC 2.0 strategy which has been ongoing since 2000 has focused on investing in local companies and banks while also relying on local

⁶¹ programme and Budget for the Biennium 2020-21.

⁶² BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation.

⁶³ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.54.

⁶⁴ Interview with BW staff.

⁶⁵ Interview with representatives of IFC.

investors. Similarly, the Strategy and Business outlook FY21-FY23 among other goals seeks to improve productivity and performance of businesses all the while improving their sustainability in the sphere of finances.

99. Furthermore, the IFC's report on "Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals" indicates that IFC aims to align its priorities with SDG 1 under the mandate of the World Bank Group (WBG), while at the regional and sectoral levels it strives to support the implementation of SDG 5 and 8. This facilitates coherence with the programme, as in both cases reduction of poverty and better working opportunities are pursued with a focus on increasing gender equality. Furthermore, as these topics gain prominence within the IFC and the interest in environmental sustainability develops in IFC and under Better Work, it is likely that coherence will continue to blossom in the mutual work of both organisations.

100. The complementarity of the IFC with Better Work is also reflected in practice. For example, when IFC invests in a garment factory in a Better Work country, then that factory is more likely to join the Better Work programme – if not yet part of it - to ensure that the social standards are matched up to the investment. Another example showing that the IFC and Better Work maintain coherence with their strategy is the example of Bangladesh. Here, the work of both sides allowed GEAR to successfully reach its goals of training female sewing operators and then implement this model in other countries and sectors.

3.2.2. Coherence with Sustainable Development Goals

101. Coherence with SDG objectives considers how well the programme was able to integrate aspects related to the sustainable goals. Overall, **the BW activities and objectives are found to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs in the programme countries.**

SDG 8

102. The focus of SDG 8 is to promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth and ensure decent work opportunities for employees.⁶⁶ Based on the evidence collected, Better Work and related programmes contribute to SDG 8 when it comes to promoting decent work opportunities in all countries where the project is active.

103. In the case of **Cambodia, Indonesia** and **Vietnam**, the countries' mid-term evaluation pointed to the fact that in all three countries the programme contributed to the expansion of decent work opportunities.⁶⁷ Similarly, the experience of **Bangladesh** highlights how the work of the Programme in the country is coherent with SDG 8. Programme activities encourage worker safety through training sessions, with BWB providing and developing guidelines for improving working conditions in factories.⁶⁸ Similarly, BWB interventions also allowed some factories to reduce conflict between workers and management all the while instituting better remuneration mechanisms.⁶⁹ Meanwhile, specific recommendations were developed to address the needs of working mothers through the Mothers@Work programme, contributing to improvements in breastfeeding and childcare facilities.⁷⁰ All such activities contribute to the improvement of decent work in the country (SDG 8).

104. Similarly, in **Ethiopia** the SIRAYE programme which includes Better Work is closely aligned with SDG 8. Notably multiple indicators such as 8.3 and 8.8 are closely tied to promotion of decent work and protection of workers' rights.⁷¹ Nevertheless, despite this close coherence with decent work priorities, the fragile country context might make it difficult to implement these goals and might need adjustments to ensure further coherence with SDG 8.

SDG 1

105. The focus of SDG 1 is to end poverty.⁷² Here, the work of the programme aligns with this goal, because Better Work includes the promotion of decent work opportunities (i.e. fair wages), creation and ensuring compliance

⁶⁶ UN. The 17 goals | Sustainable Development. Retrieved from <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

⁶⁷ ILO. BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.50.

⁶⁸ Interview with Employers' association leader (Bangladesh national-level interviews).

⁶⁹ Factory-level group interview, workers (Bangladesh national-level interviews).

⁷⁰ Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.27.

⁷¹ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.41.

⁷² UN. The 17 goals | Sustainable Development. Retrieved from <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

with labour laws by working with country stakeholders and constituents to amend and improve labour law legislation or by collaborating with external partners to fight poverty.

106. In **Bangladesh**, Better Work has been able to contribute to discussions in the area of wage payments and information.⁷³ In Jordan, working towards improved remuneration focused on facilitating social dialogue led to an addition in the 2019 sectoral collective bargaining agreement of annual wage increases of roughly 3%.⁷⁴ Furthermore, when ILO joined UN's Capital Development Fund's *Better Than Cash Alliance*, Better Work became one of the main programmes which started promoting the use of digital means to transfer wages through. This enables the programme to promote greater transparency in the wage system and provide more decent work opportunities, both of which enable the move towards reducing poverty.⁷⁵
107. Meanwhile, in **Indonesia** ILO/BW was able to develop its expertise by working and learning from external partners in the country. For example, following Germany's Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) provision of nearly USD 2 million to workers and factories which were disrupted by the effects of COVID-19, the Better Work programme was able to develop its own understanding of how cash transfers and subsidy schemes can work in times when crises affect the sector.⁷⁶ Thus, this ensures a sort of "future-proofing" in terms of contributing to poverty reduction in even the most pressing times.

SDG 5

108. The focus of SDG 5 is to ensure gender equality.⁷⁷ The Better Work programme contributes to the goals outlined in SDG 5, as it has incorporated this aspect into its gender strategy. At the global level, BW/ILO's Global Gender Strategy outlines several objectives which guide the General Better Work approach. This includes raising worker awareness about gender-sensitive issues, providing training to female workers and encouraging partnerships which are responsive to gender policies and gender equality.⁷⁸ Moreover, two types of interventions are designed to complement the coherence with SDG 5, which are skill building and gender-transformative trainings.
109. In all BW countries, various trainings have been implemented by Better Work which includes training and advisory services to reduce harassment and violence that takes place in the workplace among women. Similarly, measures are also taken to ensure equality with their male counterparts such as working towards equal pay and increasing opportunities for women to move up the company hierarchy. In the case of **Ethiopia**, the drive towards SDG 5 can also be observed as the country is committed towards meeting SDG 5 and among the outputs of the programme includes the output which seeks to ensure that females can participate as equals in all spheres of life.⁷⁹

3.2.3. Alignment of Better Work country strategies with the Global strategy

110. Internal coherence considers how well national BW strategies align with the Global BW strategy. As evidence shows, in both cases **many synergies were found**. Difficulties were only encountered when aligning Better Work at the global and country levels, yet this is understandable due to the influence that local needs can have on the implementation of the programme.
111. A review of the programme documentation and interviews with BW staff show that country programmes are still aligned with the global programme. This is also visible from the fact that cross-country statistical data towards common indicators could still be collected (see Annex 2). All BW countries are therefore in essence contributing to the global outcomes. The mid-term evaluation of BW **Vietnam** and **Indonesia**, as well as Better Factories **Cambodia**, revealed that the outcomes envisioned within the countries support the implementation of the goals outlined at the global level.⁸⁰
112. In cases where country programmes diverge from the global approach, this is explained by the fact that the programme provides room for flexibility to address the needs of local constituents. As described in the Efficiency chapter, such divergence is not necessarily problematic. Namely, BW countries are in different stages of programme maturity and development, meaning that there is no "one approach that fits all". For example, in the case of **Bangladesh**, BW staff noted that the BWB programme would benefit from more

⁷³ 2021 Independent Interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28 – March 31, 2021), p.21.

⁷⁴ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.26.

⁷⁵ Global Annual Report 2019

⁷⁶ Better Work Phase IV Fourth Annual Donor Report 2021.

⁷⁷ UN. The 17 goals | Sustainable Development. Retrieved from <https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

⁷⁸ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.79.

⁷⁹ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.80.

⁸⁰ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.32.

global BW-level technical support on OSH, to help structure policy dialogue with the government on that particular topic.⁸¹

113. Some problems regarding occasional lack of alignment were pointed out during interviews. Given that country needs are prioritised contributed to a feeling of disconnect between the country and global level, while also making the achievement of some outcomes lag behind their targets. This issue is further compounded when programme phases do not line up perfectly, making the alignment of the planning process between the two levels more complicated.⁸²

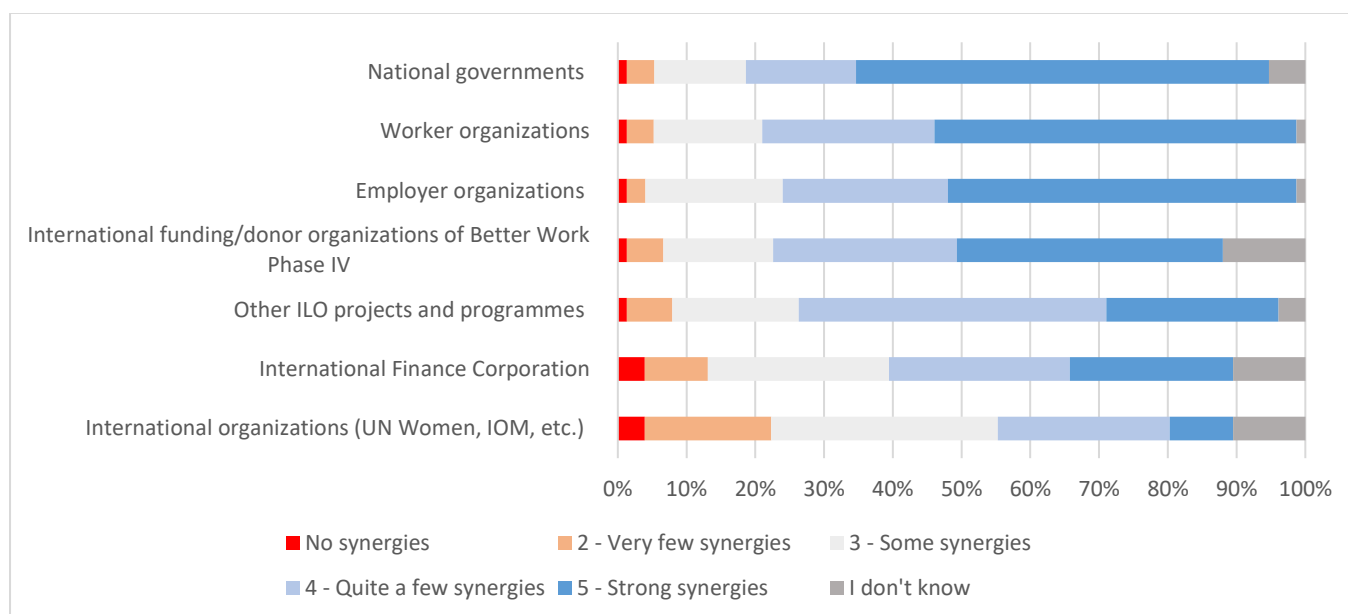
3.2.4. External coherence

114. External coherence looks at how well the Better Work Project was able to coordinate its goals with actors external to the ILO and IFC during the programme’s implementation. Alignment with activities of other organisations can enhance effectiveness and avoid duplication of work.

115. ILO and BW staff as well as constituents, buyers and other stakeholders mostly perceive Better Work as a unique programme which often finds complementarity rather than overlaps with other organisations and programmes, especially since the start of COVID-19.

116. Survey data show that most respondents noted strong synergies of BW with national governments, workers’, and employers’ organisations (above 50% in all three cases). Meanwhile, survey respondents perceived less synergies or alignments with other international organisations.

Figure 4. Synergies with other organisations’ activities



Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff, constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=100). "To what extent do you think Better Work Phase IV was able to establish synergies with the organisations, agencies, and their units listed below?"

117. **It is also worth noting that** the work of BW is perceived as rather unique compared to interventions by other organisations. Nearly 70% of respondents rate the work of Better Work 4 or 5 out of 5 in terms of its uniqueness compared to other organisations. Interviews with stakeholders confirm that the programme activities provide unique value to factories, workers, and constituents, compared to other organisations, because the services do not only include assessments (fault-finding) but provide follow-up support to address the gaps in compliance. Additionally, the cost recovery mechanism is a unique feature of the programme, contributing to the commitment of factories and buyers to the programme (since they are paying for the services) and possibly to its long-term sustainability.

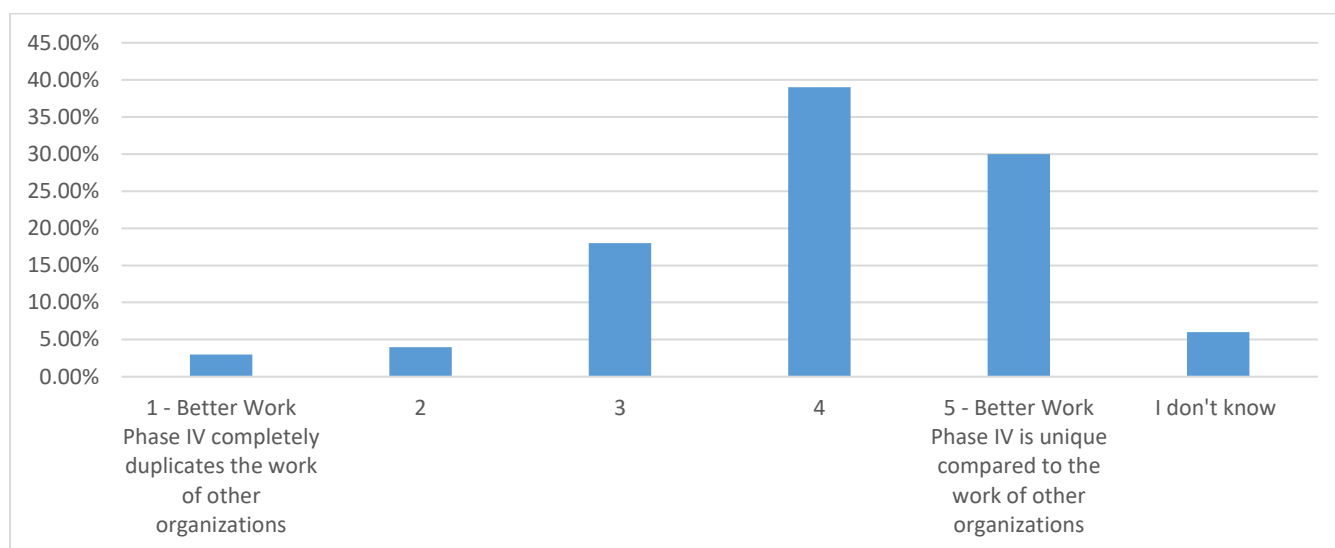
118. The Better Work project was able to build up its capacity to collaborate with external actors, and within the UN system. While initially this process was slow, collaboration with UN actors increased during the COVID-19 pandemic. From 2019 onwards Better Work contributed to the implementation of UN Capital Development Fund’s Better Than Cash Alliance, and also contributed to the ONE-UN Assessment of the Socio-Economic

⁸¹ Interview with BW staff.

⁸² Interview with BW staff.

Impact of COVID-19 in Ethiopia.⁸³⁸⁴ This allowed to share its knowledge with other constituent bodies of the UN, but also to directly contribute to gender equality and improving working conditions within factories, directly feeding into its outcomes.

Figure 5. Overlaps with other organisations



Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff, constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=100). "To what extent do you think Better Work duplicates the work carried out by other organisations?"

119. BW was also able to support the work of ILO and WHO in developing OSH strategies during the pandemic.⁸⁵ BW supported the ILO-ITC programme "SCORE" to implement the Global Textiles and Clothing programme (GTEX/MENATEX) by providing materials and expertise to help craft a more well-rounded intervention. In doing so it was able to contribute to social compliance gains in Egypt and indirectly reached a broader range of beneficiaries.⁸⁶

120. However, some stakeholders noted that at times the programme's work overlaps a little with the work that other organisations do. This could partly be explained by Better Work working in countries such as Bangladesh for a long time where the existence of local actors focusing on improving working conditions makes it difficult for the programme to provide unique value added.⁸⁷ Other times this can be explained by the growing interest in certain topics, such as environmentalism, which leads to risks of overlapping with others if not proceeded with carefully.⁸⁸

3.2.5. Cross-cutting priorities

121. Coherence with cross-cutting priorities considers how well BW was able to integrate cross-cutting priorities of the ILO. These include attention to gender equality, persons with disability, environmental sustainability, social dialogue and promotion of labour standards. Overall, the Better Work programme paid detailed attention to some of the cross-cutting factors such as gender inequality and ensuring the promotion of social dialogue. However, inclusion of individuals with disabilities and environmental concerns were less integrated in the programme design and activities. Similarly, the promotion of international labour standards could have been more integrated within the programme.

122. Over 90% of respondents noted that social dialogue and promotion of labour standards received strong or very strong focus, and around 87% pointed out that the focus on gender equality was strong or very strong. Meanwhile respondents noted that the focus on persons with disabilities and environmental sustainability was lower and less systematic. For example, regarding the focus on disability only 35% noted that the programme was strongly or very strongly focused on the topic, while 20% noted that it was barely focused on the priority. In regard to environmental sustainability, 40% of respondents noted that the programme was

⁸³ Global Annual Report 2019.

⁸⁴ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.55.

⁸⁵ Interview with a BW donor.

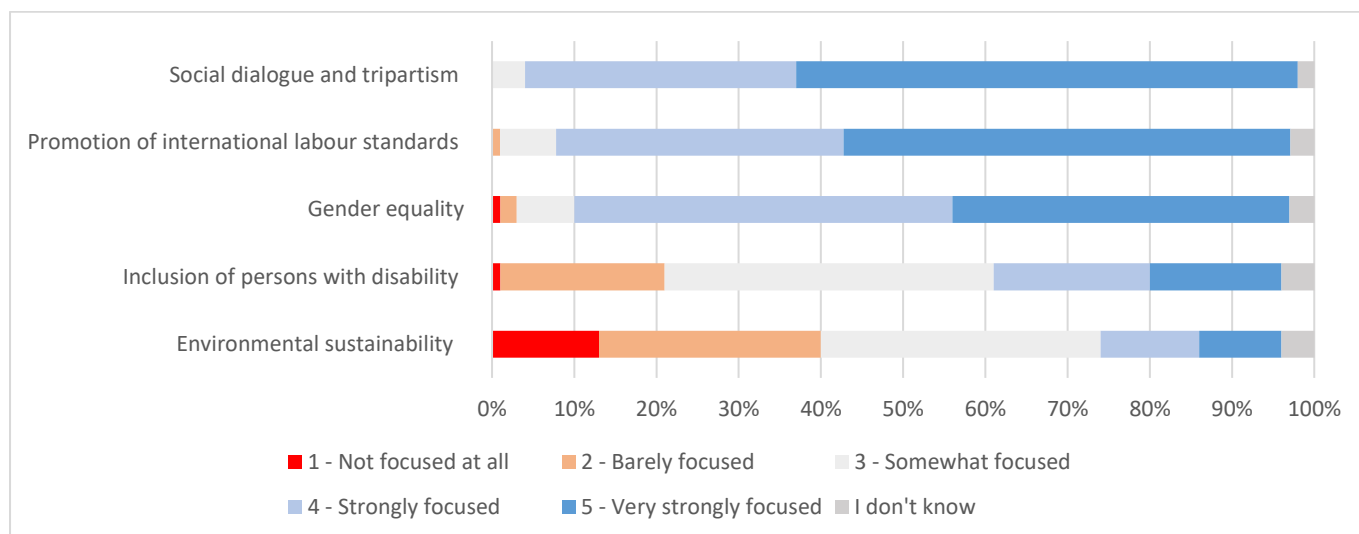
⁸⁶ Better Work Phase IV Fourth Annual Donor Report 2021.

⁸⁷ Interview with a BW donor.

⁸⁸ Interview with BW staff at global and country levels.

not focused or barely focused on the priority while only around 23% pointed to its strong or very strong focus on the priority.

Figure 6. BW focus on cross-cutting priorities



Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff, constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=100). "To what extent do you think Better Work Phase IV included a focus on?"

Gender equality

123. In Better Work Phase IV, there has been an increasing attention to gender equality which has resulted in tailored activities addressing the particular issues faced by women in the garment sector.

124. Based on research done in the previous phases of Better Work, the programme was able to create an evidence-based approach to tackle gender inequality and integrate the Global Gender Equality Strategy into its work.⁸⁹ This is well reflected by the fact that the 2019 Annual Donor report, included a section on gender in each country chapter.⁹⁰ Similarly, the drive towards reducing gender inequality also reflects at the country level, as in 2019 Better Work **Bangladesh** published a statement outlining 4 aspects relating to gender equality, which it aims to integrate into the work it undertakes in Bangladesh.⁹¹

125. In order to ensure that Better Work remains coherent with internal strategies as well as the needs of the countries, a twofold approach has been taken to ensure a certain amount of flexibility. On the one hand the needs of countries feed into the Global planning of the project, which has led to the streamlining of the gender strategy into four aspects relating to anti-discrimination, combating unpaid work and care, ensuring leadership, and skill development. Meanwhile, constituents can then use these guidelines to focus on the aspects that they find most complicated within their country.⁹²

126. However, despite the increasing focus on gender equality certain issues still persist. The aforementioned model which provides some flexibility, is sometimes inhibited by the willingness of constituents to acknowledge certain issues and to work on them. Furthermore, the decentralised approach can also lead to difficulties in communicating on what the global approach to certain issues is in the first place to key stakeholders.⁹³

More details on this topic are provided in Case Study 1 on Gender Equality.

Persons with disabilities

127. The Better Work programme had some ad hoc efforts, based on country-level initiatives or national laws, to promote inclusion of workers with disabilities within factories. Yet, in general it has not been successful in ensuring coherence with the needs of people with disabilities in the programme. While this is attributable to shortcomings in the design of the programme, this is also influenced by external factors.

⁸⁹ Interview with BW staff.

⁹⁰ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV p.25.

⁹¹ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.22.

⁹² Interview with BW staff.

⁹³ Interview with BW staff.

128. One of the best examples that seeks to include individuals living with disabilities can be found in **Indonesia**. Here, to ensure their integration into factories an increasing number of trainings are being offered to persons with disability to promote employment opportunities for them.⁹⁴ In **Jordan**, the issue integrating of individuals with disabilities was not targeted directly, with the programme mainly focusing on ensuring that companies comply with pre-existing Jordanian laws regarding hiring quotas.⁹⁵ Yet, at the country levels there does not seem to be, in practice, a tailored approach which would ensure increasing coherence with the inclusion of people with disabilities. This is because in some cases stakeholders felt that this area should not be a priority.⁹⁶ Nevertheless, BW Jordan launched a new project in April 2022 with an output entirely focused on supporting persons with disabilities. This can support other countries to explore such initiatives as well.⁹⁷
129. In other cases, challenges to focus on persons with disabilities had to do less with the work of BW, but more with fundamental issues within the country. As the case of **Nicaragua** shows, it was hard to ensure that the programme remains coherent with the aims of disability inclusion, because the legislation does not provide sufficient guidance on who qualifies as a “person with disabilities”.⁹⁸

Environmental sustainability

130. The programme did not include a specific focus on environmental sustainability in its strategy and design of activities. Activities which related to environmental concerns were rather rare and those that did take place were carried out in an ad hoc manner, lacking systemic integration and a cohesive approach. The global Mid-Term evaluation already recommended BW to consider how issues of climate change could be better integrated in BW, noting the impact this may have on workers. This recommendation can still be further addressed in Phase V.⁹⁹
131. The most prevalent example of Better Work addressing environmental concerns, yet one that was mostly relied on ad hoc implementation of environmental concerns took place in **Vietnam** in the form of a pilot project on environmental compliance. Despite some setbacks in developing the project, there is optimism at the Global level that the lessons learnt can act as a steppingstone in the next phase of Better Work.¹⁰⁰
132. Nevertheless, despite these limited steps, little has been done to mainstream environmental sustainability concerns into the work that the programme does. This is supported by collected data which showed that 13% of survey respondents stated that the programme didn't focus at all on environmental sustainability and 27% believed that the programme barely focused on this aspect. Similarly, reports evaluating the programme's progress have shown that despite recognition of the environmental factor concrete steps need to be taken to integrate environmental measures at a more comprehensive level.¹⁰¹

Social dialogue and tripartism

133. The ILO has a unique governance structure, comprising representatives of governments, employers, and employees. Therefore, promoting social dialogue and tripartism among these three constituents is a core concern and priority of ILO across its work.
134. Better Work, similarly, has a role to play in promoting social dialogue. The design of the programme includes social dialogue at two levels, namely within the factory (including workers and management) and on the national level (with trade unions, employer representatives, and governments).
135. At the *factory level*, social dialogue is mainly promoted through the establishment of Performance Improvement Consultative Committees (PICCs). These committees act as a platform for promoting and facilitating dialogue between managers and workers, and are leveraged through BW advisory services to promote continuous improvement planning. Many workers feel that they can more easily voice their concerns or find ways out of seemingly deadlocked situations without the need for excessive conflict. Similarly, female workers also benefited as they felt more comfortable to voice their concerns. By providing training to its participants, BW staff are able to contribute to a more conducive social dialogue, allowing factories to try and tackle existing disagreements on their own through the newly developed capacities.

⁹⁴ Mid-Term Cluster Evaluation of Better Factories Cambodia, Better Work Indonesia, and Better Work Vietnam programmes p.101.

⁹⁵ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.9.

⁹⁶ Mid-Term Cluster Evaluation of Better Factories Cambodia, Better Work Indonesia, and Better Work Vietnam programmes p. 101

⁹⁷ Interview with BW Jordan staff.

⁹⁸ Interview with BW Nicaragua staff.

⁹⁹ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV, p.40.

¹⁰⁰ Interview with BW staff.

¹⁰¹ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.38; Interview with ITUC representatives.

136. At the *national level*, the programme promotes social dialogue among the key social partners in the garment sector. However, the design of BW focuses predominantly on factory-level social dialogue, rather than facilitating national-level social dialogue. As explained by BW staff and a member of the BW programme Advisory Committee, this means that national-level social dialogue was addressed through various activities but has not received the same comprehensive attention compared to factory-level social dialogue.¹⁰² An ILO staff member also mentioned that promoting and supporting social dialogue is a responsibility of other ILO units such as INWORK, rather than BW.¹⁰³

Promotion of labour standards

137. In the sphere of promoting labour standards, there are two considerations:

138. On the one hand, the cross-cutting concern refers to the provision of advice and technical assistance to social partners to *ratify and implement International Labour Standards*. This requires legal change at government level. The current evaluation has found limited evidence of advocacy to adopt new ILS by the BW countries, given that the main focus of the programme is factory-level services. One example mentioned in the mid-term evaluation of Better Work in **Vietnam** shows that some efforts are being made by the Vietnamese government to align national laws with the ILS.¹⁰⁴ Interviews with various staff did not identify other examples.

139. At the *factory level*, promotion of labour standards was to some extent implemented through the compliance assessments. However, these assessments use national laws as baseline and not ILS. National laws can have lower standards or requirements than the ILS. Therefore, compliance with national laws does not necessarily mean that international labour standards were promoted and implemented. A representative of one global buyer specifically noted that one of the shortcomings of Better Work may be that they focus too much on national labour standards that may not be as high as international ones, in that way not ensuring better conditions for the workers¹⁰⁵.

140. As already noted in the Mid-Term Evaluation, BW has made efforts in Phase IV to mainstream ILS in different industry initiatives for data sharing. For example, BW has supported the Social and Labor Convergence Program (SLCP) to transform its standard agnostic industry tool into a tool that measures compliance with ILS.

3.3 Effectiveness

141. According to the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, effectiveness measures to what extent the intervention has achieved its set-out objectives and results.¹⁰⁶ Hence, the following section includes an overview of set and achieved targets and achievements of outputs and outcomes at individual, factory, and national level, and focusing on cross-cutting issues. The section also explores the extent to which the results of the Better Work programme are visible and how the achievement of the set outputs and outcomes was affected by COVID-19 pandemic.

3.3.1. Achievement of outputs

142. In the context of this evaluation, outputs are the immediate results of products or services delivered by the Better Work programme. The intervention logic created for this evaluation with an aim to better understand how specific outputs were expected to create results and, subsequently, impact, grouped Better Work's outputs (services and products delivered) into three different levels – individual, factory and national levels.

- *Individual-level activities* focused on capacity building of specific individuals, and outputs can include trainings implemented, advice provided.
- *Factory-level activities* focused on increasing compliance and improvement of conditions and processes in the factories. Factory-level outputs can include number of factory compliance and process reports or number of social dialogue meetings at factory level facilitated.

¹⁰² Interview with BW staff and a PAC member.

¹⁰³ Interview with ILO staff.

¹⁰⁴ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with a global buyer representative.

¹⁰⁶ <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/543e84ed-en/1/3/4/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/543e84ed-en&csp=535d2f2a848b7727d35502d7f36e4885&itemIGO=oe&itemContentId=book#section-d1e3395>

- *National- and global-level activities* included were concerned with supporting state actors and supporting the policy environment at national and global level to discuss and improve working conditions. Outputs include number of research papers and policy reports as well as number of tripartite meetings organised and technical assistance/consultations provided.

143. This section presents an overview of what outputs were achieved on the individual, factory, national and global level as well as cross-cutting outputs related to gender equality, workers with disabilities, labour standards, and similar.

General achievements of outputs and outcomes

144. The Better Work Phase IV had five longer-term outcomes planned for the phase for the **Global programme**. Four of them addressed the overall objective of improved working conditions. One outcome was the support outcome which focused on smooth running of the programme. The support outcome will not be thoroughly discussed in this section as it is concerned more with the topics discussed in the Efficiency section. Each of the outcomes had several specific outputs planned. The progress towards achieving these outputs and outcomes is presented in Annex 2. As can be seen from Table 11 in the annex, **most of the outputs and outcomes were realised according to the schedule**. The only global output that has not been realised according to the schedule is expansion to Myanmar as the activities related to expansion were put on hold due to the military coup.¹⁰⁷

145. The global programme also had some quantifiable targets in terms of its coverage (outcome 1) and stakeholder engagement (outcome 2), which were achieved with only the target for stakeholder engagement not being reached. In 2021 Better Work directly reached 1,762 factories (target for 2021 – 1,800) and 2,799,252 workers (target for 2021 – 2.8 million). Most factories that joined the programme in 2021 were located in Bangladesh (89 factories) and Egypt (16 factories). Moreover, the programme coverage increased due to the recently established country programme in Pakistan and new interventions in Madagascar and Sri Lanka. The programme indirectly reached additional 259 factories through the Better Work Academy. Considering stakeholder engagement, in 2021 Better Work had 45 brands as global business partners (target for 2021 – 47) and additionally engaged with 117 brands on a more transactional basis.¹⁰⁸ In 2022 the programme continued according to the schedule and further increased its outreach.

146. Each **country programme** had its own longer-term goals with specific outcomes and outputs, aligned with the global programme. Several Better Work staff members, donors and buyers noted that it is very hard to compare the Better Work country programmes with each other as the context Better Work teams operate in differs a lot from country to country. In some countries the conditions are more favourable and Better Work programmes are more advanced, while in other countries the Better Work programmes are only starting or the conditions in the country create some challenges (these challenges are discussed in detail in later sections). Hence, the country-specific longer-term outcomes and outputs fit the maturity of the country programme and country context. The progress towards achieving these outcomes and outputs is presented in the tables in Annex 2. **The overview of the progress towards the planned outputs in each country shows that most of the country programmes managed to realise their plans according to the schedule. However, some Better Work teams faced some external challenges, including COVID-19, resulting in delays.**¹⁰⁹

147. Better Work had also some harmonised indicators for all countries it covers. The targets for 2022 and actual 2022 mid-term values for these indicators for the countries on which this evaluation is focusing are presented in Table 10 **Error! Reference source not found.** in Annex 2. The targets and actual values for 2021 are presented in Table 11 in Annex 2.

148. The overview of the harmonised country indicators shows that **the programme is progressing well towards its goals**. In 2021 most of the targets were achieved fully or to more than 80% of its value. The 2022 mid-year figures shows that more than half of the indicators were already achieved to at least 80% of the target value after the first six months of the year.

149. However, slight underachievement of the planned targets in 2021 points to some challenges considering specific targets in all countries. In some countries, such as **Bangladesh** and **Cambodia**, the main reason for underachieving some targets was the COVID-19 pandemic as the country programmes were completely on

¹⁰⁷ Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021.

¹⁰⁸ Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021.

¹⁰⁹ Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021.

track to achieve their goals by the end of 2019, before the COVID-19 outbreak. Due to the pandemic, some of the planned assessments in 2020 did not take place and this backlog also delayed other assessments.¹¹⁰

150. Moreover, limited opportunities to organise face-to-face activities resulted in fewer trainings being organised and fewer people attending them. Due to the challenges and delays in work for Better Work's partners and beneficiaries, likewise some of them could not keep up their level of engagement and involvement, which resulted in decreased engagement of national-level partners and lower commitment to ensure compliance by the factories. While the negative effects of COVID-19 have been creating challenges for Better Work since 2020, achievement of some of the targets for 2022 during the first six months of a year indicates that the programme may have been able to overcome some of the challenges and adapt to the situation.
151. Furthermore, many country programmes expanded their reach to new factories. Historically it is observed that as the factories join the Better Work programme and participate in Better Work assessment for the first time, they usually have high non-compliance (which then decreases over the years the factory is participating in the programme). Hence, the non-compliance during the Better Work assessments were higher than expected in some countries, but this does not mean that the programme's activities were ineffective.
152. Moreover, some of the targets were not achieved due to other external circumstances that the programme could not influence¹¹¹. For example, in **Cambodia**, some planned activities were postponed by the national partners. In **Egypt**, some of the activities were delayed because of the challenges caused by the funding constraints. In **Nicaragua**, the Better Work team had to postpone some of the planned activities due to the political situation.¹¹²
153. Despite the outlined challenges and some of the targets being underachieved, the progress made is still clearly visible. Most of the targets were reached to the level above 80%. In the light of COVID-19 pandemic and the challenges it brought, the observed results should still be seen positively. Dealing with COVID-19 pandemic required a lot of additional resources and swift adaptation to constantly changing conditions. Hence, a slight underachievement of the set-out targets does not mean that Better Work underperformed or that any significant inefficiencies appeared.

Achievement of individual-level outputs

154. **Considering individual-level outputs, around half of the Better Work country programmes achieved their targets** in terms of number of training activities organised (as it can be seen looking into targets such as number of training sessions and number of industry seminars in Table 10). This contributes, at least partly, to the achievement of the planned *global outcome 1 – accelerated improvements in working conditions and business competitiveness through in-factory services* – and specific country programme outcomes focusing on improvements in working conditions and business competitiveness as well as promotion of decent work.
155. As already mentioned, most of the challenges that prevented the country programmes to achieve these targets are related to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹¹³ Still, despite slightly lower numbers of trainings and industry seminars than expected due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of individuals reached by trainings and advisory services was constantly increasing throughout Better Work Phase IV. Some of the country programmes also managed to expand their coverage with trainings and reach their targets despite the challenges caused by the pandemic. Some of the country programmes created new initiatives to ensure more effective training delivery and make their services more accessible.

Better Work **Vietnam** has been expanding its training services throughout Phase IV of the programme even though it did not reach its targets for 2021. In 2019 Better Work Vietnam delivered more training courses than the set target (125 courses compared to the target of 107). In the same year, a share of factories using their 15-days' training allowance and the share of days used-up from the allowance also increased. Altogether 220 out of 370 factories eligible for the 15-days' training allowance used some or all of the available training days compared to only 15 factories in 2018.¹¹⁴

Since 2017, Better Work **Bangladesh** was able to significantly expand the available training and learning opportunities for its constituents, especially through its Learning Hub initiative. Through the initiative, Better Work Bangladesh provided direct training on resource management and productivity topics for national tripartite constituents and

¹¹⁰ Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021.

¹¹¹ Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021.

¹¹² Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021.

¹¹³ Better Work Fourth Annual Donor Report 2020.

¹¹⁴ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.44.

created a pool of almost 200 master trainers among personnel from employers' and workers' organisations. Between July 2020 and March 2021, the initiative provided five Training of Trainers courses. Better Work Bangladesh plans to expand this initiative and include a wider range of labour compliance themes, especially as this training approach is seen as a key strand of the programme's sustainability strategy.¹¹⁵ Moreover, through the Learning Hub, BWB also looks to scale the work in other sectors beyond RMG. To this end, consultation and training to industry actors from other sectors such as leather, agroprocessing, electronics etc. has already begun. The Learning Hub Training of Trainers model is also being implemented in **Indonesia**.¹¹⁶

156. The overview of the information collected from BW countries indicates that individual-level outputs provided were in high demand and perceived as of high quality.

According to the Satisfactory Training Survey 2019 and Training Need Assessment Survey 2020, in **Indonesia** 84.2% of respondents saw clear or highly clear links between the trainings and industry seminars provided by Better Work Indonesia and their advisory services.¹¹⁷

In **Vietnam**, in 2019 83% of the training participants evaluating 125 training courses considered quality and value of the trainings to be "excellent".¹¹⁸

In **Jordan**, the results of workers' surveys conducted by Better Work Jordan for monitoring purposes shows that the workers were satisfied with the trainings received through the programme.¹¹⁹

An interviewed Better Work staff noted for **Ethiopia** and **Egypt** that beneficiaries who attended Better Work trainings are mostly satisfied with them as the Better Work team makes them feel respected and valued during the training,¹²⁰ which likely results in them benefiting from the trainings more.

In **Nicaragua**, participants of the trainings offered by Better Work appreciated the high level of commitment and enthusiasm for the work done.¹²¹

157. The high quality of the trainings and high satisfaction among the beneficiaries may be a result of the innovative approaches Better Work teams implement in providing their trainings. For example, Better Work has been working on digitalising the trainings to make them more interactive and interesting through inclusion of games, videos and quizzes. Training programmes provided are also bipartite, meaning that both workers and managers join the training. This not only ensures that everyone in the factory has the same knowledge regarding important topics but may also facilitate communication between workers and management and build trust between them,¹²² leading to desired outcomes from the trainings.

158. From the assessment carried out for the evaluation it is evident that the trainings and advisory services of Better Work are of high quality and in high demand. However, some challenges, in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, hindered smooth delivery of individual-level outputs and prevented the team from realising their full benefits. Several stakeholders highlighted the limited access to offered trainings. For example, according to the Trade Unions in **Indonesia**, while training courses by Better Work, such as workplace cooperation training or training of trainers, are beneficial, they do not accommodate a large number of workers.¹²³

159. A national stakeholder from **Jordan** also noted that the limited availability of training hindered the ability of factories to use some of the other services or tools offered by the Better Work team.¹²⁴ Limited access to training seems to be a long-term challenge as has been reported in the evaluations of previous phases, for example the Better Work **Jordan** Phase II Final evaluation.¹²⁵ Finally, the Better Work team face a serious challenge in realising their individual-level outputs into outcomes. This challenge is explored in the section focusing on the individual-level outcomes.

¹¹⁵ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.vii.

¹¹⁶ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.40.

¹¹⁷ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.40.

¹¹⁸ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.44.

¹¹⁹ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.16.

¹²⁰ Interview with BW Egypt.

¹²¹ Better Work Phase IV Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021.

¹²² Interview with BW staff.

¹²³ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.40.

¹²⁴ Interview with factory representatives in Jordan.

¹²⁵ BWJ Phase II Final Evaluation, p.9.

Achievement of factory-level outputs

Activities targeting factories

160. **Considering factory-level outputs in 2021, around half of the Better Work country programmes achieved their targets** for factory engagement, assessments and factory-level social dialogue and the majority of the remaining countries slightly underachieved the targets (as can be seen looking into targets such as number of compliance assessment reports completed in the reporting period in Table 10). This has, at least partly, contributed to the achievement of *global outcome 1 – accelerated improvements in working conditions and business competitiveness through in-factory services* – and *global outcome 2 – influencing global retailers, brands and manufacturers in the establishment of business practices that promote decent work outcomes in supply chains* – as well as specific planned country programme outcomes focusing on improved business conduct and focus on ensuring decent work.
161. During the first half of 2022 the countries were progressing well. However, as can be expected after only 6 months, most of the targets were not yet achieved (Table 10 **Error! Reference source not found.**). The number of compliance assessment reports completed in most countries ranged between 30% and 50% of the set target, which can be expected for half of the period. Similarly, the number of advisory visits in the reporting period ranged between 30% and 60% of the set target. The number of training sessions organised ranged between 25% and 50% of the set target, except for **Indonesia**, where the BW team had already exceeded its target by June 2022.
162. The number of industry seminars organised ranged between 0% and 60% of the set target, except for **Indonesia**, where the BW team had already exceeded its target by June 2022. Around half of the targets showing the improvement of services provided were achieved. Targets for average number of days between an Assessment visit and the factory's receipt of the final report were not reached in **Ethiopia** and **Vietnam**. While several countries seem to be struggling to achieve their targets, it is important to note that the figures show the results from the first six months of the year. Additional challenges that may prevent them from achieving their targets for outputs are presented later in this section.
163. During Phase IV Better Work expanded its reach to the factories and maintained or expanded the provision of their core services to the factories, to further contribute to the achievement of global programme outcome 1. For example, an employer representative from **Ethiopia** shared that Better Work conducted assessments of factories and later followed up with concrete advice on how to address any non-compliance issues and with technical support needed.¹²⁶ A factory owner from **Egypt** shared that Better Work is not only an auditing platform but is focusing more on advisory services and helping the factories to conform with the compliance requirements.¹²⁷ **Better Factories Cambodia** provided factories with legal interpretation on the Labour Law articles related specifically to internal factory policies.¹²⁸
164. While factory-level outputs were being achieved, at least to a greater extent, some challenges appeared. Firstly, as with individual-level outputs, a lot of the challenges that prevented the country programmes from achieving their targets are related to the COVID-19 pandemic.¹²⁹ Despite adjustment of activities and switch to virtual service provision, some activities and targets were delayed or cancelled. For example, in **Bangladesh**, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Better Work team had strict restrictions on what work they could implement, and because of the restrictions some factory activities could not be implemented. This, according to an interviewed representative of a global buyer, resulted in worsening situations in some factories.¹³⁰ The workers in **Bangladesh** indeed noted that during the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Better Work team did not always check whether the conditions in the factories were in line with the requirements.¹³¹
165. Other challenges were also observed. A representative of one global buyer also noted that one of the shortcomings of Better Work may be that they focus too much on national labour standards that may not be as high as international ones, therefore not ensuring better conditions for the workers.¹³² Moreover, assessment results may be incomplete, which prevents effective Better Work interventions. For example, in

¹²⁶ Interview with a representative of employer organisation in Ethiopia.

¹²⁷ Interview with factory owner in Egypt.

¹²⁸ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.34.

¹²⁹ Better Work Fourth Annual Donor Report 2020.

¹³⁰ Interview with a global buyer representative.

¹³¹ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.25.

¹³² Interview with a global buyer representative.

Bangladesh Better Work struggles to properly implement assessment activities due to under-reporting of sensitive issues.¹³³ Lack of information on under-reported issues may result in slower improvement.

Activities targeting buyers

166. When discussing the outputs of Better Work related to the business environment, it is also important to consider programme's activities targeting national and global brands and buyers, which are contributing to the achievement of global programme outcome 2. The involvement of brands to Better Work activities has been gradually increasing throughout the last phase of the programme. For example, between 2018 and 2019 Better Work **Vietnam** admitted four new vendors and three new brands as new "Buyer Partners", which denotes the highest engagement with the programme.¹³⁴ In Phase IV, Better Work expanded its engagement with brands, focusing on the brands with the greatest leverage in the industry and brands that can commit to the Better Work long-term goals.¹³⁵ This included various activities. For example, Better Work **Bangladesh** organised annual buyers' meetings that provided an opportunity for national stakeholders and buyers to get together and discuss the most pressing issues in the industry.¹³⁶
167. On a **global level**, it is crucial to mention the Better Work Academy, which is a unique way for the programme to engage with buyers. Through the Academy the programme offered training on BW methodologies for brands and piloted various tools and trainings that brands could later use internally to help them with the decisions that impact workers.¹³⁷ Training and advisory services under the framework of Better Work Academy targeted brands' global staff. These services addressed topics as freedom of association, industrial relations, discrimination, and similar as well as focused on staff's capacity to implement tried-and-tested methodologies across the supply chains.¹³⁸ The Academy also aimed to raise awareness among the brands about social dialogue and support them in the process of introducing the social dialogue mechanisms at the factory level.¹³⁹ The Better Work Academy activities also contributed to the achievement of global outcome 2.
168. In general, the planned activities and initiatives with the buyers were organised and the planned outputs were achieved. The work of the programme targeting the buyers, especially the Better Work Academy, are perceived positively by buyers. They believe that the work done through the Academy is very beneficial and can have a lot of impact.¹⁴⁰

Achievement of national and global level outputs

169. Better Work's outputs on the national level include promotion of tripartite meetings and activities to support governmental actors, such as a Ministry of Labour or Labour Inspectorates. These activities contribute to the achievement of *global outcome 3 – strengthening institutions and influencing policies that create an enabling environment for decent work and improved competitiveness*. Specific global-level outputs include published research and reports that can inform policy decision-making, dissemination of the work results, promotion of Better Work activities and values. These activities should help Better Work achieve its *global outcome 4 – influencing the global policy dialogue on decent work and the SDGs with its unique evidence base and proven examples of success*.
170. In Phase IV, Better Work expanded its work with and strengthened its collaboration with the national-level constituents. For example, Better Work, together with IFC, supported closer alignment of policy advice to governments and developed joint plans in areas such as resource efficiency, labour inspections, gender, financing, trade, competitiveness, investment climate and labour policies. Moreover, Better Work teams brought together important national actors and facilitated the development of sectoral industrial strategies in **Vietnam** and development of garment sector strategies in **Cambodia** and **Jordan**.¹⁴¹ More examples of national-level activities conducted by Better Work are presented below.

In **Ethiopia**, the Better Work programme has been meeting or over-achieving output targets related to the Labour Inspectorate, including the analysis of the workflows of different regions and development of strategic compliance plans for all regions.¹⁴²

¹³³ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28 March 31, 2021), p.29.

¹³⁴ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.35.

¹³⁵ Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021.

¹³⁶ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.41.

¹³⁷ Interview with BW staff.

¹³⁸ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV p.28.

¹³⁹ Interview with BW staff.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with a global buyer representative.

¹⁴¹ Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021.

¹⁴² Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE pp. 57-58.

In **Jordan**, the Ministry of Labour established a Better Work Unit in the Labour Inspectorate. The Unit is supporting the Inspectorate in conducting inspections in the garment sector.¹⁴³ Moreover, the Better Work Jordan team produces annual reports that present trends in compliance across factories and examine the common issues across the factories. After the report is published, the team organises a meeting with relevant national-level stakeholders to present the findings.¹⁴⁴

In **Haiti**, the Better Work team provided training to labour inspectors, office of the ombudsperson and some judges on the topics of forced labour and trafficking. This technical training aimed to improve the ability of the labour inspectorate, office of ombudsperson and judges to recognise issues of forced labour and trafficking and spot the issues of non-compliance.¹⁴⁵

171. The national- and global-level activities were implemented, and the outputs were reached almost according to the plan. The outputs were perceived positively by stakeholders and constituents. Still, the challenge on how the outputs can be realised into long-term impact remains. For example, as regards Better Work's activities with Labour Inspectorates, the challenge the BW teams face is to ensure that the Labour Inspectorate has longer-term capacity to continue this work. Technical skills, access, resources, and data are the main four areas related to this challenge.¹⁴⁶ This is further discussed in the sections focusing on outcomes and impact.

Achievement of cross-cutting outputs

172. Through its outputs on individual, factory and national levels, Better Work also tackled issues related to the cross-cutting priorities important not only to Better Work but to the wider ILO as well. These priorities include gender mainstreaming, well-being and needs of persons with disabilities, environmental sustainability, labour standards, occupational health and safety. This section examines how well the targets for the outputs related to each of these cross-cutting priorities were achieved and what challenges the Better Work teams faced in this regard.

Gender equality

This topic is discussed in more depth in case study 1.

173. **As regards outputs related to gender mainstreaming, around one third (or, considering some targets, around a half) of the Better Work country programmes achieved their targets** in terms of number of training activities organised (as can be seen looking at targets such as the percentage of PICC management representatives that are women or percentage of SST training participants that are mentioned in Table 10). Some of the targets related to gender mainstreaming, like the rest of the targets, may not be achieved because of COVID-19. A Better Work Global staff member consulted for this evaluation noted that gender issues were exacerbated during the pandemic, and while some additional activities were planned, it may not have always been enough.¹⁴⁷ Nevertheless, the progress is evident.

174. One of the most important activities of Better Work Phase IV in terms of gender mainstreaming is the **development of its Global gender strategy**, which was launched in 2018. The new strategy addressed gender equality through four thematic areas – discrimination, paid work and care, voice and representation, and leadership and skills development. These themes are addressed through the targeted initiatives in factories and by gender mainstreaming in policy-level work.¹⁴⁸

In **Nicaragua**, the Better Work team designed a unique intervention to help factories address and prevent sexual harassment. The intervention had a more comprehensive victim- and survivor-centred approach. It focused on introducing specific conditions in the factory needed to effectively address sexual harassment, including adequate policies on sexual harassment, clear understanding among the workers and managers of what sexual harassment is as well as awareness of the existing factory policies on the issue, and functional grievance mechanisms to report cases of sexual harassment and access support for victims and survivors.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴³ Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021.

¹⁴⁴ Interview with BW Jordan staff.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with BW Haiti staff.

¹⁴⁶ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE pp.57-58.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with BW staff.

¹⁴⁸ Global Annual Report 2017-2018.

¹⁴⁹ Better Work Phase IV Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021.

Better Work Jordan managed to draw stakeholders' attention to the issue of sexual harassment even though the topic is a taboo in Jordanian culture and stakeholders would have preferred to avoid the topic. The Better Work team provided training on sexual harassment to factory middle management, supervisors and workers.¹⁵⁰

In **Ethiopia**, the Better Work programme provided soft skills training for women factory workers and offered them a women's leadership development programme. A sexual harassment training module, which was developed by INWORK, was also implemented in the factories. As regards women's representation in management, Better Work made progress with women's representation on PICCs and OSH Committees.¹⁵¹

The GEAR project in **Vietnam** and **Bangladesh** focused on helping women become supervisors and grow in their roles.¹⁵² The project aims to help factories in improving their line-level productivity through equipping women with the skills they need to effectively perform once they are promoted as a line leader.¹⁵³ The programme assisted women in developing both the hard and soft skills needed for their professional development and potential promotion.¹⁵⁴ The project also included coaching of factory managers on how to identify, train and retain female talent.¹⁵⁵ While the project was being implemented, it was realised that in some cases vertical career change is not as significant and as valuable as horizontal one due to high increase in workload and not the same increase in salary. Hence, the project also started taking into account these issues.¹⁵⁶

Mothers@Work programme in **Bangladesh**, which was developed through a national consultation in 2016 with the support of several ILO agencies and programmes, contributed to ensuring better conditions for mothers in the workplace. The programme recommends seven standards for maternity protection and breastfeeding support in the workplace, which include providing breastfeeding spaces and breaks, providing child care, ensuring safe work, providing women with paid maternity leave, cash and medical benefits, and ensuring employment protection and non-discrimination. The programme planned interventions in the factories that do not provide minimum standards for mothers. Through the cooperation with Better Work, the programme was implemented in 103 factories.¹⁵⁷

175. Better Work tried to ensure that their activities which focus on gender equality are implemented properly, are beneficial for the beneficiaries, and have a visible long-term effect. To achieve that, the Better Work team firstly focused on ensuring that their own team had the knowledge needed on gender equality that could help them implement the planned activities properly. This was done through trainings for the global team,¹⁵⁸ as well as country programmes, such as Better Factories **Cambodia**,¹⁵⁹ or Better Work **Vietnam**.¹⁶⁰ Moreover, Better Work chose a more complex approach to gender mainstreaming by ensuring that all relevant parties are involved in the activities to achieve more significant results. For example, with the GEAR project, Better Work targeted both gender equality and factory productivity to involve more parties and increase the commitment from factory owners. The project aimed to highlight the benefits gender mainstreaming can bring for factories in terms of productivity, profitability, and compliance.¹⁶¹ In **Cambodia**, the team had a strong commitment to eliminating sexual harassment in the workplace and is addressing this in a complex manner. Both male and female workers as well as the factory's group leaders, supervisors and managers were educated on sexual harassment.¹⁶²

176. The gender mainstreaming outputs were well perceived by relevant stakeholders, especially the work done on addressing sexual harassment. For example, in **Vietnam**, the programme on sexual harassment was positively received by the participants, who were management staff, factory staff and union representatives.¹⁶³ Better Work **Nicaragua's** initiative to tackle sexual harassment received a high level of commitment and enthusiasm from relevant stakeholders.¹⁶⁴ While the stakeholders in **Jordan** would have preferred to avoid discussing the topic of sexual harassment, the employers recognised the benefits of addressing this issue. Some of the workers also reported that they benefited from the available sexual

¹⁵⁰ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.25.

¹⁵¹ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.63.

¹⁵² Interview with BW staff.

¹⁵³ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.84.

¹⁵⁴ Better Work Phase IV Fourth Annual Donor Report 2021.

¹⁵⁵ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.84.

¹⁵⁶ Interview with BW staff.

¹⁵⁷ Mothers@Work (n.d.). *Final Report - Mothers@Work; Implementation summary in 103 Better Work factories.*

¹⁵⁸ Interview with BW staff.

¹⁵⁹ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.81.

¹⁶⁰ Interview with BW Vietnam staff.

¹⁶¹ Interview with BW staff.

¹⁶² BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.82.

¹⁶³ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.84.

¹⁶⁴ Better Work Stage IV Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021.

harassment training not only on the professional but also on the personal level.¹⁶⁵ In other cases, such as in **Indonesia**, certain stakeholders believed that gender mainstreaming is not an issue since “most workers in the sector are women, and therefore the programme is already female-centric”.¹⁶⁶

Persons with disabilities

177. From the review of the Better Work global and country strategies it seems that **there is a limited focus on inclusion of persons with disabilities**. The activities related to this issue are rare and there are no specific targets focusing on persons with disabilities and no related issues are included in objectives or planned outputs.
178. While the inclusion of persons with disabilities does not receive as much attention in Better Work activities as, for example, gender issues, some activities were still implemented in the countries where Better Work had to check for compliance with the issues related to persons with disabilities because of the national regulations. In countries where there are national legislations focusing on the inclusion of people with disabilities in the labour market, Better Work teams often integrate disability as an added vulnerability to gender, for example, and try to communicate to the national stakeholders what policies and actions are needed to effectively address it.¹⁶⁷
179. For example, in **Jordan**, as Better Work focuses on aligning factory activities with the national law, the programme team focused on disability indirectly and has been encouraging the employers to abide by national laws and recruit more persons with disabilities.¹⁶⁸ In 2019, Better Work **Indonesia**, with the support of ILO Jakarta, organised a training for officials from the Directorate-General of Industrial Relations and Social Security and business associations to build their capacity to ensure equal treatment and conditions for all workers, regardless of whether they have a disability or not.¹⁶⁹ Better Work **Indonesia** also partnered with PPDI, an organisation for people with disability, to better address inclusiveness of people with disability at their work.¹⁷⁰ However, activities focusing on persons with disabilities were implemented only in the countries where Better Work has to assess compliance with certain issues related to persons with disabilities because of the national law. These activities were not initiated by Better Work teams themselves.
180. The lack of outputs focusing on persons with disabilities may be a result of the perceived low relevance of the issue in the national contexts. For example, while in **Indonesia** a significant number of factories completed disability equality training and programme interventions on inclusiveness have been developed to promote employment of people with disabilities, some of the stakeholders do not feel that this should be a priority.¹⁷¹
181. The conditions to include the issue in the programme may also not be in place as regards the national contexts in which the Better Work programme operates. For example, in **Nicaragua**, inclusion of people with disabilities was an important topic at the beginning of the programme. As the national law encourages factories to hire at least 2% of workers with disability, the Better Work team included this in their factory assessments. However, the definition of disability was also not clear, which made it very difficult for the factories and Better Work team to understand whether the factories employ workers with disabilities or not. Consequently, Better Work stopped marking this 2% requirement in their assessment reports and instead of focusing on persons with disabilities redirected their focus onto gender issues.¹⁷² Moreover, the programme teams may not be able to focus on all the issues and may have to prioritise some of them over others, which results in lack of focus on inclusion of persons with disabilities.

Environmental sustainability

182. **There are no specific targets, objectives or planned outputs related to environmental sustainability.** However, some sporadic activities are being implemented. For example, the Better Work assessment process includes some issues related to environment such as safe storage and disposal of dangerous chemicals, even though they are assessed from the occupational health and safety perspective.¹⁷³ In **Haiti**, Better Work provided training for factory staff on chemical product management.¹⁷⁴ In **Vietnam**, Better Work enterprise advisers encouraged the factories to reduce their use of toxic and harmful chemicals. During the factory visits

¹⁶⁵ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.39.

¹⁶⁶ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.83.

¹⁶⁷ Interview with BW staff.

¹⁶⁸ Interview with BW Jordan staff.

¹⁶⁹ Mid-Term Cluster Evaluation of Better Factories Cambodia, Better Work Indonesia, and Better Work Vietnam programmes p.101.

¹⁷⁰ Interview with Trade Unions in Indonesia.

¹⁷¹ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.83.

¹⁷² Interview with BW Nicaragua staff.

¹⁷³ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE.

¹⁷⁴ Interview with BW Haiti staff.

the team presented strategies on how to handle and store chemicals in a safe and secure way to prevent accidents and leaks. Better Work **Vietnam** also provided training on emission reduction through the use of coal boilers. The trainings were positively received by the factories.¹⁷⁵

183. Better Work, together with IFC, also piloted an environmental assessment programme in **Vietnam**. The idea was to replicate Better Work's assessment of social issues to environmental issues. The pilot of the compliance assessment focusing on environmental issues was implemented successfully, had desired results, and was received positively. However, there are no plans to continue this programme.¹⁷⁶

184. While the number of outputs of Better Work focusing on environmental sustainability is low, there is still an interest from the stakeholders to focus more on this topic. For example, stakeholders from **Nicaragua** repeatedly asked the team to conduct environmental assessments and the Better Work team acknowledges that such assessments would be very beneficial for the stakeholders.¹⁷⁷ Hence, it is evident that there is potential and room for improvement in this area.

Labour Standards

185. **The topic of labour standards is close to the activities of Better Work and is integrated in its planning, targets, objectives and planned outputs.**

186. As can be seen in Annex 2, BW *global outcome 3 – strengthening institutions and influencing policies that create an enabling environment for decent work and improved competitiveness* – and *4 – influencing the global policy dialogue on decent work and the SDGs with its unique evidence base and proven examples of success* – are focused on improving conditions in the garment sector and contributing to better global policy dialogue on related topics. Some of the implemented outputs indeed focused on contributing to these outcomes and international labour standards. These activities include policy advice and influencing. For example, in **Vietnam** the Better Work Team continuously provided feedback and comments on new decrees as well as input to the governments on important laws and documents, such as Labour Code or guiding documents.¹⁷⁸ The input provided by the Better Work team was based, at least to some extent, on the international labour standards. Better Work also monitors compliance with international labour standards. In July 2017 Better Work launched the Transparency Portal that reports the Better Work factories' compliance with 26 national and international labour standards. The portal lists all factories that had at least two Better Work assessments and rates their compliance.¹⁷⁹

187. While some outputs related to international labour standards can be observed, they are rather limited. The activities of the Better Work programme firstly focus on factory-level issues, so the topic of international labour standards, especially those at national level, received less attention. Indeed, a representative of one global buyer also noted that one of the shortcomings of Better Work may be that they prioritise national labour standards instead of international ones.¹⁸⁰

Social dialogue and tripartism

This topic is discussed in more depth in case study 4.

188. Creating a better environment for social dialogue and building the capacity of trade unions at national level were important planned outputs for Better Work Global and Country programmes, as can be seen from outcome 3 and its planned outputs in **Error! Reference source not found.. The existing data and interviews with relevant stakeholders point to successful realisation of the planned outputs related to improving social dialogue and several activities focusing on this issue.**

In **Vietnam**, Better Work supported trade unions through their capacity building programmes and organised tripartite meetings on the concerns in the sector¹⁸¹. The trade unions' personnel also received training on negotiation skills that they could later use in social dialogue. The trained personnel was also expected to disseminate the information to the district level trade union members¹⁸².

In **Nicaragua**, just before the pandemic Better Work team carried out a project 'Building Bridges' project, which gathered together the representatives of factories, trade unions and the Ministry of Labour. Different stakeholders

¹⁷⁵ Interview with BW Vietnam staff.

¹⁷⁶ Interview with IFC representatives.

¹⁷⁷ Interview with BW Nicaragua staff.

¹⁷⁸ Interview with BW Vietnam staff.

¹⁷⁹ Global Annual Report 2017-2018.

¹⁸⁰ Interview with a global buyer representative.

¹⁸¹ Interview with the Bureau for Employers' Activities, VCCI, Vietnam.

¹⁸² Interview with the HCMC Confederation of Labour Vietnam.

had an opportunity to discuss the pressing issues in the sector from their perspective and jointly prepare an action plan towards improvement¹⁸³.

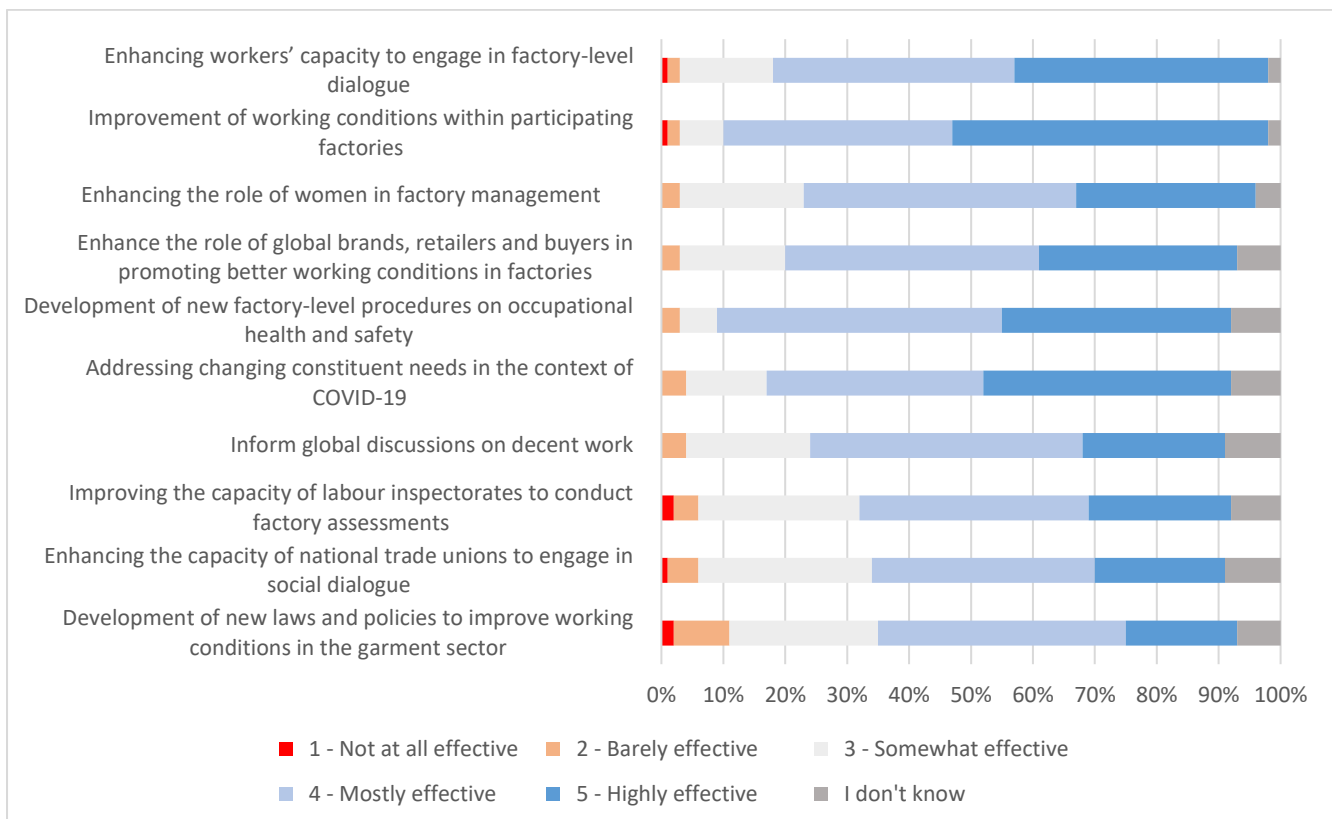
189. In general, it seems that the outputs of Better Work related to social dialogue, and especially the capacity of trade unions to participate in it, are seen as very beneficial and effective. For example, representatives of IFC, interviewed for this evaluation, noted that one of the traits that makes Better Work special is the programme's ability to bring different actors together and facilitate their dialogue. A representative of employers from **Vietnam** interviewed for this evaluation also noted that social dialogue has significantly improved because of Better Work activities and that their organisation does not face any difficulties in participating in available Better Work activities.¹⁸⁴

3.3.2. Achievement of outcomes/results

190. The planned individual-, factory- and national-level outputs of the Better Work programme were expected to result in planned outcomes, as can be seen in the tables in annex 2. This chapter analyses how well the programme was able to realise the planned outputs into the planned outcomes and results. **In general, Better Work was successful in achieving its main expected outcomes, despite certain challenges discussed below.**

191. As can be seen in Figure 7, respondents of the survey conducted for this evaluation believed that in general Better Work outputs effectively contributed to the planned outcomes. Respondents believed that Better Work's outputs mostly contributed to enhancing workers' capacity to engage in factory-level dialogue, improving working conditions in participating factories, and enhancing the role of women in factory management. The same conclusions can be drawn from the information gathered through the interviews with different stakeholders. As can be seen from the examples presented below throughout this section, the stakeholders most often highlighted Better Work's contribution to improved skills and knowledge among workers and factory management and improving working conditions, especially for women.

Figure 7. Effectiveness of outputs to achieve planned outcomes.



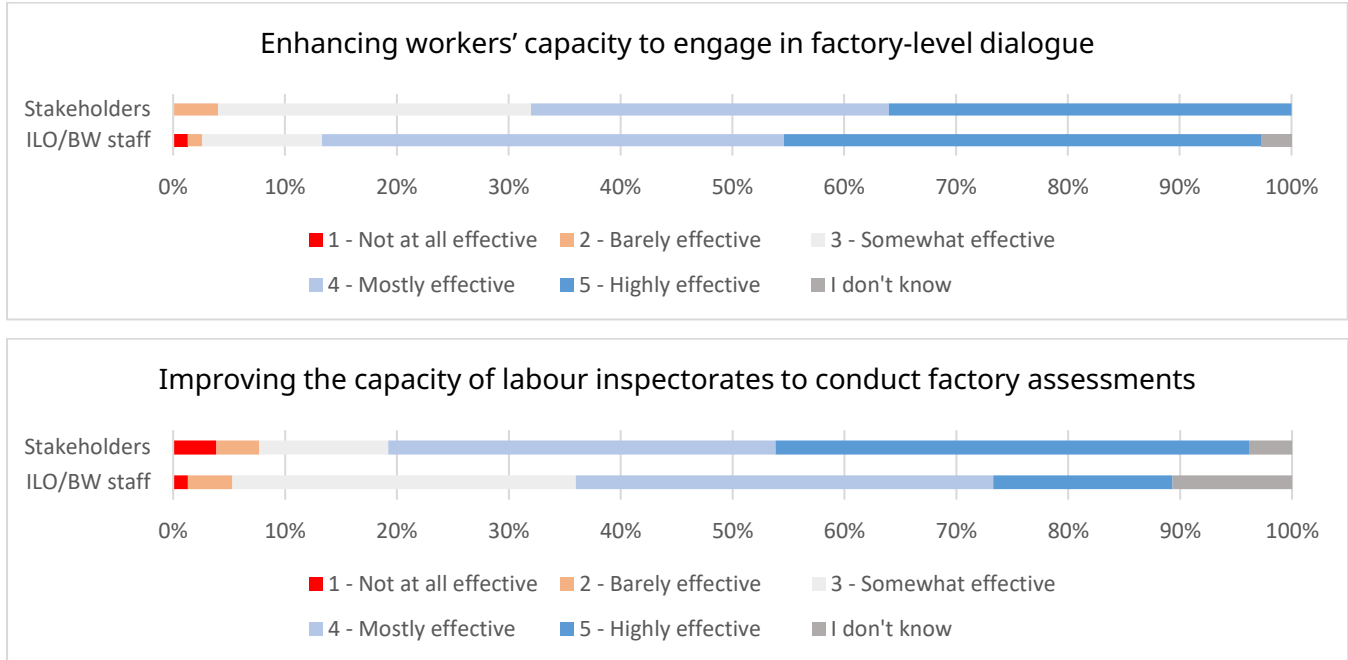
Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff, constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=100). "To what extent do you think Better Work's activities effectively contributed to the following goals?"

¹⁸³ Interview with BW Nicaragua staff.

¹⁸⁴ Interview with Bureau for Employers' Activities, VCCI Vietnam.

192. In most cases, ILO/BW staff and stakeholders shared equal perspectives on the achievements and progress towards the goals listed above. In a few cases, stakeholders perceived less contribution of BW activities to some of its higher-level goals, namely with regards to workers' capacity and with regards to labour inspectorates' capacity. While the majority still considered BW effective in this regard, the stakeholder results more often included "somewhat effective" compared to the BW/ILO staff.

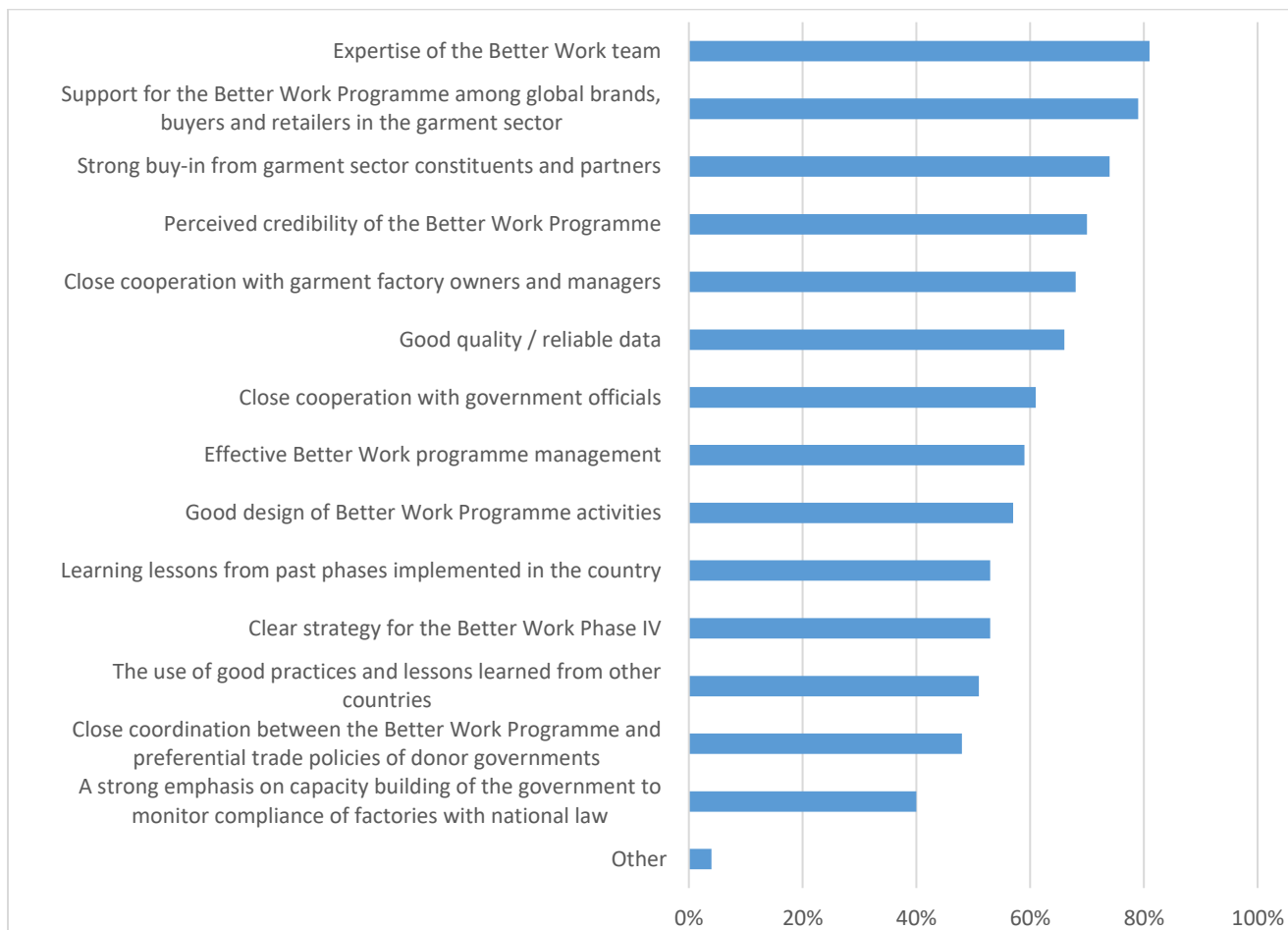
Figure 8. Differences in perspectives between ILO/BW staff and stakeholders on the contribution of BW activities towards specific expected outcomes.



Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff (N=75) and constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=25). "To what extent do you think Better Work's activities effectively contributed to the following goals?"

193. Overall, the respondents believed that **the main factors enabling the Better Work programme to effectively achieve the planned results are the expertise of Better Work team members, support for the programme among the global brands, and strong buy-in to the programme from the relevant constituents.** Figure 9 provides more details on the enabling factors. These findings are in line with the findings from the interviews and desk research, which are presented in the following sections. Indeed, the expertise of the Better Work team and their professional outlook on different issues have been named as some of the main factors contributing to the programme's success. It builds more trust in the programme and ensures greater buy-in from the relevant stakeholders. Moreover, it ensures that the programme outputs are of high quality and address the most important issues. Support for the programme from global buyers and relevant constituents are the important enabling factors as these stakeholders can put more pressure on the factories and in that way support the activities of Better Work.

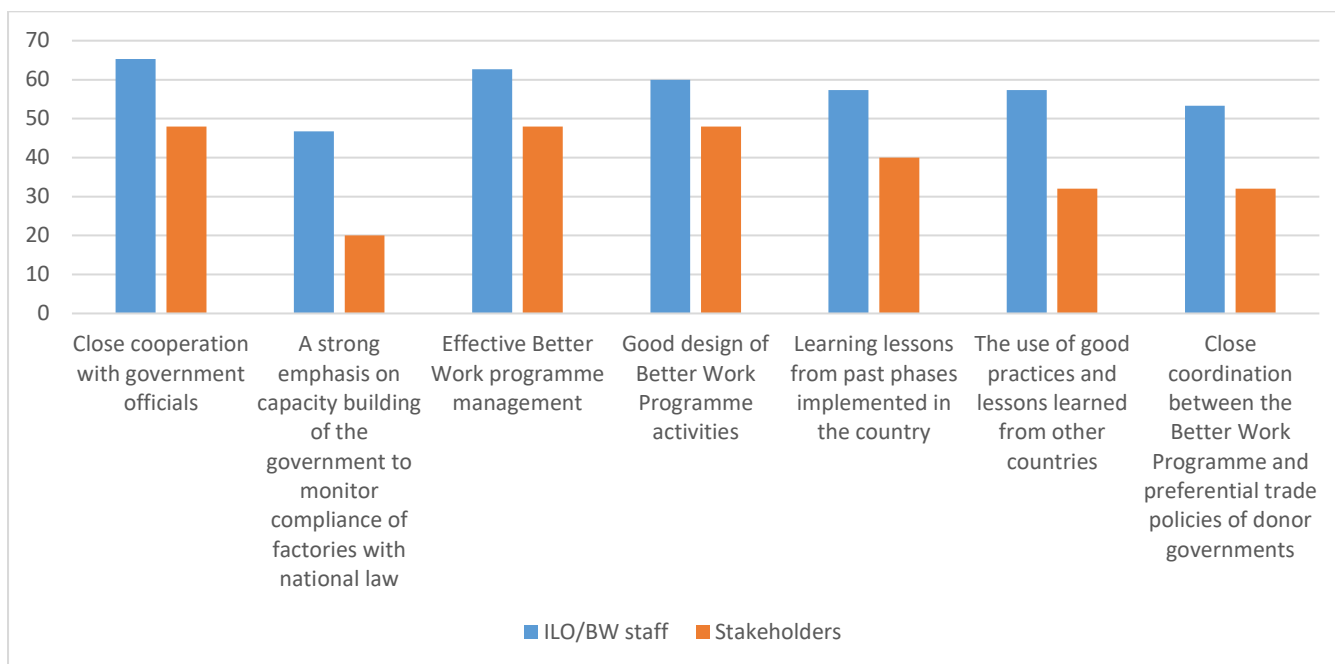
Figure 9. Factors enhancing the effectiveness of Better Work activities



Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff, constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=100). "In your view, which of the following factors were the most important for Better Work to achieve its goals?"

194. While the ILO/BW staff and stakeholders generally agreed on the enablers of BW's success, some differences in responses were still found. BW/ILO staff more often considered various other factors as enablers of success. In some cases, this can be attributed to deeper programme knowledge of BW by the BW staff compared to stakeholders (e.g., use of good practices from past phases and other countries, engagements with donors regarding trade policies). In other cases, there might be a perception of stakeholders that more engagement with the government could further benefit the programme.

Figure 10. Differences in perspectives between ILO/BW staff and stakeholders on the enablers of BWs success.

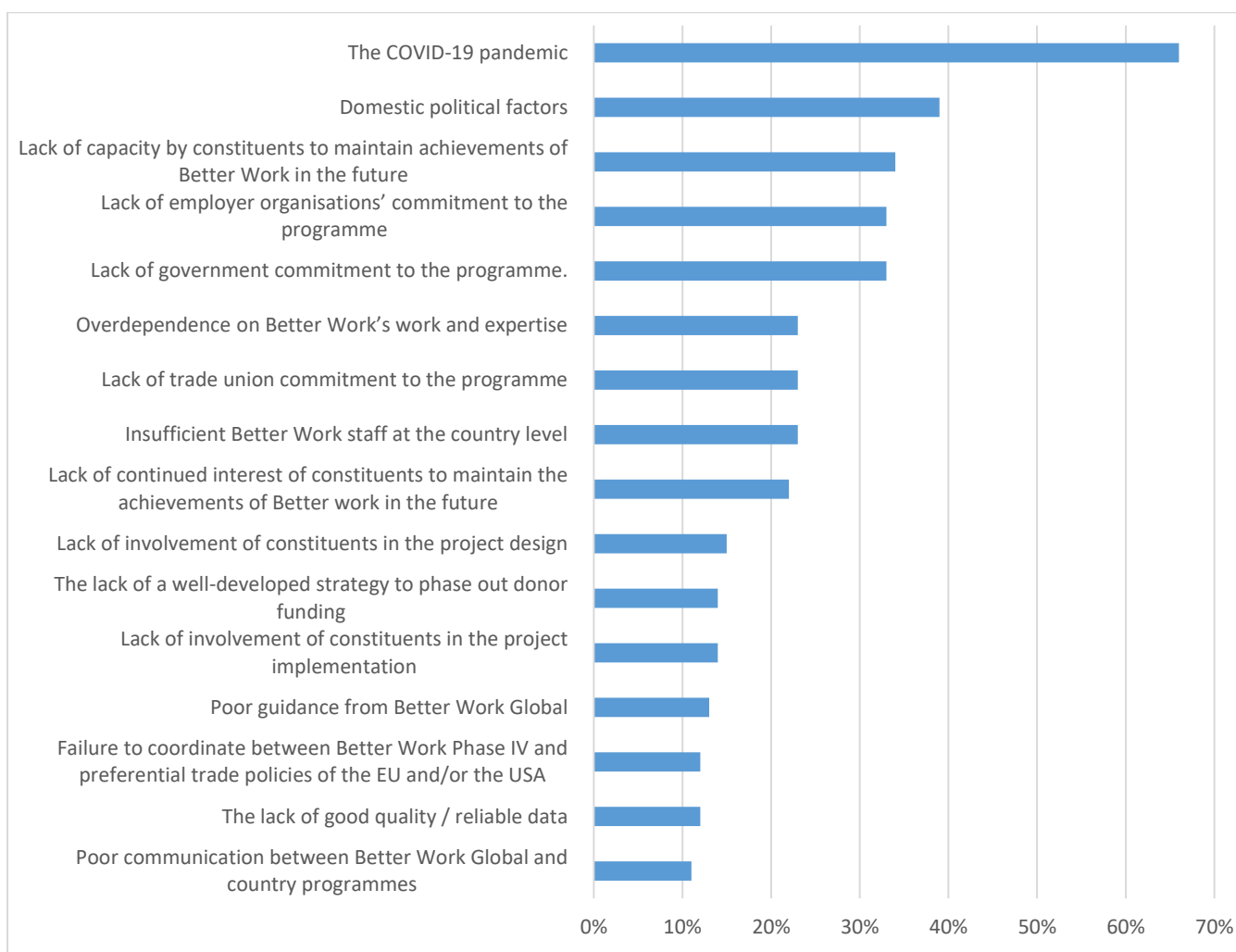


Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff (N=75) and constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=25). "In your view, which of the following factors were the most important for Better Work to achieve its goals"

195. Besides the enabling factors, **the evaluation also identified internal and external factors that hindered outputs from resulting in outcomes.** As already mentioned in the overview of the achievement of the programme outputs, COVID-19 resulted in several unforeseen challenges which were hard to cope with. Still, considering the circumstances, the programme managed to perform well. Other important barrier includes conditions in the country over which Better Work has limited control. Domestic political factors and lack of competences indeed hinder the effectiveness of the programme activities and jeopardise the sustainability of the results as the reliance on the programme becomes rather high. However, Better Work tried to address these hindering issues through capacity-building activities. Figure 11 provides more information on the hindering factors.

196. In almost all cases, ILO/BW staff and stakeholders provided similar answers. The exception is that 28% of ILO/BW respondents perceived a lack commitment of trade unions to the programme as a barrier, compared to 8% of stakeholders.

Figure 11. Factors hindering the effectiveness of Better Work activities



Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff, constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=100). "In your view, which factors hindered the achievement of expected results of Better Work in your country?"

Achievement of individual-level results and outcomes

197. Individual-level outputs of Better Work, including trainings and advisory services for individuals, were expected to contribute to individual-level outcomes and results, such as enhanced relevant skills and capacities of individual factory workers and managers. These outputs should have also contributed to the achievement of global outcome 1 – *accelerated improvements in working conditions and business competitiveness through in-factory services*. **The analysis of the available data indicates that the outputs of Better Work teams resulted in improved capacities and skills of the individual factory workers and managers and staff of national institutions.** Stakeholders also believe that the individual-level outputs of Better Work translate into the expected outcomes. The improvement in skills and competences are observed among factory workers, factory managers, government officials, and individuals working in other relevant organisations and institutions.

The results of the survey among participants of **Better Work Indonesia** industry seminars and trainings shows that the trainings contributed to increased knowledge in policies and government regulations related to the garment sector and skills to address non-compliance issues, improve working environment, and effectively discuss problems arising at the factory level. As many as 21.2% of the respondents stated that they applied all the knowledge and skills they gained during the trainings and 67.1% noted that they applied almost all knowledge and skills gained. A total of 63% of the respondents believed that the training and industry seminars were effective in supporting improvement of factory processes and 26% believed that they were very effective.¹⁸⁵ The stakeholders consulted for this evaluation, including representatives of buyers, trade unions and factories, agreed that the positive impact is still visible. For

¹⁸⁵ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.66.

example, the buyers shared that Better Work activities equip workers with knowledge needed to better understand the benefits of participation in trade unions.¹⁸⁶

The feedback from participants in the Better Work training and seminar in **Cambodia** point to the improved skills and capacities of factory managers and workers, which helps them to perform better at their job and even improve the conditions in their factories. For example, one participant noted that during the trainings they learnt about the updates to the Cambodian Labour Law regarding the compensation and benefits to workers and could then put that knowledge into practice and adjust their calculation system.¹⁸⁷ Government officials were able gain new knowledge and skills to effectively deploy different assessment tools and procedures when conducting labour inspections.¹⁸⁸ The interviewed representative of a trade union also noted a positive change in the understanding of the employers about the working conditions¹⁸⁹, which may be a result of the legal interpretation of the Labour Law articles related specifically to internal factory policies, provided by Better Factories Cambodia.¹⁹⁰

In **Vietnam**, Better Work Vietnam activities helped the tripartite constituents to strengthen their capacity to support their Better Work Vietnam core service delivery and to embed the knowledge and skills into their day-to-day work.¹⁹¹ An interviewed stakeholder representative also noted that there is a significant change in attitude of managers towards work organisation, job quality and occupational health and safety, gender equality, and similar issues.¹⁹²

Migrant workers in **Jordan** noted that the Better Work Jordan trainings provided them with knowledge needed to implement new approaches to factory work and teamwork.¹⁹³ A consulted representative of an employer organisation also shared that trainings helped factories to advance and improve in terms of social compliance and social dialogue with workers.¹⁹⁴

In **Ethiopia**, Better Work activities resulted in increased awareness of labour law and compliance requirements among workers and factory managers. Because of that the workers felt empowered to raise concerns with the management and managers became more responsive to complaints as they had more knowledge about labour law.¹⁹⁵ The interviewed factory management representatives from Ethiopia noted that Better Work's activities remained effective and relevant. They shared that trainings on topics such as OSH, workplace inspections, risk assessment and hazard identification, and chemical handling all contributed to a positive attitude change among OSH committee members and their increased sense of responsibility.¹⁹⁶

According to feedback from some beneficiaries, trainings provided by **Better Work Bangladesh** increased the confidence of factory workers to pursue their interests in the factories, such as ensuring hygienic conditions at the workplace. The trainings taught the workers about the importance of regularly cleaning their workplace and resulted in them regularly cleaning it, which improved their working conditions. Because of the cleaner surroundings the workers also started feeling more comfortable and safer at their workplace.¹⁹⁷ The consulted trade union leader also shared that as Better Work provided trainings and consultations to supervisors in the factories, the programme provided them with more knowledge about the importance of decent working conditions. Consequently, the managers started focusing on ensuring better conditions for the employees and improving the working environment in the factories.¹⁹⁸

198. The examples above show that individual-level outputs mostly translated into expected outcomes, namely enhance capacity to improve working conditions in the factories. Even though the consulted stakeholders did not report any unexpected outcomes, some shortcomings were identified. More specifically, despite available trainings, various stakeholders and beneficiaries (employees of state institutions, factory managers and workers) still lack some knowledge and skills. The biggest areas for improvement include OSH and workers' rights. This can be illustrated by an example of **Cambodia**. A factory representative shared that even though Better Work provides support and trainings, a lot of employers and factory managers still lack sufficient knowledge and skills to ensure decent conditions for workers.¹⁹⁹

¹⁸⁶ Consultation with buyers' representatives in Indonesia (Indonesia national-level consultations).

¹⁸⁷ Cambodia TPR Oct 2021-March 2022.

¹⁸⁸ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.65.

¹⁸⁹ Interview with the Cambodian Federation of Independent Trade Union (CFITU).

¹⁹⁰ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.34.

¹⁹¹ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.47.

¹⁹² Interview with the Bureau for Employers' Activities, VCCI Vietnam.

¹⁹³ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.11.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Jordan Garments, Accessories & Textiles Exporters' Association (JGATE).

¹⁹⁵ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.77.

¹⁹⁶ Interview with factory management and OSH Committee members in Jay Jay Factory in Ethiopia (Ethiopia national-level consultations).

¹⁹⁷ Factory-level group interview, workers, Bangladesh.

¹⁹⁸ Interview with trade union leader in Bangladesh.

¹⁹⁹ Interview with Employer representative – Fashiontext in Cambodia.

Achievement of factory-level outcomes

199. As can be seen from the sections above and the tables in Annex 2, the achieved outputs should translate into specific outcomes, some of them focusing on changes in the factories. Planned factory-level outcomes included accelerated improvements in working conditions and business competitiveness, influenced global retailers, brands and manufacturers in the establishment of business practices promoting decent work outcomes in their supply chains, and environment for sound labour relations, to name a few. This section analyses how well the planned outcomes visible at factory level were realised. The section focuses on the outcomes related to compliance, improvement of factory processes and conditions, social dialogue in factories, and improved buyer behaviour. This is also related to the achievement of global *outcome 1 – accelerated improvements in working conditions and business competitiveness through in-factory services* – and *outcome 2 – influencing global retailers, brands and manufacturers in the establishment of business practices that promote decent work outcomes in supply chains*.
200. Some of the quantifiable indicators that are measured by Better Work analyse the achievement of set outputs. Analysis of these indicators shows evident progress. As can be seen in Table 10 in Annex 2, around half of the targets showing improvement in conditions in the factories were achieved. Targets for the average compliance rate of publicly reported issues were not achieved in Bangladesh,²⁰⁰ Cambodia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Haiti, Indonesia or Nicaragua. Targets for the average non-compliance rate on gender-sensitive compliance issues were not achieved in Cambodia or Nicaragua. Targets for the percentage of factories with no non-compliant publicly reported issues were not achieved in Cambodia, Egypt, Haiti or Nicaragua.
201. The targets for percentage of factories that have put sound management systems in place for Human Resource Management and Occupational Health and Safety were not reached in Haiti, Jordan or Vietnam. Targets for percentage of factories that have established a PICC were not achieved by Jordan, Nicaragua or Vietnam. Targets for percentage of factories with an active and effective bipartite committee were not achieved by Bangladesh, Cambodia, Egypt, Haiti, Indonesia, Nicaragua or Vietnam. Targets for percentage of factories that have a CBA were not achieved by Cambodia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Haiti or Nicaragua. Targets for the percentage of factories demonstrating progress toward effective social dialogue and ability to resolve disputes were not achieved by Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Haiti, Indonesia or Nicaragua. Targets for percentage of factories that are on track to demonstrate progress in implementing their Learning plan were not achieved by Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Indonesia or Jordan. Targets for percentage of factories that have an effective grievance handling mechanism were not achieved by all countries except Vietnam.
202. While several countries seem to be struggling to achieve their targets, it is important to note that the figures show the results from the first six months of the year only.

Compliance and improved conditions in the factories

203. The factory-level outputs, such as factory assessments and audits, should result in increased compliance with national laws by factories. The overview of the existing evaluations and interviews with some relevant stakeholders, beneficiaries and Better Work staff indicate that **Better Work's outputs, at least to some extent, contribute to higher compliance and improved conditions in the factories.**
204. The Phase IV impact assessment found that factories with both a collective bargaining agreement (CBA) and union presence had, on average, non-compliance rates that were nearly 10 percentage points lower than factories with no CBA or union presence. CBAs also correlated with better working conditions and OSH, particularly during COVID-19.²⁰¹
205. Interviews with national stakeholders and BW staff point to the effective realisation of the Better Work outputs into the expected results. For example, staff of Better Work Global noted that while further improvements regarding factory compliance are necessary, a lot of compliance areas that used to be challenges have been significantly improved during Better Work Phase IV.²⁰² Better Work staff in **Vietnam** noted that even though the factories lack knowledge about labour standards and the existing legal framework, their involvement in Better Work activities, such as trainings and advisory services, result in a gradual decrease in non-compliance issues.²⁰³ An interviewed factory owner from Vietnam also shared that

²⁰⁰ An underlying issue here was the fact that during the pandemic-induced lockdown, factories began doubling down on cutting costs, which led to them deprioritising certain areas related to compliance. For Better Work Bangladesh, another reason was that post 2021, there was a large influx of new factories, meaning that factories in the first cycle which understandably had a lot of non-compliance issues, drove up the overall non-compliance rate of publicly reported issues. Similar challenges were noted for other BW countries as well.

²⁰¹ Forthcoming Phase IV impact assessment.

²⁰² Interview with BW staff.

²⁰³ Interview with BW Vietnam staff.

due to the support and advice from the Better Work team the factory was able to improve the conditions in the factory and increase compliance.²⁰⁴

206. Some visible improvement could be seen from compliance data. A transparency report from March 2019 indicates that in **Cambodia**, 41% of factories have fully complied with 21 critical issues, compared to 32% in the period before. The number of violations of those 21 critical issues decreased from 281 to 197. The percentage of low-compliant factories decreased from 10% in 2014 to 2% in 2019.²⁰⁵ According to **Better Work Bangladesh** compliance reports, non-compliance with the requirements for storage of chemicals decreased from 75% to 41%, and non-compliance with the regulations for inventory of hazardous substances decreased from 75% to 42%. The **Vietnam** annual activity report from 2019 indicates that over the 8 years that Better Work was in the country, non-compliance with having a functioning OSH council in factories decreased by 20%.²⁰⁶ The improvements in working conditions are also evident from the qualitative data collected. Some examples of the improvements in factory conditions thanks to Better Work activities are presented below.

In **Ethiopia**, the Better Work programme exceeded its targets for the implementation of the factory roadmaps in the factories receiving Better Work services.²⁰⁷ Representatives of the workers' organisations also highlighted that with the support of Better Work the factories managed to improve working conditions and, consequently, reduce work-related accidents as well as to establish workers' organisations inside the factories to empower the workers to voice their needs.²⁰⁸

In **Jordan**, the Better Work programme supported factories in introducing new laws and mechanisms to improve their factory conditions and processes.²⁰⁹ Better Work supported factories in improving the atmosphere and working conditions in factories, especially the conditions for migrant workers, and ensuring better compliance.²¹⁰

Policy advice and advocacy activities of **Better Factories Cambodia** are also linked with the long-term strategy for Cambodia's garment sector and some specific improvements that can be observed, for example, increase in minimum wage for garment, textile and footwear workers or an introduction of seniority payment under UDC as an inclusive benefit.²¹¹

An interviewed trade union leader from **Bangladesh** shared that audit procedures, which were necessary for the local factories to get orders and payment from foreign buyers, used to be very lengthy and included a lot of paperwork. The Better Work programme eased the audit process and at the same time focused on tackling the challenges revealed through the audit.²¹² Moreover, the interviewed stakeholders believe that Better Work Bangladesh significantly contributed to higher compliance and improving conditions in the factories.²¹³ Better Work activities can be linked to decreased instances of verbal abuse,²¹⁴ more effectively addressed safety issues, availability of maternity leave and special leave following injuries in the factory, and introduction of a worker grievance mechanism.²¹⁵ Introduction of accident insurance in factories in Bangladesh can also be linked to the Better Work activities.²¹⁶

207. Respondents of the survey conducted for this evaluation also believed that the majority of the outputs realised by Better Work were mostly effective or very effective in improving working conditions in the factories. As can be seen in Figure 12, outputs regarding social dialogue in the factories were seen as "mostly" or "very effective" for improving working conditions by the greatest share of respondents. Provision of policy advice to governmental institutions, delivering analytical and research outputs, and implementing the Better Work Academy were seen as the least effective outputs for improving working conditions.

²⁰⁴ Interview with a factory owner in Vietnam.

²⁰⁵ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.38.

²⁰⁶ 2019 Annual Report Vietnam.

²⁰⁷ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE pp.57-58.

²⁰⁸ Interview with representatives of workers' organisations in Ethiopia (Ethiopia national-level consultations).

²⁰⁹ Interview with Jordan Garments, Accessories & Textiles Exporters' Association (JGATE).

²¹⁰ Interview with Jordan Garments, Accessories & Textiles Exporters' Association (JGATE).

²¹¹ Interview with the Cambodian Federation of Independent Trade Union (CFITU).

²¹² Interview with Trade Union Leader, Bangladesh.

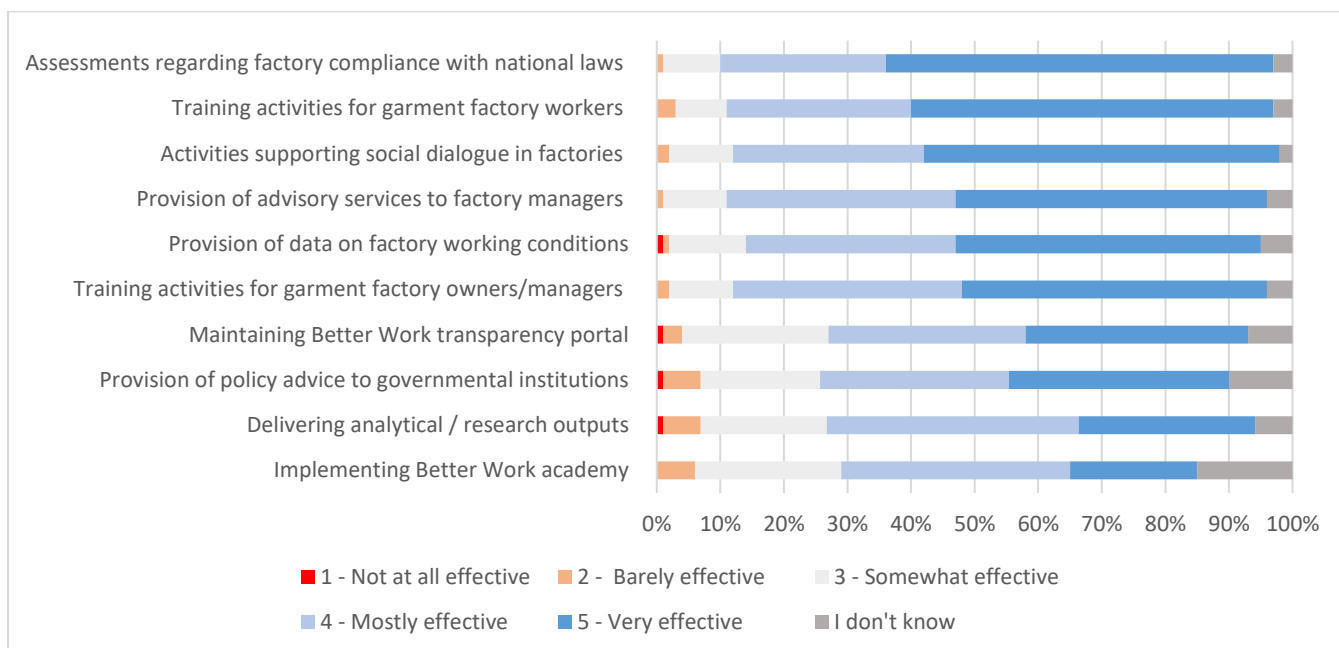
²¹³ Interview with Jordan Garments, Accessories & Textiles Exporters' Association (JGATE).

²¹⁴ Interview with factory workers, Bangladesh.

²¹⁵ Interview with factory managers and workers, Bangladesh.

²¹⁶ Interview with an ITUC representative.

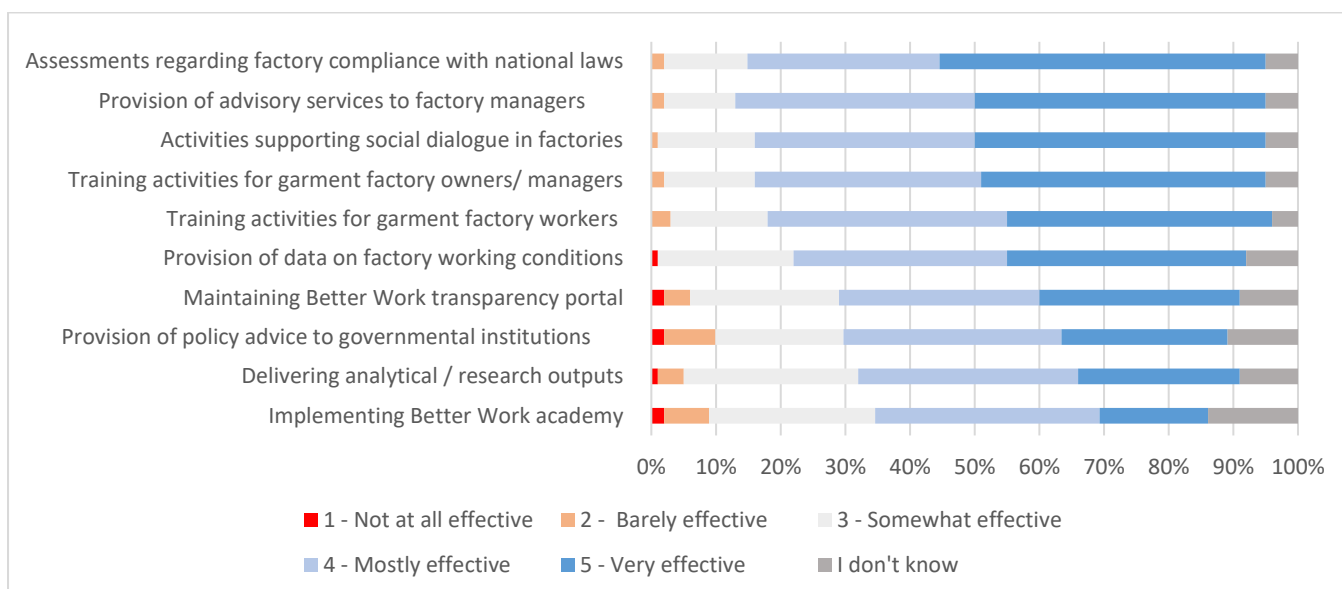
Figure 12. Effectiveness of outputs to achieve improved working conditions



Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff, constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=100). "In your opinion, which Better Work Phase IV activities were the least and the most effective to improve working conditions in the garment sector?"

208. Another important planned result of the Better Work programme, related to factory processes, is **increased competitiveness of Better Work factories**. Respondents of the survey conducted for this evaluation believed that most of the outputs realised by Better Work were somewhat effective, mostly effective or very effective in increasing competitiveness of Better Work factories. The most effective outputs in this regard were provided advisory services to factory managers, assessments of factory compliance with national laws, activities supporting social dialogue in factories, and training activities for garment factory owners and managers. More information on the effectiveness of the activities can be seen in Figure 13. **Error! Reference source not found.**

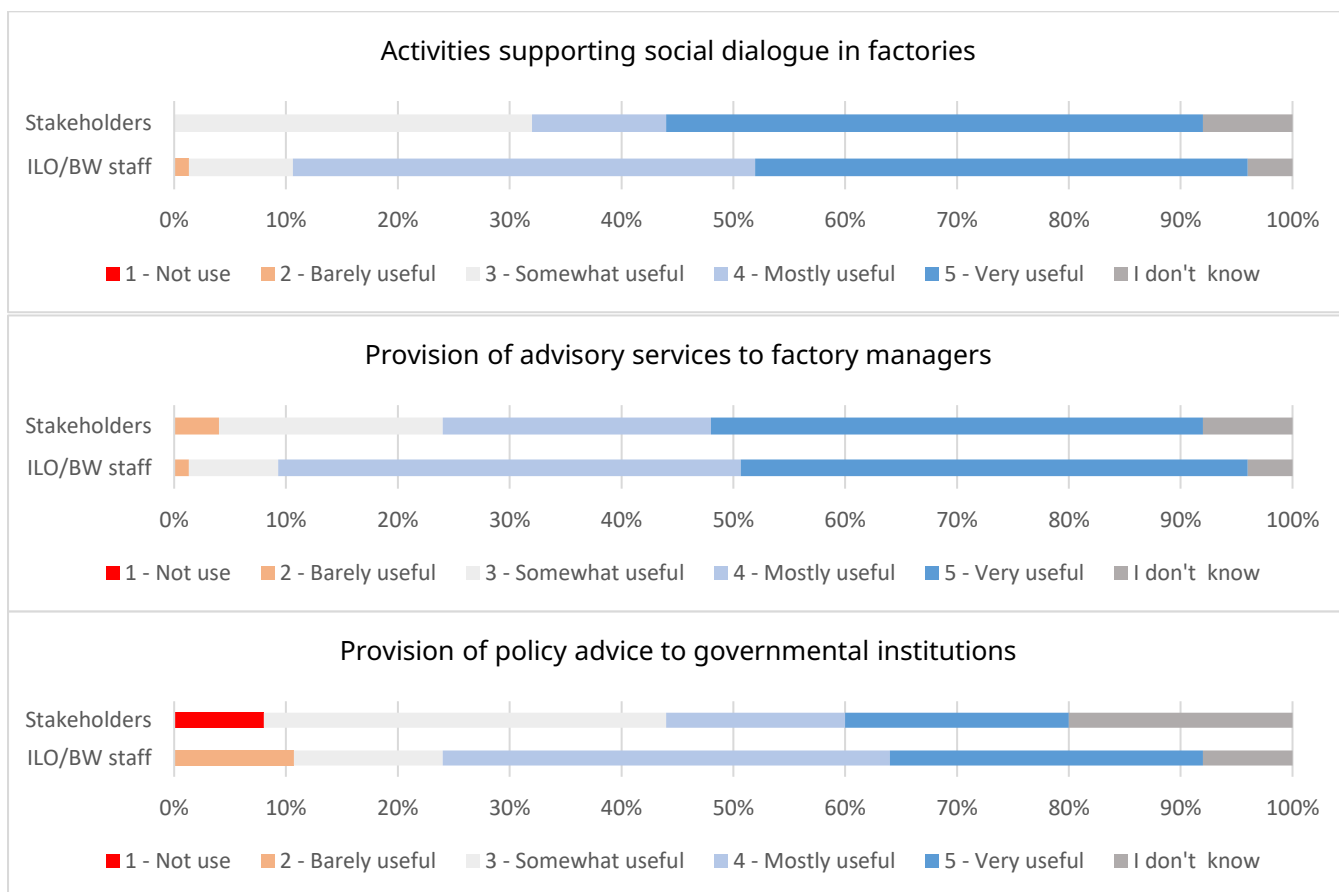
Figure 13. Effectiveness of outputs for increased competitiveness of BW factories



Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff, constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=100). "In your opinion, which Better Work Phase IV activities were the least and the most effective to improve competitiveness of factories in the garment sector?"

209. In the majority of cases, the BW and ILO staff and the BW stakeholders had almost the same perception on the effectiveness of the programme activities to increase competitiveness. However, in a few cases, some small differences were noted. As demonstrated in Figure 14, stakeholders are slightly less convinced of the effectiveness of factory-level social dialogue and advisory services to managers, as well as policy advice to governments, for the increase of factory competitiveness.

Figure 14. Differences between ILO/BW and stakeholders in their perceived effectiveness of activities to increase competitiveness



Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff (N=75) and constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=25). "In your opinion, which Better Work Phase IV activities were the least and the most effective to improve competitiveness of factories in the garment sector?"

210. Several characteristics of Better Work's activities and overall strategy may contribute to the relatively successful realisation of the outputs into increased compliance. More specifically, Better Work focuses not only on introducing specific practices in factories, but also on informing employers and managers about the importance of better conditions in the factories and the ways it can increase productivity. Consequently, as the employers have more knowledge on compliance and its importance to workers' well-being and the factory's productivity, they feel more accountable to meet the expected standards, for example to pay their workers according to the law and see the purpose of doing that.²¹⁷ This facilitates the change in employers' mentality and contributes to more visible longer-term results.

"As part of BW in **Ethiopia**, our factory established an OSH committee with 25-30 members, where 50% comprise factory management and 50% are workers. Better Work provided OSH-related trainings for committee members related to general concepts related to OSH, workplace inspections, risk assessment and hazards identification, chemical handling, etc. These trainings changed the attitude of our OSH committee and increased their responsibilities. Before the trainings, OSH-related issues were considered to be the responsibilities of the OSH officer, but after the trainings, all OSH committee members are taking responsibility for issues related to OSH in terms of creating awareness among workers, inspecting workplaces, etc.

The OSH committee members also participated in industry seminars where they share experiences with other similar factories on how to address issues related to OSH. This was a nice approach to better understanding different approaches in addressing various OSH-related cases. We also use training materials provided by Better Work to train their workers. Thus, after the Better Work training, there is improvement in handling OSH-related issues, more awareness creation among workers about their health and safety and hence there is reduction in the number of workplace accidents, better sharing responsibilities among OSH.

However, there is still limited awareness and capacity among workers to have high-level discussions with factory management. The channel of communication is via workers' counsel and grievance and complaint handling

²¹⁷ Interview with BW staff

managers. Workers need to be organised into basic trade unions so that they have a bigger voice about their working environment. But in the workers' counsel, the influence of management in the counsel is high and hence the workers' counsel is less effective in addressing issues raised by workers."

Group interview with OSH committee members (workers) in an Ethiopian factory.

211. Moreover, BW not only highlights the issues that are problematic, but also provides support and advice on how the challenges can be addressed. According to consulted national stakeholder from **Jordan**, Better Work brings the most benefit to the garment sector because while other auditors used to only mention what the factories are doing right and wrong, Better Work also provides advice on how to improve and brings a lot of experience and knowledge that factories can use.²¹⁸ Finally, the evidence indicates that Better Work outputs contribute to better compliance because they focus on long-term effects. An interviewed factory owner from **Vietnam** shared that even though changes related to behaviours and habits are difficult, Better Work consistently supports the improvements in factory conditions related to chemical management, workplace, light and noise, among other issues, and focuses on sustainable, systematic and continuous improvement.²¹⁹

"As a foreign woman, the assistance I received from Better Work helped to understand better the **Nicaraguan** Law related to Safety, Health, and labour rights. I attend every Better Work training session and scheduled activity in the factory, and I especially appreciate the POSH Program for its targeting of harassment and for empowering women. Furthermore, I don't speak English, but I'm learning Spanish, also with the support of my Better Work counsellors. As result, I feel more capable in my management position, and my life outside the factory is being improved by the influence of Better Work.

This kind of caring support is one of the things I value the most about the service we receive from Better Work. Working with Better Work is an easy, flexible, empowering, and comprehensive experience that has brought development to the Factory and the people there. I listen to them and rely on them when it comes to situations, I don't understand, for example employee relation issues, violence, and abuse conditions, to name a few. But I don't only ask for help; I do what is recommended to me to make changes happen, and they want those improvements to occur. That is reciprocation because they're doing their job by providing advisory assessments, training but also, they are observing how their effort is reaping results. I am proud of the improvements and success that my factory and I have been able to achieve, but we couldn't have done this without our collaboration with Better Work."

Interview with a Factory Manager in Nicaragua

212. While the presented examples and compliance data indicate the achievements of expected results from the Better Work activities, some shortcomings can be observed. According to **Better Work Bangladesh** compliance reports, non-compliance rates were high for some of OSH issues. Up to 36% of factories lacked emergency exits and 39% did not have a functioning fire alarm system.²²⁰ According to the **Vietnam** annual activity report, 50% of factories did not have sufficient on-site medical facilities and staff, 30% did not have a functioning fire alarm system, and 74% were non-compliant with annual overtime limits.²²¹

213. There are several reasons for existing non-compliance. While Better Work activities may educate employers and workers about improving factory processes, this does not necessarily result in a desired outcome. For example, a consulted stakeholder from **Vietnam** noted that while Better Work activities help raise awareness, this does not always translate into actual changes in working conditions.²²² The interviewed representative of employers from Bangladesh also shared that when Better Work Bangladesh started its activities, mid-level managers, who were responsible for dealing with workers' problems and responsible for different factory processes, resented Better Work as they felt undermined by it. Even though the situation is improving, this negative opinion about Better Work hindered the potential results in the beginning.²²³

214. Finally, it is not always clear whether the observed improvements can actually be attributed to Better Work activities. A consulted employer representative from **Cambodia** noted that at least some factories

²¹⁸ Interview with Jordan Garments, Accessories & Textiles Exporters' Association (JGATE).

²¹⁹ Interview with a factory owner, Vietnam.

²²⁰ 2021 Independent Interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.28.

²²¹ 2019 Annual Report Vietnam.

²²² Interview with the Bureau for Employers' Activities, VCCI Vietnam.

²²³ Interview with Employers' association, Bangladesh.

consistently improve their working conditions regardless of whether they were supported by Better Work and the improvement in Better Work factories is not necessarily greater.²²⁴

Social dialogue in factories

215. Better Work planned several outputs, such as capacity building of workers and employers, organisation of bilateral discussions and similar, that should, according to the programme's strategy, result in improved social dialogue on a factory level. Indeed, **Phase IV achieved significant progress in improving workplace cooperation and dialogue, creating conditions for workers to voice their opinions, and facilitating the empowerment of the workers.**

216. According to the Better Work staff, the progress is especially evident when Better Work factories are compared with factories outside of the programme. The work focused on highlighting the value of the dialogue with workers instead of enforcing social dialogue mechanisms without an explanation as to why they are needed. Better Work aims to "humanise" workers in the eyes of the employers and to present them more as assets rather than a cost to be minimised.²²⁵ Nevertheless, one of the most important achievements of the programme is the facilitation of PICC creation in factories.

In **Vietnam**, the Better Work programme established PICC regulations from the beginning, and the labour code change to set up a social dialogue committee at the factory level was based on the Better Work team's practices with the PICC regulations.²²⁶

Better Factories Cambodia helped to accelerate the establishment of mechanisms supporting social dialogue at a factory level. More specifically, it supported the establishment of bipartite Performance Improvement Consultative Committees (PICC) in factories, which are crucial for factory engagement and fruitful factory-level social dialogue.²²⁷ Due to the trainings provided by Better Work on social dialogue and collective bargaining the workers now know how to report any problems they face to the administration or HR. As noted by an interviewed representative of a trade union, due to Better Work activities, the most common solution to the problems in factories now is to invite the representatives of workers and unions to negotiate, so that the conflict can be avoided.²²⁸ Moreover, Better Work activities helped the employers gain a better understanding of the value of social dialogue at the factory level. A consulted employer representative noted that they used to not promote workers who were members of trade unions. Now promoting a member of trade union is seen as more convenient because they have more knowledge about compliance and social issues.²²⁹

In **Bangladesh**, improvement in effective social dialogue between workers can be observed because of the support from Better Work Bangladesh to the functioning of PCs and Safety Committees and capacity building support to trade union representatives at factory level. The complaint mechanisms also improved due to the advice Better Work team shared with the PCs.²³⁰ The consulted factory workers from Bangladesh shared that training provided by Better Work to various levels of factory officials and workers helped them build a harmonious relationship and contributed to quality social dialogue at the factory level.²³¹ According to the consulted employer representative, Better Work Bangladesh also contributed to the improved relationships between workers and managers and helped the employers to learn how to address their problems more proactively.²³²

217. Despite some progress, for several reasons it is challenging for Better Work to ensure its outputs translate into improved social dialogue on a factory level, mainly related to the mindset of the employers and factory managers. Existing evidence indicates that factory managers and their attitudes still discourage trade union formation.²³³ Moreover, data from **Bangladesh** indicate that while PICCs, supported by Better Work, promote social dialogue at the factory level, power imbalance between workers and management may still result in disfunctions of the Committee.²³⁴

²²⁴ Interview with the Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia.

²²⁵ Interview with BW staff.

²²⁶ Interview with BW Vietnam staff.

²²⁷ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.34.

²²⁸ Interview with the Cambodian Federation of Independent Trade Union (CFITU).

²²⁹ Interview with Employer representative – Fashiontext, in Cambodia.

²³⁰ Interview with factory managers, Bangladesh, and; 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021).

²³¹ Interview with factory workers, Bangladesh.

²³² Interview with Employers' association, Bangladesh.

²³³ Interview with the Cambodia Labour Confederation, and; 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021).

²³⁴ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, pp.45-46.

Improvements related to buyers

218.Planned outcomes focused on the private sector also included influencing global retailers, brands and manufacturers so that they would be more considerate of workers' well-being during the establishment of their business practices and promote decent work outcomes in their supply chains. This, subsequently, affects factory working conditions.²³⁵ The Mid-Term Evaluation of BW global recommended enhancing engagement with buyers and brands in the second part of Phase IV.²³⁶ **The analysis of the available information shows that Better Work was able, at least to some extent, influence the global and national retailers to improve purchasing practices and their engagement with factories.**

219.The most important achievements as regards buyers may be the related to decreased compliance duplication as brands that are Better Work partners generally accept Better Work's audit results.²³⁷ Representatives of global buyers interviewed for this evaluation confirmed that due to Better Work they now perform fewer compliances by themselves, which contributes to greater efficiency and less work for the factories. Better Work **Bangladesh's** close engagement with buyers also resulted in buyers encouraging their suppliers to join Better Work and, in that way, contributed to the expansion of factory-level coverage.²³⁸ Better Work outputs helped brands learn about various good practices that can be implemented on the factory level and, as a result, brands may later implement the same activities in their supply chain factories that are not part of the Better Work programme. An interviewed representative of a global brand working with Better Work shared that they were trying to expand their training programme and improve social dialogue in non-Better Work factories and countries based on what they learnt from Better Work.²³⁹ Finally, the interviewed stakeholders praised the ability of Better Work to connect the buyers and suppliers and improve their communication and collaboration.²⁴⁰

220.Despite some visible results from Better Work's outputs targeting buyers, some challenges can also be highlighted, and it seems that not all outputs translate into the desired outcomes. More specifically, even though the representatives of the brands consulted for this evaluation were interested in the Better Work Academy and saw the potential in it, especially its capacity building potential, they did not see many tangible positive outcomes from the Academy.²⁴¹

221.As regards the compliance assessment tool of Better Work, it does not necessarily result in decreased audit duplication as some of the buyers are not Better Work affiliates and require separate assessments and some Better Work partners continue conducting their own assessments in addition to Better Work assessments.²⁴² One global brand representative criticised the compliance tool as focusing too much on some topics, such as freedom of association, and then neglecting other topics, such as OSH. Consequently, the brand had to repeatedly audit the factories themselves to ensure that the important compliance areas are covered sufficiently.²⁴³

Achievement of national-level and global outcomes

Some of the planned outputs of Better Work, such as research activities and policy advice, focused on the realisation of national- and global-level outcomes. As can be seen in Annex 2, Table 12Table 10. Targets and values for harmonised indicators for all analysed countries (2022)

Indicator (targets and mid-year values for 2022)		Bangladesh	Cambodia	Egypt	Ethiopia	Haiti	Indonesia	Jordan	Nicaragua	Vietnam
Number of workers in the programme	Target	1,200,000	615,000	55,000	60,000	60,000	380,000	65,000	40	750,000
	Actual	1,062,168	615,035	54,119	54,804	53,634	437,128	68,455	39.401	675,202
	Target	8%	60%	50%	65%	45%	67%	43%	25%	70%

²³⁵ Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021.

²³⁶ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV, p.41.

²³⁷ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.iii.

²³⁸ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.18.

²³⁹ Interview with a global buyer representative.

²⁴⁰ Interview with IFC representatives.

²⁴¹ Interview with a global buyer representative.

²⁴² 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.viii.

²⁴³ Interview with a global buyer representative.

Indicator (targets and mid-year values for 2022)		Bangladesh	Cambodia	Egypt	Ethiopia	Haiti	Indonesia	Jordan	Nicaragua	Vietnam
Percentage of female supervisors in BW factories	Actual	9%	64%	28%	62%	28%	66%	42%	39%	72%
Number of compliance assessment reports completed in the reporting period	Target	300	463	60	39	30	200	90	26	390
	Actual	160	247	17	18	15	80	46	8	183
Average non-compliance rate on publicly reported issues	Target	12%	3%	5%	8%	10%	6%	9%	2%	5%
	Actual	18%	6%	14%	9%	13%	7%	9%	5%	4%
Average non-compliance rate on gender-sensitive compliance issues	Target	10%	7%	N/A	5%	8%	2%	5%	0%	5%
	Actual	10%	11%	2%	4%	9%	1%	5%	4%	5%
Percentage of factories with no non-compliant publicly reported issues	Target	2%	65%	10%	0%	30%	30%	15%	60%	40%
	Actual	7%	41%	5%	11%	13%	42%	15%	50%	53%
Percentage of factories that have put sound management systems in place for Human Resource Management and Occupational Health & Safety	Target	N/A	17%	70%	65%	75%	97%	70%	70%	50%
	Actual	8%	35%	80%	78%	0%	N/A	53%	70%	30%
Average number of days between an Assessment visit and the factory's receipt of the final report	Target	30	24	30	30	35	30	30	30	35
	Actual	43	24	33	28	41	34	30	34	25
Number of advisory visits in the reporting period	Target	2,160	1,400	360	236	190	900	400	175	2,100
	Actual	917	602	202	103	82	528	176	54	1164
Percentage of PICC worker representatives that are women	Target	50%	50%	50%	70%	40%	65%	75%	50%	65%
	Actual	47%	49%	31%	66%	40%	50%	69%	45%	66%
Percentage of PICC management representatives that are women	Target	20%	50%	N/A	35%	40%	50%	40%	50%	61%
	Actual	19%	48%	11%	34%	29%	43%	34%	55%	62%
Percentage of factories that have established a PICC	Target	80%	92%	N/A	N/A	75%	100%	80%	90%	95%
	Actual	83%	100%	17%	21%	86%	N/A	71%	86%	91%
Number of female worker representatives involved in social dialogue through PICC participation	Target	1,500	540	N/A	N/A	50%	N/A	N/A	340	N/A
	Actual	1,114	575	4	0	19%	353	77	30	392
Number of male worker representatives involved in social dialogue through PICC participation	Target	1,500	540	N/A	N/A	50%	N/A	N/A	340	N/A
	Actual	982	515	0	0	26%	387	30	42	226
Percentage of factories with an active and effective bipartite committee	Target	20%	25%	30%	N/A	50%	50%	38%	40%	30%
	Actual	9%	15%	0%	0%	26%	39%	38%	20%	25%
Percentage of factories that have a CBA	Target	1%	8%	20%	10%	25%	40%	100%	54%	80%
	Actual	1%	5%	0%	5%	0%	N/A	100%	52%	88%
Percentage of factories demonstrating progress toward effective social	Target	5%	10%	N/A	0%	55%	25%	25%	20%	18%
	Actual	1%	7%	0%	0%	6%	20%	26%	3%	18%

Indicator (targets and mid-year values for 2022)		Bangladesh	Cambodia	Egypt	Ethiopia	Haiti	Indonesia	Jordan	Nicaragua	Vietnam
dialogue and ability to resolve disputes										
Percentage of factories that have an effective grievance handling mechanism	Target	10%	25%	25%	90%	55%	50%	50%	50%	41%
	Actual	6%	18%	0%	74%	26%	39%	43%	37%	43%
Number of training sessions	Target	200	95	60	70	20	40	200	70	123
	Actual	86	48	16	23	13	44	79	19	60
Number of industry seminars	Target	60	8	4	5	10	8	6	4	16
	Actual	21	1	1	3	10	2	3	0	2
Percentage of factories that are on track to demonstrate progress in implementing their Learning plan	Target	22%	20%	N/A	50%	40%	55%	50%	25%	30%
	Actual	14%	19%	0%	26%	46%	46%	47%	31%	32%
Percentage of female training participants that reported that they were given opportunities to raise their opinions and participate in group discussions	Target	N/A	80%	N/A	95%	50%	98%	98%	N/A	95%
	Actual	100%	99%	N/A	N/A	67%	N/A	N/A	N/A	98%
Percentage of SST training participants that are women	Target	6%	80%	50%	60%	60%	60%	30%	50%	74%
	Actual	91%	69%	66%	97%	0%	47%	40%	0%	81%

Source: based on information from Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021 and internal information from Better Work on the progress towards set-out targets

Colours of the numbers indicate to what extent the target has been achieved. Green means that the target has been achieved fully. Yellow means that the target has been achieved to more than 80% of its value (underachieved). Red means the target has not been achieved. Grey indicates that there is a lack of information to make the assessment whether the target was achieved.

Table 11. Targets and values for harmonised indicators for all analysed countries (2021)

Indicator (values and targets for 2021)		Bangladesh	Cambodia	Egypt	Ethiopia	Haiti	Indonesia	Jordan	Nicaragua	Vietnam
Number of workers in the programme	Target	900,000	585,764	30,000	50,000	53,000	380,000	68,000	36,000	750,000
	Actual	971,206	568,118	49,374	52,510	49,797	371,315	62,963	33,401	640,568
Percentage of female supervisors in BW factories	Target	7%	60%	50%	65%	40%	67%	40%	40%	70%
	Actual	6%	58%	27%	63%	32%	65%	43%	39%	71%
Number of compliance assessment reports completed in the reporting period	Target	250	450	40	40	15	140	81	20	390
	Actual	143	552	47	35	34	74	87	12	292
Average non-compliance rate on publicly reported issues	Target	12%	2%	5%	10%	10%	6%	10%	2%	5%
	Actual	28%	4%	10%	12%	15%	4%	10%	4%	3%
Average non-compliance rate on gender-sensitive compliance issues	Target	10%	7%	N/A	4%	6%	2%	7%	0%	1%
	Actual	25%	11%	2%	6%	12%	2%	6%	0%	1%
Percentage of factories with no non-compliant publicly reported issues	Target	2%	70%	10%	16%	15%	26%	15%	60%	36%
	Actual	3%	54%	9%	0%	3%	57%	12%	N/A	53%
	Target	20%	19%	70%	70%	40%	97%	80%	90%	50%

Indicator (values and targets for 2021)		Bangladesh	Cambodia	Egypt	Ethiopia	Haiti	Indonesia	Jordan	Nicaragua	Vietnam
Percentage of factories that have put sound management systems in place for Human Resource Management and Occupational Health & Safety	Actual	0%	25%	59%	57%	27%	N/A	72%	50%	50%
Average number of days between an Assessment visit and the factory's receipt of the final report	Target	30	25	30	30	35	30	25	30	21
	Actual	29	22	27	27	38	27	34	37	23
Number of advisory visits in the reporting period	Target	1,650	1,300	250	300	190	900	564	150	2,400
	Actual	1,854	1,221	200	243	177	969	414	116	1,983
Percentage of PICC worker representatives that are women	Target	50%	50%	40%	75%	40%	65%	75%	50%	65%
	Actual	46%	49%	33%	67%	41%	50%	68%	45%	66%
Percentage of PICC management representatives that are women	Target	20%	48%	40%	50%	35%	50%	40%	50%	61%
	Actual	18%	49%	12%	33%	29%	42%	35%	54%	62%
Percentage of factories that have established a PICC	Target	80%	92%	50%	N/A	75%	100%	80%	80%	95%
	Actual	82%	97%	16%	22%	89%	95%	76%	95%	95%
Number of female worker representatives involved in social dialogue through PICC participation	Target	800	540	N/A	N/A	35	700	N/A	300	N/A
	Actual	1,299	569	0	4	57	643	77	27	348
Number of male worker representatives involved in social dialogue through PICC participation	Target	800	540	N/A	N/A	70	648	N/A	300	N/A
	Actual	1,322	532	0	1	82	550	38	32	205
Percentage of factories with an active and effective bipartite committee	Target	20%	25%	30%	0%	45%	60%	25%	30%	30%
	Actual	9%	14%	0%	0%	32%	37%	35%	20%	25%
Percentage of factories that have a CBA	Target	1%	8%	20%	8%	10%	40%	100%	54%	100%
	Actual	2%	5%	0%	6%	0%	36%	100%	53%	78%
Percentage of factories demonstrating progress toward effective social dialogue and ability to resolve disputes	Target	5%	10%	10%	N/A	25%	25%	20%	20%	20%
	Actual	1%	7%	0%	0%	9%	18%	23%	6%	16%
Percentage of factories that have an effective grievance handling mechanism	Target	10%	25%	25%	N/A	45%	60%	50%	40%	41%
	Actual	7%	18%	0%	84%	24%	37%	42%	37%	41%
Number of training sessions	Target	150	85	5	75	75	50	450	50	131
	Actual	189	90	5	60	25	61	452	41	98
Number of industry seminars	Target	40	6	12	4	45	8	6	4	20
	Actual	49	5	2	3	17	5	4	3	15
Percentage of factories that are on track to demonstrate progress in implementing their Learning plan	Target	22%	20%	25%	N/A	65%	55%	53%	25%	27%
	Actual	15%	19%	0%	32%	56%	46%	46%	34%	32%
Percentage of female training participants that reported that they were given opportunities to raise their opinions and participate in group discussions	Target	N/A	80%	N/A	N/A	25%	98%	96%	N/A	95%
	Actual	N/A	97%	N/A	97%	0%	99%	100%	N/A	97%
Percentage of SST training participants that are women	Target	6%	80%	40%	70%	55%	63%	N/A	50%	84%
	Actual	57%	64%	0%	57%	0%	70%	100%	0%	74%

Source: based on information from Better Work Fourth Annual Donor Report 2020 and Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021

Colours of the numbers indicate to what extent the target has been achieved. Green means that the target has been achieved fully. Yellow means that the target has been achieved to more than 80% of its value (underachieved). Red means the target has not been achieved. Grey indicates that there is a lack of information to make the assessment whether the target was achieved.

222. Table 12, Better Work Global Phase IV had two planned outcomes focusing on national and global levels: i) *outcome 3 – strengthening institutions and influencing policies that create an enabling environment for decent work and improved competitiveness* and ii) *Outcome 4 – influencing global policy on decent work and the SDGs with the unique evidence base and proven examples of success*. **The overview of the available evidence and the interviews with relevant stakeholders and Better Work staff indicate that during Phase IV the programme achieved certain progress towards these outcomes.**

223. The national-level processes related to the garment sector have been improving in Better Work countries, newly implemented policies are more in line with the international standards, and the national institutions are increasingly capable of overseeing various processes in the industry with no or minimal support.

In **Haiti**, Better Work has a system in place, together with the Ministry of Labour and the labour ombudsperson that enables the national stakeholders to receive complaints and follow up on them. The system is working with minimal support from the Better Work team. The Better Work team has also supported the national authorities in developing a system to disseminate information to the public about new laws and changes in labour standards.²⁴⁴

The **Vietnam** Better Work team, through its research and policy advice, influenced and supported national authorities in introducing labour standards related to collective bargaining and freedom of association.²⁴⁵ National authorities learnt from good practices of Better Work and introduced them on a national level through legislation.²⁴⁶ More specifically, part of the law reform is based on workplace committees, a space for social dialogue on the factory level, created by the Better Work team.²⁴⁷ The adoption of the Labour Code in 2019 was an important step towards improved industrial relations in Vietnam and a solid foundation for fair international trade.²⁴⁸ Moreover, the protocol on Zero-Tolerance issues, which Better Work Vietnam signed with MOLISA, is being implemented and should increase the capacity of labour inspectors and child protection officials to effectively react to mistreatment of workers. Moreover, more changes were introduced regarding working time and tax rates.²⁴⁹

Better Work Indonesia, together with the ILO, provided research insights and advice related to the areas that were later targeted by the omnibus law, including the policy on minimum wage. More specifically, the ILO proposed to simplify and harmonise the system used to determine the minimum wage in Indonesia. This proposition was later implemented by the government. In partnership with the Ministry of Manpower, Better Work Indonesia prepared a set of guidelines to reduce the garment industry's dependence on non-permanent working contracts and help the relevant stakeholders better understand existing legislation. Better Work facilitated discussions between the relevant stakeholders in preparing the guidelines.²⁵⁰ The consulted national stakeholders noted that these changes, especially the Omnibus Law, has a lot of potential to improve industrial relations.²⁵¹

Activities of **Better Factories Cambodia** are linked to Cambodia's Rectangular Strategy. "Building the Foundation Toward Realizing the Cambodia Vision 2050", a five-year (2019-2023) economic and social development strategy developed by the Supreme National Economic Council (SNEC), has priorities which are in line with the strategy and objectives of Better Factories Cambodia. The priorities focus on better capacity building, institutional reform, strengthening public sector inspection and audit mechanisms, improving industrial relations, and similar areas. Activities of Better Factories Cambodia are also linked to the implementation of the Labour Law and International Labour Conventions.²⁵² Moreover, the Better Factories Cambodia team also mentioned that it provided technical assistance on increasing the capacities of the Ministry of Labour and Labour Inspectorates to implement the labour inspections. The guidelines now used for factory assessments are based on the work of Better Work and the guidelines that are used regarding the COVID-19 measures are based on the work performed by Better Work and WHO.²⁵³

²⁴⁴ Interview with BW Haiti staff.

²⁴⁵ Interview with BW staff.

²⁴⁶ Interview with BW staff.

²⁴⁷ Interview with BW staff.

²⁴⁸ 2019 Annual Report Vietnam.

²⁴⁹ Interview with the Bureau for Employers' Activities, VCCI Vietnam.

²⁵⁰ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation.

²⁵¹ Interview with factory representatives in Indonesia.

²⁵² BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation.

²⁵³ Interview with BF Cambodia staff.

224. Better Work also faced some challenges towards improving national-level processes related to outcomes in the garment sector. More specifically, even if legislation improves, the improvements on paper do not always bring changes to the factories. As noted by an interviewed representative of a trade union in **Cambodia**, there may be no changes in the factories despite changes in legislation if there is a lack of resources for effective monitoring, if the factories are owned by influential individuals who may not be held accountable for not respecting the law or are protected by senior government officials, or if there is a conflict of interest and labour inspectors warn employers before their audits.²⁵⁴

225. At global level, BW has made efforts during Phase IV to influence the global policy dialogue. There are clear examples of how research efforts have fed into wider ILO research and policy-informing initiatives. For example, BW's primary data from workers and managers in several BW countries fed into ILO's Flagship Report on Social Dialogue. Research findings supported by Better Work data were presented at several academic conferences (e.g. LERA, ILERA and SASE) and included in a special issue of the International Labour Review.²⁵⁵ Another paper prepared by BW and ILO Asia-Pacific was picked up by various media outlets, including the Washington Post.²⁵⁶

Achievement of cross-cutting outcomes

Gender mainstreaming

This topic is discussed in more depth in case study 1.

226. Gender equality has been an important focus for Better Work in Phase IV. While the outputs of Better Work may be seen as inherently linked to gender issues because most of the employees in the garment sector are women, during this phase the gender aspect in Better Work has been formally highlighted through the Gender Strategy, with a number of targets and outputs focusing specifically on empowering women and improving their conditions in the industry. During this phase the programme also received funds which were specifically earmarked for gender activities, which also contributed to increased visibility of the activities related to gender equality.²⁵⁷ **The analysis of the existing evidence and interviews with relevant stakeholders shows that Better Work is generally successful in translating outputs focusing on gender mainstreaming into the planned results.**

The existing evidence indicates that the activities of **Better Work Bangladesh**, such as including gender issues into compliance assessment and the provision of training on sexual harassment, contribute to increased capacities of women to address harassment cases, advocate for their rights and the workplace, and cope with stress.²⁵⁸ Moreover, the Mothers@Work programme is linked to visible improvements in the factory such as improved breastfeeding facilities, available breastfeeding breaks, improved childcare facilities available on-site, and improved knowledge among the workers and managers about healthy maternal/child nutrition.²⁵⁹ Up to 81% of 103 factories that participated in the programme introduced policies on maternity protection and breastfeeding. All factories ensured that they have a childcare facility and spaces for breastfeeding. According to the final report of the Mothers@Work programme, it also resulted in reductions in migration rates, short leave and absenteeism and increased dedication among workers.²⁶⁰

The GEAR programme, which is being implemented in **Bangladesh** and **Vietnam**, is linked to several outcomes related to gender mainstreaming. According to the available evidence, the programme in Bangladesh is contributing to a significantly increasing share of women supervisors and supporting women in advancing individually. Women after GEAR training became, on average, 5% more efficient at their jobs, women supervisors promoted due to the project received an average 39% salary increase, and the average of women supervisors in the factories increased from 7% to 15% in those factories participating in GEAR.²⁶¹ During the first phase of the programme in Bangladesh, 79 programme participants, who were women, were appointed to supervisory roles. According to the participants, the programme helped them learn more about supervisory work, social dialogue in the factory, and voicing one's concerns and needs.²⁶²

²⁵⁴ Interview with the Cambodian Labour Confederation.

²⁵⁵ Fifth Annual Progress Report (Jan-Dec 2021).

²⁵⁶ Fourth Annual Progress Report (Jan-Dec 2020).

²⁵⁷ Interview with BW staff.

²⁵⁸ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.43.

²⁵⁹ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.27.

²⁶⁰ Mothers@Work (n.d.). Final Report - Mothers@Work; Implementation summary in 103 Better Work factories.

²⁶¹ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.26.

²⁶² Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.43.

The **Better Factories Cambodia** female leadership programme resulted in greater female participation and influence in all aspects of their working life, including their involvement in worker unions. The number of women leaders in the unions has increased and women workers seem to have more confidence in voicing their interests and problems. The existing evidence indicates that the provided trainings also changed the way male workers are now viewing their female colleagues. Moreover, while this outcome was not planned, support for women in worker unions also helped create 'safe spaces' for women to talk about various issues related to their work and personal life, including domestic violence.²⁶³

In **Ethiopia** Better Work activities focusing on gender equality topics and sexual harassment prevention resulted in improved knowledge about sexual harassment among factory management and workers. Existing evidence indicates that Better Work activities contributed to a reduced number of sexual harassment incidents, and, in some cases, this increased knowledge helped women feel more confident at work.²⁶⁴

In **Haiti**, Better Work staff noted that factory managers see the Better Work activities as directly contributing to the decreasing gender-based violence at the factories, especially sexual harassment cases.²⁶⁵

227. It is clear that Better Work activities contribute to the improving situation of women in the programme factories and are changing the understanding of gender equality among stakeholders. The positive outcomes regarding gender equality became especially visible in Phase IV when gender strategy was introduced and the focus on gender became more visible. Still, despite the evident results and increased focus on gender, some challenges have been hindering the possible outcomes. More specifically, it is evident that as gender-based discrimination is deep rooted in society, conditions for women are not really improving despite Better Work's efforts. For example, it is observed that in **Bangladesh** discriminatory practices such as requiring mothers to return to the lowest-level jobs after maternity leave, or absence of paid maternity leave, are still persistent despite several Better Work initiatives aimed at trying to improve the situation.²⁶⁶

Persons with disabilities

228. As already mentioned, Better Work did not include a targeted focus on inclusion of persons with disabilities in Better Work global and country strategies and did not include targets related to this issue. However, in some countries, there is a national regulation on the share of employees with disability that the factory should employ. In those countries the Better Work teams focus on people with disability more and the number of people with disabilities employed is increasing due to Better Work's activities.²⁶⁷ This is evident from the examples from **Jordan**²⁶⁸ and **Indonesia**,²⁶⁹ where the number of people with disabilities employed did in fact increase because of Better Work's activities.

Environmental sustainability

229. Environmental sustainability issues are not widely addressed by Better Work activities since they were not integrated in the programme design. Consequently, there are no outputs and outcomes from Better Work directly related to environmental sustainability. However, there were still achievements with positive results for environmental sustainability. For example, **Better Work Bangladesh** occupational health and safety checks and trainings resulted in better handling of chemicals in the factories and introduction of safety procedures for the employees working with the chemicals.²⁷⁰ In **Vietnam**, due to Better Work outputs the factories learnt how to assess energy conservation in the factory and what actions can be taken to save water, electricity, and other resources. This knowledge helps the factories change their practices.²⁷¹

International Labour Standards

230. In general, it seems that Better Work's activities should result in more focus on international labour standards on a national level. Planned outcomes 3 and 4 of Better Work global, as can be seen Table 10, focus on promotion of decent work topics among national stakeholders and in the global policy debate. The Phase IV impact assessment also noted that Phase IV witnessed Better Work's ability to leverage trade agreements to

²⁶³ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation.

²⁶⁴ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.77.

²⁶⁵ Interview with BW Haiti staff.

²⁶⁶ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.27.

²⁶⁷ Mid-Term Cluster Evaluation of Better Factories Cambodia, Better Work Indonesia, and Better Work Vietnam programmes p. 152.

²⁶⁸ Interview with BW Jordan staff.

²⁶⁹ Interview with Trade Unions in Indonesia.

²⁷⁰ Interview with factory managers in Bangladesh .

²⁷¹ Interview with BW Vietnam staff.

increase compliance with ILS.²⁷² Hence, it could be expected that Better Work's outputs would contribute to greater awareness about international labour standards and ratification of international standards.

231. However, concrete results are rarely observed. As mentioned before, the only example that the evaluation team could find was **Vietnam**, where the government is committed to Better Work's mission as it continuously tries to align its laws and regulations with international labour standards and core ILO conventions.²⁷³ Nevertheless, despite the commitment to ratifying the conventions on freedom of association and collective bargaining, the law introduced is still missing some important details and regulations.²⁷⁴

Social Dialogue and enhanced capacity of trade unions

This topic is discussed in more depth in case study 4.

232. From the overview of the available information and interviews with relevant national stakeholders and BW staff, it is clear that **Better Work outputs, such as provided trainings or organised events and meetings, indeed contributed to enhanced social dialogue and increased capacity of different stakeholders to participate in dialogue.** More specifically, this related to the realisation of planned global outcome 3 – *strengthening institutions and influencing policies that create an enabling environment for decent work and improved competitiveness* and outcome 4 – *influencing global policy on decent work* and the SDGs with the unique evidence base and proven examples of success. When considering the Better Work outcomes related to social dialogue, it is especially important to analyse how the programme contributes to enhanced capacity of trade unions to participate in social dialogue and advocate for the needs of workers and better conditions at the factories.

In **Vietnam**, even though social dialogue has been restricted in the country, due to Better Work the situation is significantly improving.²⁷⁵ Better Work is cooperating with the relevant stakeholders at ministerial level, and is also working with the relevant stakeholders at the provincial level.²⁷⁶ According to the interviewed stakeholders, the perceptions and proposals of social partners are now taken into account more, and different views are respected. This improvement was observed during the design process of the Labour Code 2019.²⁷⁷

In **Indonesia** Better Work facilitates communication between government and representatives of the industry on different levels, which resulted in more meetings between stakeholders being organised and industrial disputes being resolved more efficiently.²⁷⁸

In **Jordan**, activities organised by the Better Work team enabled trade unions to better communicate with workers and understand their needs. Consequently, they were more able to communicate those needs to other relevant stakeholders. Moreover, Better Work Jordan supported stakeholders in preparing to negotiate the sectoral Collective Bargaining Agreement. The latest agreement was signed in 2019 and provides an example of social dialogue on the national level. Better Work provided different stakeholders with tools to discuss the issues important for the industry.²⁷⁹ BW also managed to strengthen the internal organisational capacities of the garment trade union in Jordan.²⁸⁰

233. Different stakeholders believed that Better Work effectively facilitated social dialogue in the garment industry.²⁸¹ However, some challenges still exist that hinder the translation of Better Work outputs to outcomes. Firstly, as learnt from some stakeholders, it may be that some of Better Work's outputs do not support all relevant stakeholders equally. For example, Better Work **Bangladesh** and ILO Bangladesh have been providing capacity training to Trade Unions through the Worker's Resource Centre. However, according to some representatives of the Trade Union federations represented in the National Coordination Committee for Workers Education (NCCWE) and the Workers' Resource Centre, Better Work Bangladesh's firm support for the right to organise is lacking. While there is some contrary evidence that there is sufficient support, Trade Union representatives believe that the Better Work Bangladesh team prioritised the promotion of Participation Committees rather than Trade Unions.²⁸²

²⁷² Forthcoming Phase IV impact assessment.

²⁷³ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation.

²⁷⁴ Interview with a BW donor.

²⁷⁵ Interview with BW staff.

²⁷⁶ Interview with BW Vietnam staff.

²⁷⁷ Interview with the Bureau for Employers' Activities, VCCI Vietnam.

²⁷⁸ Interview with factory representatives in Indonesia.

²⁷⁹ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.13.

²⁸⁰ Final Internal Evaluation – "Better Work Jordan: Strengthening the Capacity of the Trade Union in Jordan's Garment Sector" p. 32.

²⁸¹ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.36.

²⁸² 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.16.

234. Moreover, Better Work's efforts to support social dialogue and especially participation of trade unions in it may not bring the desired results because of the national context. For example, issues and challenges in the garment sector sometimes become politicised, which may complicate the introduction of different solutions to emerging challenges or limit the space of some stakeholders to express their opinions. For example, a representative of a trade union in **Cambodia** noted that they have limited opportunities to express their opinion, as they can only do it during the National Social Dialogue.²⁸³ Some challenges also arise because of the opinions national stakeholders have about social dialogue and trade unions. For example, according to the trade union representative from **Cambodia**, some of the employers still believe that organisation of trade unions poses a risk to the productivity of the factories as it may facilitate strikes or complaints and reporting from the workers. Hence, forming trade unions is still very difficult.²⁸⁴

235. As regards the changes in Better Work's ability to contribute to social dialogue during the COVID-19 pandemic, it seems that the situation differs from country to country. Interviewed Better Work staff noted that during the pandemic the programme started focusing on social dialogue even more. As the team realised that they could engage with constituents using virtual tools, it facilitated the planned activities and strengthened the relationship between the team and constituents. This support for social dialogue during the pandemic also increased the trust in Better Work among the constituents as they realised the programme team is committed to supporting constituents during difficult times.²⁸⁵ However, in some countries, like **Cambodia**, it was difficult to maintain the same level of social dialogue as before and the situation deteriorated.²⁸⁶

3.3.3. Achievement of outputs and results during COVID-19

236. During the COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdowns, several BW activities were adjusted, but also new activities were introduced to meet the new needs regarding safe working spaces, salary payments, etc. This section reviews the effectiveness of the COVID-specific activities implemented by BW. Overall, prior evaluation reports demonstrate that **BW achieved its expected outputs regarding COVID-19-specific activities and initial findings show that the outputs were helpful in creating awareness of the pandemic and its risks.**

More detail about the impact of, and response to COVID-19 is included in Case Study 2.

237. Given that the pandemic was an unforeseen event, the M&E frameworks and programme design did not include activities and indicators about the pandemic. COVID-19 responses included adjusted existing (planned) activities that could be measured through the programme indicators (described above under outputs) and included new activities addressing new priorities and needs. However, since new activities were not planned, there are no M&E approaches and indicators that measured the achievements regarding COVID-19.

238. The main outputs achieved by BW at factory-level comprised the development of COVID-19 prevention protocols (as well as specific protocols for persons more at risk) guidelines on retrenchment and a safe return to work, Occupational Safety and Health checklists, and awareness-raising activities and information campaigns²⁸⁷. Importantly, Better Work also offered advice to both factories and brands on compliance issues resulting from closures, temporary or permanent layoffs, payment of wages, and others. Better Work created global and country guidelines for managing transitions and applying laws and good practices to maintain compliance in unprecedented circumstances.²⁸⁸

239. At sectoral and national level, BW engaged with WHO and UNICEF to disseminate COVID-19 awareness raising material, develop joint pieces of training with Ministries of Health and Labour Inspectors on COVID-19 and provide advice on updates on labour laws and labour proclamations. Moreover, Better Work supported the ILO in its convening of the COVID-19: Action in the Global Garment Industry "Call to Action".²⁸⁹

240. As a result of the specific COVID-19 outputs, BW in **Nicaragua** noted that factories created barriers between staff members to avoid the spread of the virus, and they hired doctors and nurses within factories to provide additional support.²⁹⁰ The Ministry of Labour and Employment in **Bangladesh** appreciated the guidelines that

²⁸³ Interview with the Cambodian Federation of Independent Trade Union (CFITU).

²⁸⁴ Interview with the Cambodia Labour Confederation.

²⁸⁵ Interview with BW staff.

²⁸⁶ Interview with BF Cambodia staff.

²⁸⁷ Interview with BW Nicaragua staff; Better Work Stage IV Fourth Annual Donor Report 2021.

²⁸⁸ Better Work Stage IV Fourth Annual Donor Report 2021.

²⁸⁹ Better Work Stage IV Fourth Annual Donor Report 2021.

²⁹⁰ Interview with BW Nicaragua staff.

were prepared.²⁹¹ In several countries, for example **Indonesia**, the enhanced focus on social dialogue and tripartism during the pandemic led to the agreement of social partners to continue such engagement in the post-pandemic years.²⁹²

The BWI, BWV and BFC evaluation found that in **Vietnam** the guidance supplied by BW on tackling COVID-19 (including advice on social dialogue) was considered a crucial element for factories managing to retain their workforce during the worst of the pandemic.²⁹³

The evaluation of BW **Bangladesh** found that interviewed workers perceived BWs activities as highly effective to improve workers' health and safety in the COVID-19 context.²⁹⁴

241. Due to the recent occurrence of the pandemic, there is no comprehensive data available yet on how the dissemination of information and provision of trainings has affected health and safety in the factories.

3.4 Efficiency

242. According to the OECD/DAC criteria, efficiency measures whether the interventions have been delivered in a timely and economic way. The chapter assesses whether inputs (funds, expertise, natural resources, time, etc.) were transformed into outputs, outcomes and impacts in a cost-effective way.²⁹⁵

3.4.1. Availability of resources

243. This chapter will discuss whether financial, human, and time resources were sufficient for the objectives of Phase IV and whether they were used in an optimal manner.

Financial resources

244. Financial resources of Better Work comprise two key dimensions. Firstly, the programme generates income from participating factories and from membership of global buyers and brands. Secondly, the programme relies on donor funding, which is either earmarked for specific activities (e.g., gender equality efforts) or unearmarked (meaning that BW has the flexibility to allocate the resources where necessary).

245. Overall, a review of programme documentation, previous evaluations and interviews for the current evaluation demonstrate that financial resources were generally sufficient for the activities and objectives of Phase IV. **Desk research of country evaluations and recent interviews indicate that the financial resources are used in an efficient manner and are clearly justified by the objectives.**

246. The results of the survey demonstrate that financial management was considered a strength of the BW programme. Namely, the majority of respondents (57%) believe that BW's ability to raise funds, combine streams of funding, and use funds at country level positively contributed to the achievement of its objectives. Respondents were slightly less positive about the use of financial resources at HQ level, due to a lack of knowledge (a higher share of respondents who indicated "I don't know"). Figure 15 furthermore demonstrates that ILO/BW staff perceived that financial resources contributed mostly in a positive way to the programme implementation more often than external stakeholders. This could be explained either by a lack of knowledge of how financial resources are used, or by a perception of stakeholders that more financial resources are needed for the programme. For example, the difference in perceptions between ILO/BW staff and stakeholders is larger regarding the financial resources at country level, compared to at HQ level.

²⁹¹ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021).

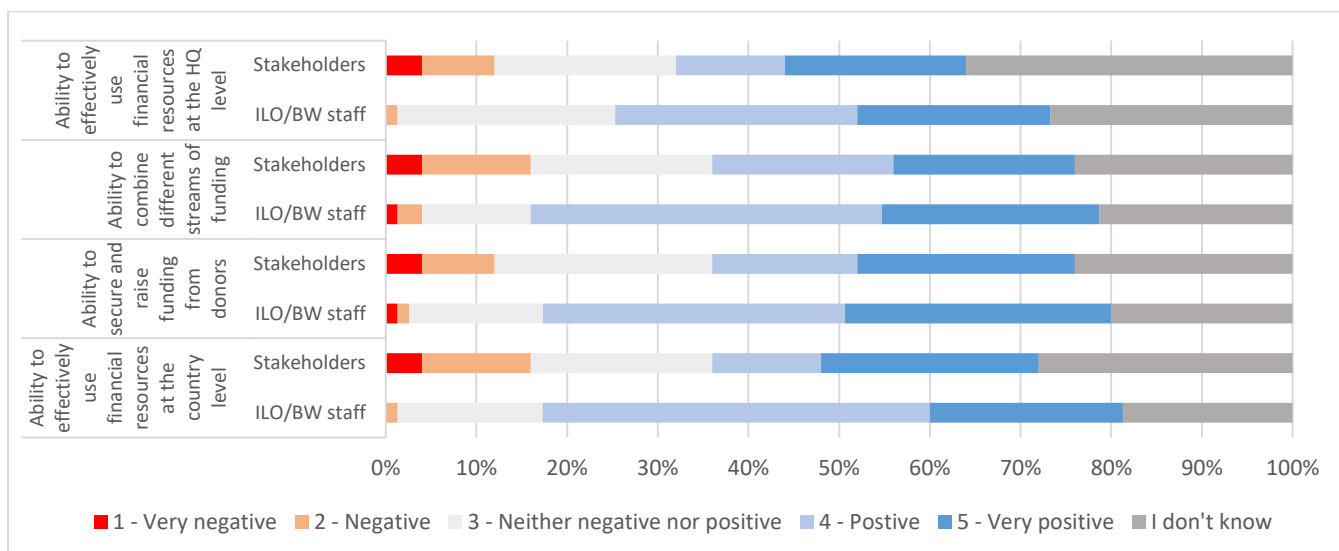
²⁹² BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation.

²⁹³ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation.

²⁹⁴ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.vi.

²⁹⁵ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

Figure 15. How have the following financial factors affected the implementation of BW?



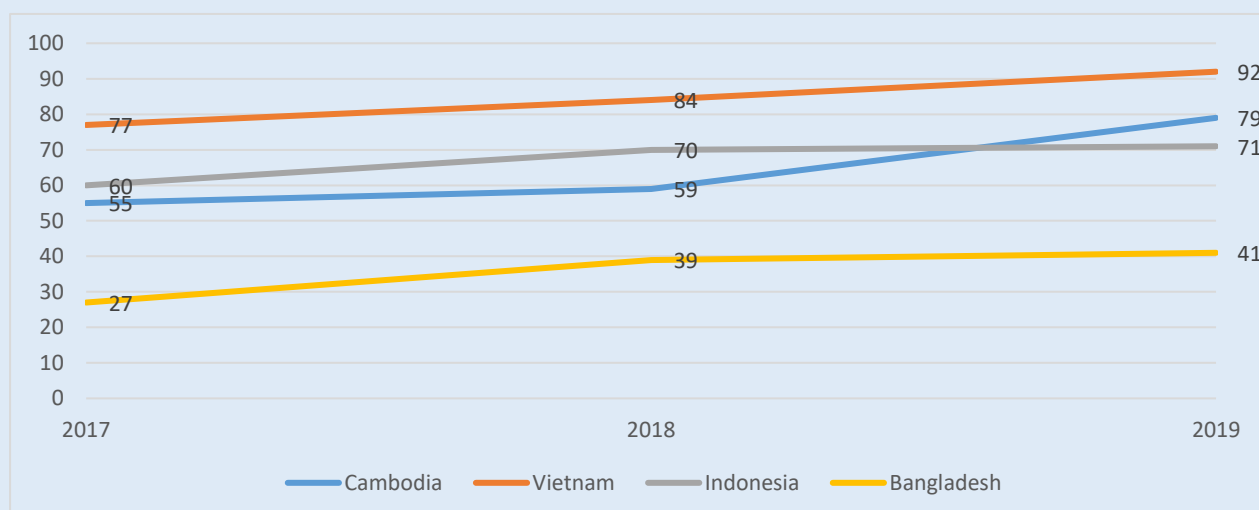
Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff (N=75) and constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=25). "In what way do you think the following factors affected the achievement of the objectives of Better Work Phase IV?"

247. A key strength of BW's financial resources is the generated income from factories and buyers, who pay a membership fee to be part of the BW programme. A large share of activities can be funded through this approach. This ensures flexibility in the spending approaches and ensures that the programme could sustain itself (to a certain extent) in case of donor withdrawal or late payments. Due to the flexibility of the funding model, financial resources can (to a certain extent) be allocated to countries based on their needs. Namely, such funding is not earmarked for specific activities and can therefore be allocated based on discussions with country teams on the most pressing needs. Additionally, various interviewed BW staff noted that the financial contribution of participating factories enhances factories' (and buyers') commitment to the programme.²⁹⁶

BW Vietnam has continued its improvement from previous phase of cost recovery rate through income generated from core services. In the current phase, BWV has set its target of cost recovery rate at 100% by 2022. Cost recovery rates of BWV have been 79% in 2017, 89% in 2018 and 92% in 2019.²⁹⁷

In other Asian countries of BW, an increase in cost recovery was also noted between 2017-2019.

Figure 16. Cost recovery rates as % of total core services costs



Source: BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, P. 61

248. The "ONEILO" approach has been mentioned in particular as good practice in terms of efficiency, by reducing staff and administrative costs for the BW programme. While its results were already observed in **Ethiopia**,

²⁹⁶ Interviews with BW staff.

²⁹⁷ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.61.

other countries such as Bangladesh indicated that the ONEILO approach was being introduced for the purpose of efficiency gains.

There is a clear indication that the ONEILO approach has improved the efficiency of the programme in **Ethiopia**. By combining the programmes into one intervention, the programme has reduced staffing costs, as well as administrative costs for both ILO and the tripartite constituents. One of the most expensive elements of an ILO programme can often be staffing costs of Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) positions. Were this programme to be split into many projects, it would have been likely that a CTA would have been recruited for each position instead of the one CTA in this programme.²⁹⁸

249. Besides the general sufficiency and efficiency of financial resources as perceived by stakeholders and demonstrated above, some challenges were identified. It is clear from the programme documents and interviews that the Better Work programme is **highly resource-intensive** in its design.²⁹⁹ The Mid-Term Evaluation recommended BW to accelerate a transition away from BW factory assessments by focusing on sustainability and capacity building, and the use of innovative tools.³⁰⁰ In the period since 2020-2022, this has been increasingly recognised by BW teams and incorporated in the next Phase strategy. COVID-19 also accelerated BW's experimentation with virtual tools that can reduce the factory-level workload.

250. Various interviewed BW staff members indicate that the factory visits (assessments and advisory services) take up a huge amount of the allocated financial and human resources. While these services are the core element of the Better Work programme, they are also clearly the largest cost post. Some BW staff expressed concern whether the achievements made by factory visits are worth the large investments, despite the importance and recognised value of the factory-level activities.³⁰¹ Similarly, some employer representatives (in already more mature BW countries) believe that some factory-level activities should be handed over to national authorities such as labour inspectorates.³⁰² Therefore, the activities should not necessarily be terminated, but conducted by, or together with, national stakeholders.

251. As a result of the high investment in factory-level engagement, fewer resources are available for national-level (capacity building) activities. In particular, the Mid-term Evaluation noted that insufficient resources are allocated to the Better Work Academy by BW Global. Of the USD 35 million, nothing is directly allocated to the Academy as it is mainly financed by private sector contributions. There are some indirect contributions from the BW Global budget through administrative services, management and operational overhead.³⁰³

252. Lastly, the **BW team in Nicaragua is facing budgetary constraints** (resulting also in HR constraints). As a result, fewer assessments and trainings are foreseen in the near future, despite the clearly expressed desire of factories and constituents to actively and even more intensely engage with the programme.³⁰⁴

Human resources

253. The human resources dimension of efficiency assesses the expertise and performance of staff allocated to the BW programme, their workload and the sufficiency of staff in comparison to the volume of work and objectives to be achieved. This is an important element of the evaluation, since staffing costs form the largest share of the total BW expenses. For example, on average, Better Work Indonesia and Vietnam, and Better Factories Cambodia allocated 67% of their budget to staff costs.³⁰⁵ **Overall, stakeholders are highly positive about the capacity and sufficiency of BW staff.**

254. The survey results confirm that the BW staff are an important factor positively contributing to the achievements of its objectives. For example, 69% of respondents believe that the number of country-level BW staff with technical expertise positively supports the project objectives. Responses are slight less positive regarding available time and expertise at HQ level, mostly due to lack of knowledge (a higher number of "I don't know" responses). However, a share of about 10% of respondents do perceive HR as a challenge, for example due to lack of time and expertise at global and country level.

²⁹⁸ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.75.

²⁹⁹ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV p.35.

³⁰⁰ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV, p.43.

³⁰¹ Interviews with BW staff.

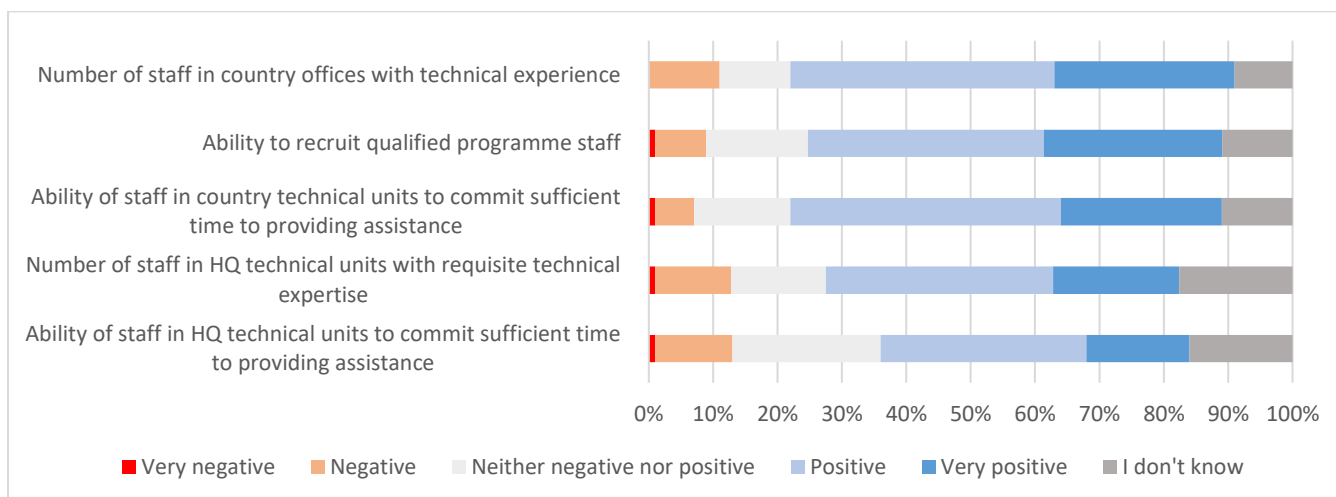
³⁰² Interviews with employer representatives from Vietnam and Cambodia.

³⁰³ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV p.30.

³⁰⁴ Interviews with BW Nicaragua and Nicaraguan stakeholders..

³⁰⁵ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.62.

Figure 17. How have the following HR factors affected the implementation of BW?



Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff, constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=100). "In what way do you think the following factors affected the achievement of the objectives of Better Work Phase IV?"

255. The current phase witnessed examples of increased efficiency of the BW staff. In **Vietnam**, the number of factories per EA increased from seven or eight factories per EA in the previous phase to 14-15 factories per Enterprise Adviser in Phase IV.³⁰⁶ BW Bangladesh and Better Work Global personnel also highlighted ongoing efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of EAs.³⁰⁷

256. The experience of BW staff was mentioned as an important strength of BW's human resources. Interviewed staff from the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) described the BW team as committed and competent.³⁰⁸

Better Work **Bangladesh** has retained relatively experienced individuals: 72% of respondent have 10 years or more professional experience and 60% have been with the programme since before 2017. An important strategy included retaining many experienced personnel from the first phases and reinforcing gender, monitoring and evaluation and communication staff capabilities per phase one evaluation recommendations.³⁰⁹

257. The country evaluations of Better Work in **Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia** demonstrated the importance attached to having staff in place that understand the national context. Not only does this provide the BW programme with useful insight regarding what approaches may or may not work, it also creates within key non-ILO partners the belief that the ILO and the BW staff have the level of knowledge and expertise to make their intervention effective.³¹⁰ Interviewed BW staff pointed out that the recruitment of local staff became a priority during Phase IV.³¹¹

258. However, interviewees for the **Bangladesh** evaluation also pointed out that the staff is nevertheless stretched to manage all the tasks involved in the labour-intensive model of BW that the factory services require.³¹² Global BW staff noted that the COVID-19 pandemic in particular led to the emergence of new tasks and responsibilities and this put additional pressure on national staff. "The staff had to work a lot as they had to take time in the evening to just talk with the workers and relate to them about providing for families, remaining in country, etc. We never did that before".³¹³ Furthermore, the country evaluations of Better Work in **Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia** found a common theme across all levels of BW staff that "there was only just enough capacity in terms of number of personnel to deal with the day-to-day running of the programme. There was no time or space provided to allow the programmes to take a step back and find more efficient (and effective) ways of doing the work".³¹⁴

³⁰⁶ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.61.

³⁰⁷ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.42.

³⁰⁸ Interview with an ITUC representative.

³⁰⁹ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.42.

³¹⁰ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation.

³¹¹ Interview with BW staff.

³¹² 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.36.

³¹³ Interview with BW staff.

³¹⁴ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.58.

Time resources and delays

259. This section assesses whether sufficient time was allocated for the foreseen objectives and whether these objectives were realistic within the time scope. Additionally, this dimension reviews whether delays occurred and why.
260. One of the main arguments for the realistic planning of BW lies in the nature of the programme's objectives. The fact that BW has been engaged in some countries for more than a decade means that **there is sufficient time available to create lasting impact and societal change**. The benefit of BW in this regard is that it is not a finite development project, but rather a long-term programme. However, a buyer noted that the BW programme is also very slow in terms of procedures and getting work started on the ground.³¹⁵ A BW country team also highlighted that, while support (in terms of authorisations) from HQ is valuable, such support is quite slow (though faster than in the ILO in general).³¹⁶
261. The main issues regarding time resources relate to the overall concern that a significant share of all programme resources is spent on factory-level activities. For example, the country evaluations of Better Work in **Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia** noted the concern that too much time was spent getting to and from factory locations and that there may be an opportunity for more innovative thinking on how this inefficiency could be addressed (e.g., through the virtual assessments that were implemented during COVID-19 lockdowns, or by allocating this task to labour inspectorates after sufficient capacity building).³¹⁷
262. As witnessed in many projects and programmes worldwide, there was an adjustment of the operational activities and support to industry partners given the strong implications of the COVID-19 pandemic. All country programmes had to adjust their activities because of COVID, considering not only the disruptions and changes it brought to the programme itself but also the challenges it caused in the garment industry. The most affected activities were the factory assessments, which requires the presence of an EA in the factory. While virtual assessments were initiated in many countries, they were not deemed as effective as in-person assessments. This caused some delays in the planned schedules.³¹⁸ Trainings and workshops were also affected and switched online, but the gap in effectiveness between online and offline trainings were not noted specifically by interviewees. The fact that almost all activities were also affected to a certain extent resulted in partial delays toward achieving each BW outcome.³¹⁹
263. The survey asked respondents to evaluate the timeliness, availability, and accessibility of various aspects of Better Work's engagements. In general, **respondents evaluate these elements positively, particularly in case of timely feedback after assessments, timely communication about events, and timely implementation of factory assessments**.

³¹⁵ Interview with a global buyer representative.

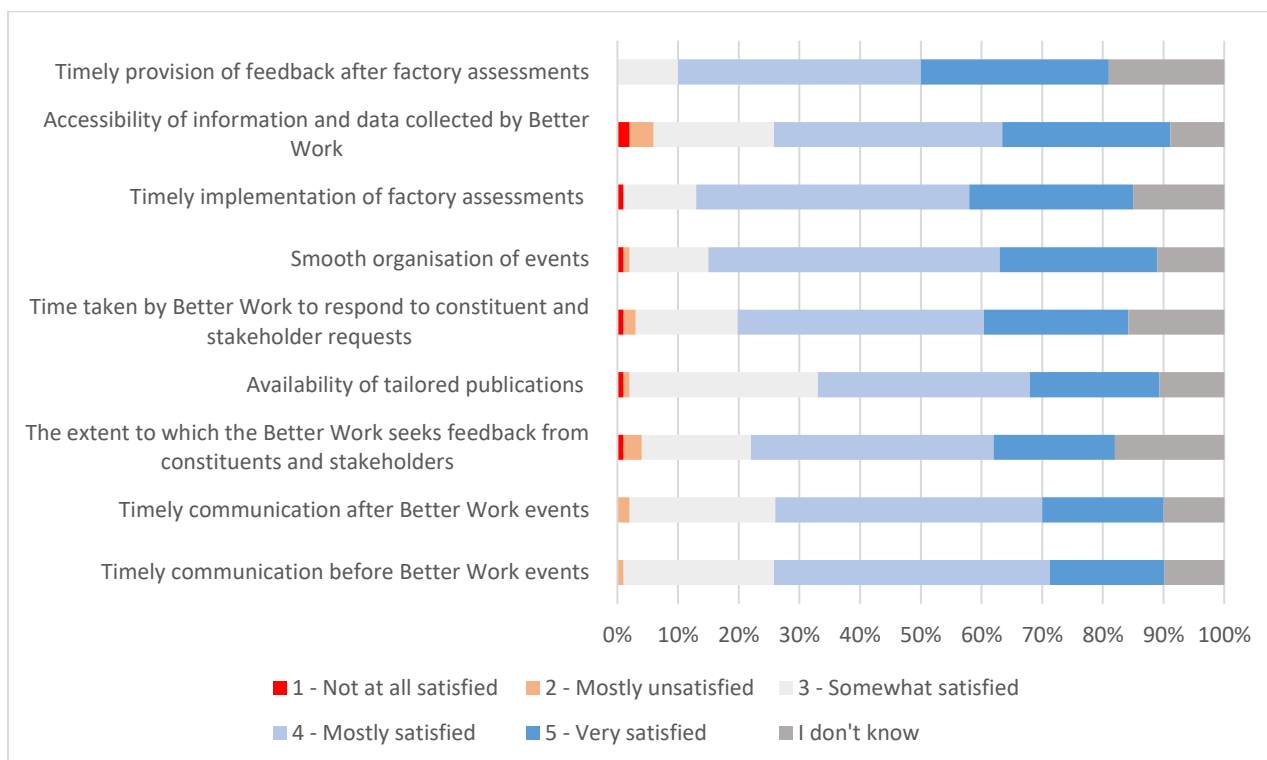
³¹⁶ Interview with a BW country team.

³¹⁷ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.58, and interviews with national and global BW staff.

³¹⁸ Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021.

³¹⁹ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.24.

Figure 18. Satisfaction with timeliness, availability, and accessibility of BW outputs



Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff, constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=100). "To what extent are you satisfied with the following aspects of Better Work Phase IV activities?"

264. However, there is some room for improvement regarding the accessibility of information and data collected by Better Work, and the availability of tailored publications.

Technology

265. In relation to the pandemic, **various efficiency gains were made through the effective use of virtual communication and assessment tools**. All interviewees responded that BW was able to make a swift transition to online tools and noted that most activities (assessments, trainings and even social dialogue) could be implemented virtually as well.³²⁰ This can lead to additional efficiency savings in the future, if time and financial resources can be saved on travel.

The response to COVID-19 in effect 'forced' some innovative thinking. BF **Cambodia** piloted a remote factory assessment process involving the use of hand-held cameras / mobile phones to view and inspect the factory. There are limitations to the effectiveness of this approach, e.g. the technology must be stable, and it makes arranging these visits as surprise and unannounced difficult. Thus, while not a substitute for on-site personal visits, a regime that mixes virtual and face-to-face assessments may lead to some efficiency savings without overly diluting the value of the assessment.³²¹

Another opportunity arising from the context of the pandemic was the transition to digital payments. BW **Jordan** has been pressuring factories to conduct salary payments digitally for a while now. With the context of the pandemic and the need to avoid cash exchange as part of the health measures against the spread of COVID-19, factories transitioned to digital payments rather quickly.³²²

266. Better Work has found innovative ways to continue to support both workers and management (in some cases including those from factories that are temporarily closed) through the use of remote data collection and smart phone apps.³²³ BW staff pointed out that there was a learning curve for staff to utilise the various technologies, but overall, the switch to virtual tools was efficient.³²⁴

³²⁰ Interviews with a range of global and national BW staff.

³²¹ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.58.

³²² Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.32.

³²³ Better Work Stage IV Fourth Annual Donor Report 2021.

³²⁴ Interview with BW Nicaragua staff.

267.The BW global Mid-Term Evaluation furthermore found that COVID-19 increased – and improved – communication between the BW global and country teams, as confirmed by interviews.³²⁵ Similarly, BW global staff indicated that the pandemic improved opportunities for the management team and country teams to stay in touch more regularly and therefore more often share information and best practices.³²⁶

3.4.2. Efficient programme management

268.Programme management is a key factor hindering or facilitating efficiency. Namely, smooth management and allocation of resources can reduce time for decision-making and programme implementation. Therefore, efficient management can enhance the outcomes of the programme at the same level of resources.

269.This section describes whether the BW programme was efficiently and effectively managed on the global and country level. This includes the management of the programme itself, but also the effective engagement of other ILO units and departments, and coherence with other ILO-led projects and programmes.

Management of the Better Work programme

Global level

270.The Better Work programme is led at global level by BW staff in Geneva and Bangkok. The operational management team is composed of Better Work Global managers and all country managers. They come together on a regular basis to discuss the issues they face. During the pandemic it met much more frequently, almost every 2 months because BW was in a crisis mode.³²⁷ Before COVID-19, BW also organised regular industry summits which brought together operational staff from all countries for three-day gathering to allow them to exchange information.³²⁸

271.On a more strategic level, BW is overseen by the Global Management group, which comprises two senior level officials from the ILO and two senior levels from the IFC, and who meet at least twice a year. BW also has a global advisory group of industry stakeholders, experts like academics or supply chain experts, governments, donor governments, international unions, international employers, and buyers.³²⁹

272.**Interviewed BW staff and stakeholders consider that the management of BW by the global BW team is efficient.** This shows a continuation of the previous phase, where the evaluation found that “the overall governance of BW is satisfactory, including the functioning of the advisory structures and management”.³³⁰ IFC noted that the programme is managed by experienced and competent staff, who are easy to approach and collaborate with.³³¹ The BW team itself also noted that a key strength of the global team is the long-term involvement of the staff in BW (and therefore their deep knowledge of the programme) and the trust in its leadership.³³² National BW CTAs expressed their general satisfaction with the support and expertise provided by the global team.³³³ A programme Advisory Committee member also considered the management structure effective.³³⁴

273.One area for improvement noted by a partner and a buyer is the speed of decision-making and procedural aspects. They noted that the management of BW can be quite slow. Both interviewees also mentioned communication between BW global and national teams as a challenge to efficient management.³³⁵ The increasing independence of national programmes (to address the specific needs of the countries, especially in more mature programme countries) requires the global team to relinquish more responsibility to the national level.³³⁶

National level

274.At the national level, the BW programme is overseen by the CTA and their staff. They are responsible for the strategic design, monitoring and implementation of the country programme. They sometimes have a deputy (P3 level), who helps them more on the operational side, and a huge team of Enterprise Advisers, who are

³²⁵ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV p.32.

³²⁶ Interview with BW staff.

³²⁷ Interview with BW staff.

³²⁸ Interview with BW staff.

³²⁹ Interview with BW staff.

³³⁰ Independent Final Evaluation of Better Work Global Program Phase III p.8.

³³¹ Interview with IFC staff.

³³² Interview with BW staff.

³³³ Group interviews with BW country staff.

³³⁴ Interview with the PAC member.

³³⁵ Interview with a buyer and with IFC.

³³⁶ Interview with BW staff.

usually split into various sub-teams. All sub-teams are always led by a team leader (more senior level factory engagement person). In the Phase IV some countries also started putting in place more industry-focused staff to have a liaison role with the constituents.³³⁷

275. In terms of reporting lines of the programme managers, they usually officially report to the ILO country office director, but they also report to the Better Work Global team, so we have technical reviewing chiefs in the global team. All operational and technical issues are handled with technical reviewing chiefs, while more political engagement is handled together with country offices.³³⁸

276. Similar to the global office, **BW management at country level was evaluated positively by various BW and external interviewees**. Interviewed IFC staff positively evaluated the management of BW at country level and praised the efficiency of local staff (e.g., in providing support to stakeholders).³³⁹ An interviewee from BW global mentioned in particular the efficient and independent adjustment of national activities by BW staff during the pandemic, such as the fast switch to online tools and innovative use of such tools to replace in-person activities.³⁴⁰ This is confirmed by the fact that various activities (though delayed) continued to take place in adjusted formats.

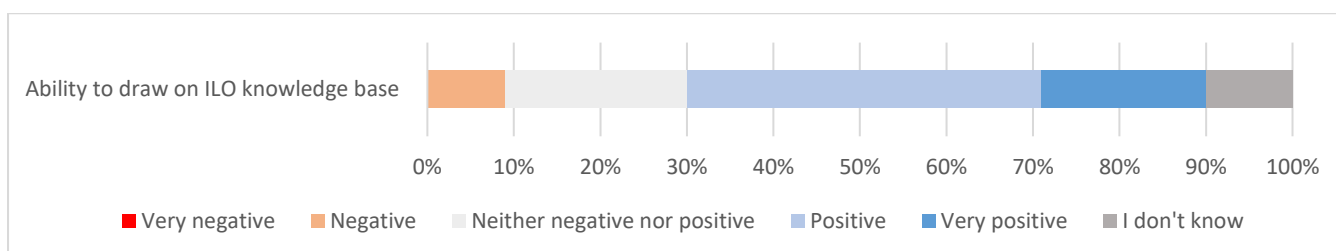
277. In **Jordan**, the recent BW evaluation found that the programme is adequately managed, and stakeholders reported positively on their interaction with the programme team.³⁴¹ An **Egyptian** factory owner noted that BW staff are supportive and responsive, and that disagreements can always be settled amicably.³⁴² **Nicaraguan** interviewees praised their national BW team for their hard work and excellent communication. One Nicaraguan stakeholder would like more communication with the BW Nicaragua team, but recognises that the team is currently understaffed.³⁴³

Synergies with other projects and ILO departments

278. Better Work is a programme led by the ILO, contributing to the ILO's strategic objectives and its programme & Budget (P&B). Efficiency, as well as progress towards the strategic objectives, benefit from coordination and alignment between ILO programmes to ensure that ILO efforts support rather than duplicate each other. The global Mid-Term Evaluation recommended BW to enhance collaboration between BW and ILO units and programmes.³⁴⁴ Some examples have been found of increased collaboration in recent years, although this process can be further expanded in the upcoming phase.

279. Based on the interviews conducted for this evaluation, **the ability of Better Work to rely on other ILO units and departments, technical staff, and ongoing projects differs by country and thematic area**. The survey results found that 60% of respondents believe that the ability of BW staff to draw on ILO's knowledge base contributed positively to the achievements of BW.

Figure 19. Contribution of BW's ability to rely on the ILO's knowledge base to the BW programme implementation



Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff, constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=100). "In what way do you think the following factors affected the achievement of the objectives of Better Work Phase IV?"

280. In some countries, the Better Work team works efficiently with the ILO office. This is particularly the case in **Ethiopia**, where the ONEILO approach is implemented. However, examples of optimal coordination between BW and ILO were also found in countries without ONEILO approaches.

³³⁷ Interview with BW staff.

³³⁸ Interview with BW staff.

³³⁹ Interview with IFC staff.

³⁴⁰ Interview with BW staff.

³⁴¹ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.34.

³⁴² Interview with an Egyptian factory owner.

³⁴³ Interviews with Nicaraguan stakeholders.

³⁴⁴ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV, p.44.

The fact that BW **Indonesia** and ILO are located in the same office building has given ample opportunities for coordination between BW and other ILO projects. BW staff noted that exchange often takes place between projects and technical experts from ILO also support the BW activities.³⁴⁵

BW **Ethiopia** also works with other ILO teams. With regards to productivity, BW works very closely with the ILO Enterprise team. For industry relations and social dialogue, they work very closely with INWORK and other departments. Through the ONEILO design, BW Ethiopia can easily tap into the knowledge base of ILO without relying on new recruitment.³⁴⁶

The ILO **Bangladesh** CO is pursuing a “ONEILO” approach to working with specific sectors, reaching beyond the RMG cluster of projects. This integration has been demonstrated by BWB joining forces with the RMG project to provide labour inspector training, and with the ILO-SDIR project³⁴⁷ to provide training to trade unions and employers’ organisations, as well as integrated responses to the Covid-19 pandemic across the ILO Bangladesh country programme.³⁴⁸

In **Egypt**, Better Work is part of a bigger project “Strengthening labour relations and its institutions in Egypt” (SLARIE) that has two other outcomes related to freedom of association and social dialogue. A stakeholder believes that the benefit of this approach is that all income from “Better Work” (factory and buyer fees) can be distributed across SLARIE programmes and enhance their financial resources as well.³⁴⁹

281. The BW office in **Nicaragua** pointed out that the pandemic enhanced opportunities for them to collaborate with the regional office in Costa Rica. *“Before the pandemic, we perceived that regular meetings could occur only in person, but now we have weekly meetings to discuss our mitigation measures regarding COVID-19 or other requests for support”.*³⁵⁰

282. An important example of coordination between two programmes is Better Work and SCORE³⁵¹ in **Ethiopia**. Better Work has supported SCORE factories once the initial three-month intensive support is complete. The Enterprise Advisers in these factories remain and provide follow-up support. Additionally, Better Work and SCORE collaborated in developing and implementing the women leadership development programme from the inception of the intervention to the implementation of the pilot phase.³⁵² However, the SCORE programme has also been implemented in parallel to BW, for example in Indonesia and Vietnam. An important enabling factor was the specific request of the programme’s donor to enhance such coordination, which would reduce administrative and financial resources.

In **Indonesia** and **Vietnam**, SCORE and BW are run in parallel focusing on different sectors or different parts of the supply chain. Where the two programmes focus on different sectors, they collaborate by sharing knowledge and technical expertise. They also tried to intervene in the same sector. For example, in Vietnam SCORE training was used in factories that were too small to join BW. In Indonesia, SCORE worked with suppliers to consumer goods factories and BW helped SCORE to add compliance checks to those factories that usually get visited by auditors from brands and buyers, but do not necessarily get training on how to address the shortcomings that are revealed through the audits.³⁵³

283. Another example of synergies between BW and ILO includes the ILO-wide apparel task force, led by BW, which aimed to ensure that all ILO staff working on apparel could coordinate and exchange information, and avoid competition for donor funding.³⁵⁴

284. **However, the findings of the interviews demonstrate that there are still areas for improvement.** An interviewee from INWORK pointed out that there is no official, strategic approach to the coordination and exchange between BW and other ILO programmes. They provided the example of social dialogue, where BW is increasing its efforts (building trade union capacities) but where INWORK is minimally consulted. As a result,

³⁴⁵ Interview with BW Indonesia staff.

³⁴⁶ Interview with BW Ethiopia staff.

³⁴⁷ Promoting Social Dialogue and Harmonious Industrial Relations in the Bangladesh Ready-Made Garment Industry (SDIR) Project.

³⁴⁸ 2021 Independent Interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.36.

³⁴⁹ Interview with an Egyptian government representative.

³⁵⁰ Interview with BW Nicaragua staff.

³⁵¹ Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) is an ILO global programme that improves productivity and working conditions in small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

³⁵² Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.49

³⁵³ Interview with the representative of SCORE.

³⁵⁴ Interview with BW staff.

there is no efficient use of the knowledge and capacity present within ILO.³⁵⁵ Interviewed donors also noted that some BW staff may be quite detached from ILO strategic discussions and planning.³⁵⁶

285. Another ILO staff member made similar observations regarding country-level alignment. Sometimes, BW is implementing activities which are not included in the ILO country programme. The management of BW, including its financial resources, is in many cases separate from the ILO country office and reports directly to BW HQ. The staff member believed that the reporting line from BW country programme is stronger to BW global than to the ILO country office, which means that the activities are often more driven by BW global strategy than the ILO country strategy.³⁵⁷

286. The evaluation of BW **Bangladesh** noted great progress in its approach to seek synergies, but it is not yet sufficiently implemented to achieve efficiency gains. The previous evaluation interviews found that *"although part of RMGP II³⁵⁸, the BWB has been a separate programme. That hindered BW from making the interventions efficient (e.g. by using administrative staff for both programmes) and making the most of the donor resources."*³⁵⁹

287. One of the reasons mentioned for the limited synergies is the difference in scope between Better Work and other ILO interventions. The ILO in general works at the national level, whereas BW is active mainly at the factory level. This requires BW staff to assess how ILO's work can be relevant for, and combined with, BW's factory work. Furthermore, it was pointed out that ILO technical staff do not always have the time or the ability to address concerns at the sectoral or factory level, as they are predominantly engaged at national institutional level.³⁶⁰

288. BW staff noted that in Phase III of the programme, Better Work acted rather independently without being well integrated into ILO. Phase IV of the programme (with increased attention to sustainability) provided important lessons learnt about seeking synergies with other ILO units. In particular, synergies between BW and ILO country teams are crucial for knowledge exchange within the organisation (and exchange of technical expertise without relying on additional staff), better resource management, and for the sustainability of the programme if BW exits the country. Namely, the present ILO office can continue providing support to workers' organisations, work on social dialogue, etc.³⁶¹

3.4.3. Coordination between Better Work Global and Country programmes

Communication and coordination

289. The evaluation covers nine programme countries which are supported by the Better Work global team. This section discusses whether the BW country teams received sufficient support from the global staff. The majority of interviews carried out with country staff found that the **country teams are satisfied with the support received from BW global**. This supports the findings of the Mid-Term Evaluation, which indicated that *"the support provided by BW Global is largely appreciated by the country teams. Especially useful in recent years were the support for implementing the gender strategy and more recently the support to handle the COVID-19 pandemic*. Such support included the preparation of trainings, guidelines and protocols on gender equality, responses to ad hoc requests from country teams, and knowledge sharing.³⁶²

290. The survey results indicate that about 70% of respondents found the technical and administrative support from HQ to country programme adequate. About 6% found this support completely or mostly inadequate. The results show that respondents are less familiar with the political support provided by HQ to country programmes, resulting in less positive feedback and more "I don't know" responses.

³⁵⁵ Interview with INWORK.

³⁵⁶ Interview with a BW donor.

³⁵⁷ Interview with the representative of SCORE.

³⁵⁸ Improving Working Conditions in Bangladesh's Ready-Made Garments sector Phase II (2017-2023, RMGP II) is ILO's programme aimed at improving working conditions and safety standards in the sector.

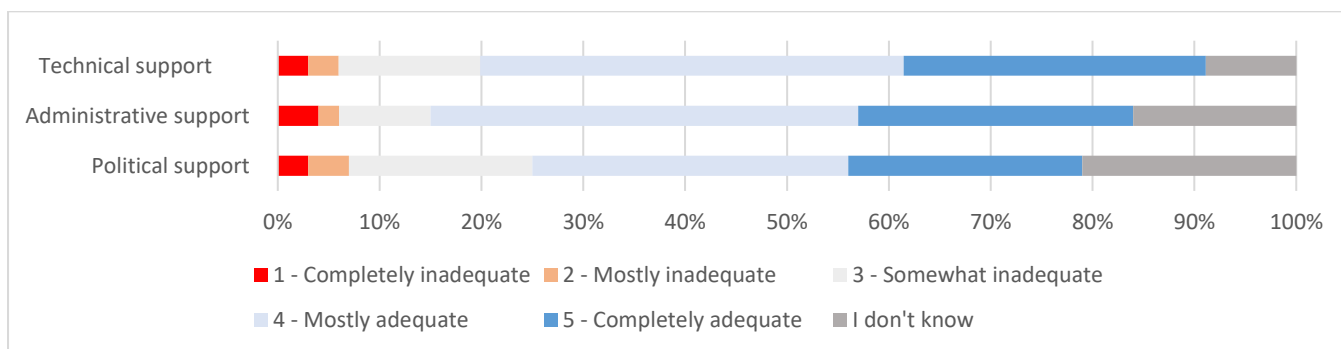
³⁵⁹ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.26.

³⁶⁰ Interview with BW staff.

³⁶¹ Interview with BW staff.

³⁶² Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV p.32.

Figure 20. Adequacy of support from BW HQ to country programmes

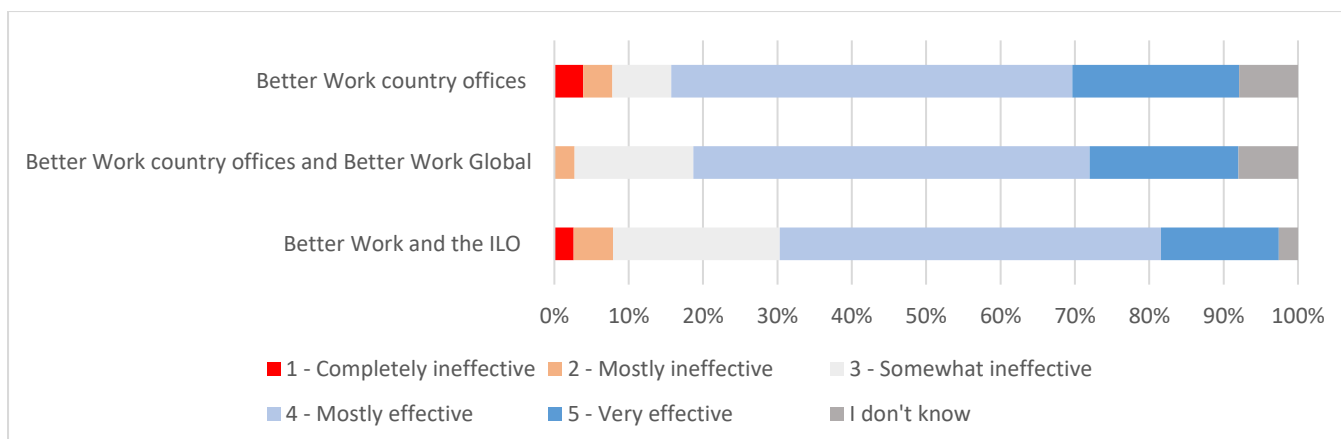


Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff, constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=100). "To what extent do you think Better Work Global was able to provide adequate administrative, technical and political support to the country programmes?"

291. Interviewed country teams indicate that there are sufficient communication channels with BW global and the frequency of meetings is sufficient for them as well. During the pandemic (2020 and 2021), BW global organised weekly meetings with the CTAs on handling the response to the pandemic. More strategic conversations took place every 3 months.³⁶³

292. These findings are supported by the survey results among ILO and BW staff. Respectively, 76% and 73% of these respondents perceived effective collaboration between BW country offices and between BW country offices and HQ respectively. Up to 67% also perceived effective collaboration between BW and the ILO in general. In this regard, a larger share of respondents considered this collaboration "somewhat effective" (22%).

Figure 21. Effectiveness of cooperation at different levels.



Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff (N=75). "How would you rate the effectiveness of collaboration between?"

293. BW staff perceived Phase IV as a lesson learnt about the frequency of communication, formal versus less formal decision-making, communication structures, and engagement structures. Namely, it showed that countries could exchange more frequently and effectively using online tools, and communication was more often used for knowledge sharing and peer-to-peer troubleshooting. Staff also noticed the value of the recent shift to virtual communication as an enabler of BW to embrace technology as a way to stay more connected across countries and with HQ. Namely, it enhanced communication and exchange without affecting time and financial resources needed for travel.³⁶⁴

294. One of the challenges affecting coordination between BW global and country teams is the growing decentralisation of the programme. Initially, BW strategies were meant to suit all country contexts, but more flexibility has been given to country teams during Phase IV to adjust the global strategies to the national needs and realities. The Mid-Term Evaluation recommended BW global to increase exchange between country teams and focus more on mutual support between global and country offices (rather than one-way support from global to countries).³⁶⁵ The current evaluation found various examples of how more flexibility was given to country teams and how increased communication has taken place, as noted above.

³⁶³ Interview with BW staff.

³⁶⁴ Interview with BW staff.

³⁶⁵ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV, p.42.

295. However, the global team is still responsible for ensuring consistency across the countries and for a large share of fundraising and reporting. Some BW staff noticed that this caused some tensions regarding the needs of the country programmes to have more independence, and the need of global to create certain rules and boundaries.”³⁶⁶

296. Some external stakeholders noticed this tension as well. One interviewee pointed out that they felt that BW global was insufficiently informed about national-level work, and they noticed a growing discrepancy between global-level strategies for BW and actual national-level implementation. A BW staff member confirmed this as well.³⁶⁷ An interviewee from IFC perceived that the communication between global and country programmes could be improved in terms of how quickly information is exchanged.³⁶⁸

Exchange of lessons learnt

297. **Regular exchange takes place between BW offices of different countries.** The CTAs have a platform and different working group platforms to share experiences on best practices and challenges faced. CTAs also have weekly calls with global representative to share experiences and to promote mutual learning.³⁶⁹ Although countries face specific challenges and have different contexts and needs regarding the BW programme, CTAs notice a clear advantage of exchange between countries. For example, newer programmes may try a certain approach that was already tested and deemed ineffective in another country. These findings are supported by the survey results presented above, indicating that cooperation between BW countries is “mostly” or “very effective”.

298. **Only a few examples were found of exchange between constituents of the BW programme countries.** Interviewed CTAs noted different levels of interest for such exchange. In some countries, a willingness for peer learning was mentioned, while in others the constituents have limited interest. For example, one government showed less interest due to the fear of being perceived as “worse”.³⁷⁰ Therefore, the examples are rather sporadic and no systematic approach for such exchange exists. CTAs noted that there is no active effort made by BW to support exchange between constituents.³⁷¹

299. One example of exchange among employers was found, namely the Alliance of the Textile Associations in Bangladesh, Indonesia, Vietnam. However, since employers are also competitors, the opportunities for exchange are limited.³⁷²

This section is elaborated in Case Study 5. Sustainability.

3.4.4. Monitoring and evaluation

300. This section describes whether the objectives and targets of Better Work Phase IV were realistic with respect to each country’s context and challenges, timeline and resources.

301. Overall, prior evaluations of BW in the programme countries indicate that **the targets were mostly realistic and achievable, and that risks and challenges were well integrated in the design of those targets.** Various steps were taken during Phase IV to further improve M&E systems.

302. The BW programmes in **Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia** have performed well in identifying key assumptions and risks that have the potential to impact upon various aspects of their programme delivery and – by extension – the achievement of programme objectives.³⁷³ RMGP II and BW **Bangladesh** interventions strategies generally drew on ILO strengths and adequately considered country-level challenges and opportunities.³⁷⁴ Some country programmes were able to hire a dedicated M&E staff member to enhance attention to M&E and relieve the workload of the CTA.³⁷⁵

303. Additionally, some efforts have been made to better align BW monitoring with general ILO monitoring. BW global is working on aligning the BW indicators better with ILO’s P&B. The P&B indicators are not always

³⁶⁶ Interview with BW staff.

³⁶⁷ Interview with a buyer and a BW staff member.

³⁶⁸ Interview with IFC representatives.

³⁶⁹ Interviews with various CTAs.

³⁷⁰ Interviews with various CTAs.

³⁷¹ Interview with BW Jordan and Egypt staff.

³⁷² Interview with BW Bangladesh staff.

³⁷³ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.59.

³⁷⁴ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.49.

³⁷⁵ Interview with BW staff.

applicable to BW. During Phase IV, BW staff have adapted some of the ILO P&B proposed indicators to suit the BW context.³⁷⁶

304.USDOL is currently working on adjusting the indicators with BW **Bangladesh** and **Jordan** country programmes.³⁷⁷ For example, BWB is establishing indicators and targets specifically for the USDOL-funded activities under its USDOL gender intervention logframe, which may include target numbers of female participants reached with services.³⁷⁸

305.However, **monitoring approaches were not always in line with BW staff's capacity to collect data**. This related to ambitious (quantitative) indicators which required significant data collection for which insufficient resources were available.³⁷⁹ However, at the same time, interviewed BW staff found that current M&E frameworks for BW do not capture the "richness" of activities that take place at the country level. They mentioned for example that the extensive work on social dialogue and OSH, especially during COVID-19, is not reflected in current M&E frameworks (e.g., a lack of qualitative indicators) and therefore does not always get presented properly in (donor) reports.³⁸⁰

306.**One important challenge of the current M&E framework and its indicators is the focus on quantitative measures and outputs** (number of factories enrolled, number of assessments conducted, number of women trained as supervisors) rather than qualitative outcomes and impact (e.g. changes in factory practice and managers' behaviour). The framework also does not effectively capture changes in the motivation, capacity, practices, and policies of the tripartite constituents.³⁸¹ The evaluation of Better Work in **Indonesia, Vietnam** and **Cambodia** noted that "the RBM process currently stops short of the systemic collection and evaluation of outcome and impact data".³⁸² The evaluation of BW **Bangladesh** found no indicators measuring progress on BWB efforts to strengthen the national enabling environment or promote responsible business practices, even though these are strategic intervention areas.³⁸³ However, it is noted that BWB's strategy for Phase V will aim to measure BWB's progress on promoting responsible business practices.³⁸⁴ Similarly, the prior evaluation of BW **Jordan** noted that the indicator "average non-compliance rate on publicly reported issues" does not describe the severity of violations that were observed and/or addressed.³⁸⁵

307.With a diversity of donors and programmatic alignments, the BW **Bangladesh** evaluation found that BWB's performance monitoring and reporting systems are multiple and varied, which did not facilitate efficiency in terms of time spent on collecting data, reporting and informing management decisions. As a result, the evaluation noticed a weakness in the use of such monitoring data for decision-making.³⁸⁶

3.5 Impact

3.5.1. Likelihood of impact

308.Given the maturity of the Better Work programme, the 2017-2022 period should be able to measure to what extent BW activities have achieved impact related to working conditions and productivity in the garment sector over the past five years, which areas of impact are lagging behind, and what initial signs of impact of the 2017-2022 activities are visible.

309.In the evaluation intervention logic, impact is measured by the increased well-being of workers in the garment sector, the changed behaviour and attitudes of garment factory owners, the increased competitiveness of factories and the enhanced role of social partners in shaping policies and priorities for the sector, through social dialogue. **Desk research, interviews and the surveys have found various examples of impact of BW across the programme countries.**

³⁷⁶ Interview with BW staff.

³⁷⁷ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.18.

³⁷⁸ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.18.

³⁷⁹ Interview with BW staff.

³⁸⁰ Interview with BW staff .

³⁸¹ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.38.

³⁸² BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.55.

³⁸³ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.23.

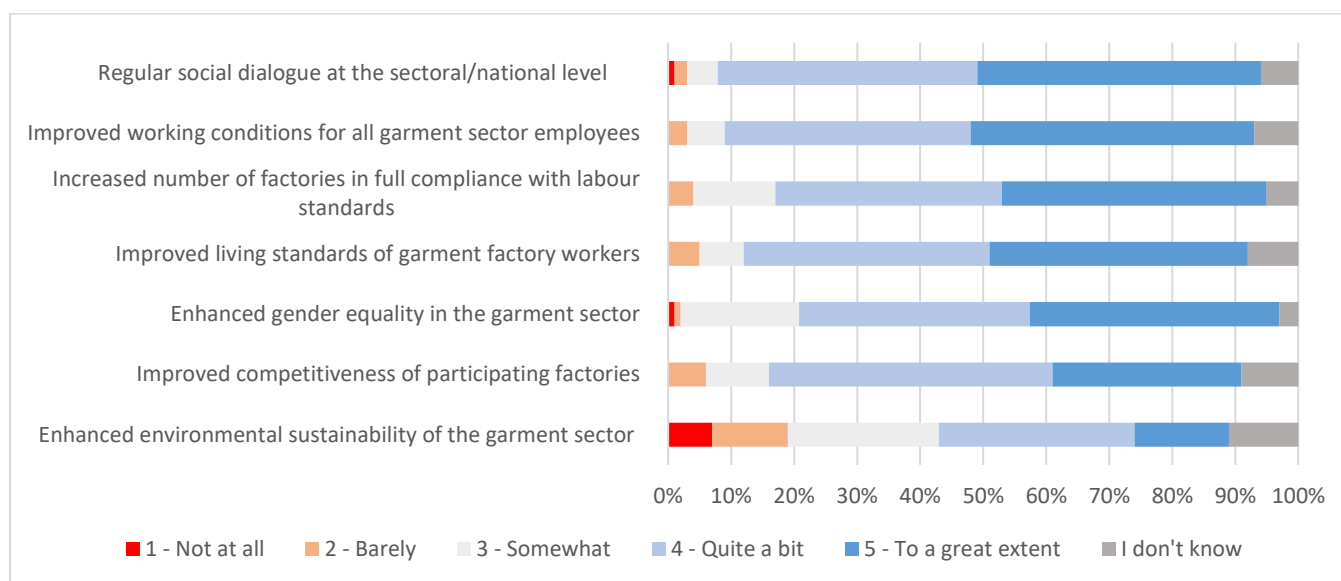
³⁸⁴ Note from BW staff.

³⁸⁵ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.19.

³⁸⁶ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.37.

310. The survey results show that respondents have noticed “quite a bit” or a “great extent” of impact in different areas addressed by BW. Regular sectoral / national social dialogue (86%), improved working conditions (84%) and living standards (80%), increased factory compliance (78%) were most often perceived in this regard.

Figure 22. Initial signs of impact



Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff, constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=100). “To what extent have you already noticed or experienced the following examples of Better Work impact?”

Increased well-being of workers

311. The hypothesis of the intervention logic is that an improvement in working conditions in the factories and awareness of garment workers of their rights would affect not only their well-being at work, but also their well-being in general. Examples include reduced poverty, and enhanced enrolment of children in schools.

312. The majority of country evaluations conducted during the 2017-2022 period, as well as the survey results presented above, concluded that the BW programme had improved the lives and well-being of garment sector workers inside the factory and in general. Interviews with employer and employee representatives, as well as with beneficiaries, in the programme countries demonstrate that **the BW programme has made significant impact on the working conditions of garment workers.**

Workers in **Bangladesh** stated that BWB is highly effective in improving their conditions, their voice in dialogue with management, the maternal and childcare services for women, as well as workers’ health and safety under the impact of COVID-19.³⁸⁷ An increase in school enrolment of children of **Indonesian** garment workers demonstrated that raising of standards in factories has improved the quality of life of the workers and their families.³⁸⁸ **Jordanian** stakeholders reported improvements in the working and living conditions of workers.³⁸⁹

313. The forthcoming impact assessment for Phase IV noted a clear link between the empowerment of workers in BW factories (e.g. their perceived ability to voice concerns, presence of bipartite committees) and overall workplace communication, representation and complaint mechanisms, social dialogue, and reduced abuse. The study found therefore that participation in BW directly resulted in improved factory environments in terms of communication, and in terms of workers’ job confidence.³⁹⁰

314. Furthermore, the impact assessment found that workers in factories enrolled in Better Work tend to work fewer hours for higher take-home pay, and the conditions for workers’ hours and pay tend to continue to improve the longer a firm engages with Better Work. This all results in improved health and education opportunities for workers and their families.³⁹¹

³⁸⁷ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.vi.

³⁸⁸ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.65.

³⁸⁹ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.35.

³⁹⁰ Forthcoming Phase IV impact assessment, pp.89-90.

³⁹¹ Forthcoming Phase IV impact assessment, p.90.

315. Research carried out under the current evaluation confirmed the impact assessment. Interviews showed that workers' well-being and living conditions in various programme countries benefited from increased minimum salaries, improved healthcare provision and access to social protection.³⁹²

“I am working at a factory that began working with Better Work **Jordan** nearly 12 years ago, and I have seen terrific progress in enhancing compliance and protecting workers' rights since then. Looking back to over a decade ago before Better Work's involvement, there are various advantages that workers and migrant workers now have, including the elimination of many fees charged to migrant workers in exchange for work, and increased compliance, which has facilitated improvements throughout the factory and workers' housing. There are also improvements in infrastructure, improvements in housing, the addition of cafeterias, and improved OSH as some examples. This progress has in turn increased the number of buyers engaging with the factory, and so I view Better Work as having a significant role in the factory's future and success.

Additionally, I appreciate the variety of activities and trainings provided by Better Work, in areas of sexual harassment, digital training, COVID-19 assistance information, communication, monitoring, and mental health. We have never missed an event of Better Work in 12 years! I believe that there is value in placing a focus on mental health, especially for women workers, and I appreciate the addition of a mental health counsellor at the factory.

I see that the regular advisory visits by Better Work Jordan are opportunities to increase compliance, foster better communication, and grow professionally. Improving on compliance and strengthening the assessment reports is a priority for me, and therefore I even transitioned from working in accounting to working on compliance issues. I believe that the factory's partnership with Better Work has helped my team reach a phase in our work that would have otherwise been unachievable if we were on our own. I still see and hope for a long future of collaboration with Better Work.”

Interview with a factory compliance manager in Jordan.

“Better Work **Bangladesh** came to our factory and contacted our top management. With the authorisation of the management, Better Work Bangladesh communicated with the representatives of the workers of our factory. Then we were informed about the Better Work Programme by our worker representative. In this way we became involved with the Better Work programme.

In order to ensure the health safety of the workers, especially during COVID-19, factory management provided us with masks, hand sanitisers and other relevant health safety kits. These initiatives have been undertaken by the factory management. The factory provides training to a certain number of workers every week about how to ensure a clean, healthy, safe environment within our workspace. Besides, since we are working in the garment manufacturing sector, physical cleanness has been a significant requirement to ensure our professionalism. To ensure safety, the factory established a safety committee, and to improve the working environment, the factory established a participatory committee (PC).

Since our involvement with the factory and the Better Work Programme, we have noticed that our toilet has become neat and clean and we noticed improved cleanliness of machines and emergency exit paths. Most of us (about 90%) can now speak directly to our boss or manager at any time; we were told to speak with our immediate superior or directly to the managers.

The activities and training sessions of Better Work Bangladesh have increased our self-confidence about how we can do better in pursuing our own issues of interest in the factory, such as ensuring our own hygienic workplace. We were taught the importance of cleanliness and how to keep our machine (swing) and surroundings clean. We paused our work while playing music to clean our machine with a cloth provided by our supervisor. We dropped the dust cloth in a specific box after cleaning the machine, which was later removed by the supervisor. We understand that if our machine remains dirty, our product (swing cloth) may become dirty. As a result, we clean our machine on our own accord on a regular basis.

Furthermore, after coming in contact with Better Work Bangladesh, we experienced a clean and clear exit path from our floor, which had previously been littered with pills and packets. This net clean path makes us feel safe and secure because we believe that if an emergency situation arises (accident occurs), we will be able to easily and quickly exit

³⁹² Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE.

from here via those clear exit paths. Previously, the environment of our office surrounding was not in a good condition. Now, we enter our workplace and return to our home with joy.”

Group interview with factory workers in Bangladesh

316. However, the results of BW in relation to workers' well-being is not perceived by all stakeholders. One interviewed global buyer noted that they had not yet witnessed a clear improvement of workers' situation.³⁹³ Similarly, a **Cambodian** employer representative did not perceive any particular changes over the past 2 years in terms of improved job quality (although a trade union in the same country did perceive improvements).³⁹⁴ This could link to either inconsistencies in the achievement of impact across different countries, or a lack of information and evidence presented to all stakeholders by the BW team.

Changed behaviour and practices in factories – increased number of factories complying with national and international labour standards

317. The intervention logic assumes that the introduction of new factory processes, based on trainings, assessments, and advisory services, will lead to a change in the mindset of factory owners and managers. It is expected that the BW interventions create a growing understanding of workers' rights and well-being, and about the benefits of improved working conditions on productivity. As a result, factory owners and managers who were trained by BW pay more attention to workers' well-being due to their changed attitudes.

318. The previous evaluations carried out between 2017 and 2022, and the current survey and interviews carried out with constituents, have found **numerous examples of changed behaviour and practices of factory management.**

The BF **Cambodia** programme ensured that workers are involved in identifying non-compliance issues and in the process of problem solving through the internal mechanisms, i.e. PICC and OSH Committees, which helps promote a culture of participatory social dialogue within the factory.³⁹⁵

Certain **Jordanian** factories reported that the mentality of the garment sector has shifted towards more interest in the well-being of workers, and certain factories explained that they no longer need to be pushed. This was considered a result of the BW trainings and increased capacity.³⁹⁶

Improvement in factory performance in **Vietnam** was clearly recognised by stakeholders in terms of both labour compliance and working conditions and that encouraged them to continue participating in the programme in the following years.³⁹⁷

Although the programme in **Egypt** was more recently initiated, a local buyer already noticed that employers in some BW factories are *“already more respectful to the employees and know the importance of a safe environment and the importance of properly training and educating employees about their rights and duties”*.³⁹⁸ An Egyptian factory owner expressed the same views.

A **Nicaraguan** factory owner explained how BW changed his factory behaviour: *“In 2020 a chemical substance incident occurred: a man who wasn't using his glasses got ink inside his eye. Gladly, we were prepared to provide him first-aid and medical assistance before risking his life, but we could have prevented this accident if we had implemented our prevention culture. Since then, we have worked on an action plan based on the assessment diagnosis received by Better Work. They continuously monitor and communicate the importance of prevention and reaction in an emergency. They helped us shape a programme that consisted of first-aid kits, emergency numbers and an internal supervisor designated to detect any potential risks.”*³⁹⁹

319. Interviews with national employer and employee representatives presented positive perspectives on changed factory attitudes in the sector as a whole. A trade union from **Cambodia** described that the increase in knowledge of labour laws and working conditions has led many factories to change workers contracts from Fixed Duration Contracts to Undetermined Duration Contract, which include more employment benefits.⁴⁰⁰ Workers from **Bangladesh** noted that trainings facilitated by BW led to the set-up

³⁹³ Interview with a representative of a global buyer.

³⁹⁴ Interview with the Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia.

³⁹⁵ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.64.

³⁹⁶ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.23.

³⁹⁷ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.68.

³⁹⁸ Interview with a buyer from Egypt.

³⁹⁹ Interview with a Factory owner from Nicaragua.

⁴⁰⁰ Interview with the Cambodian Federation of Independent Trade Union (CFITU).

of a committee of seven members (five from within the factory and two lawyers from outside) to oversee incidents of verbal abuse. As result of this measure, the trend of verbal abuse has almost stopped.⁴⁰¹

“After 12 years of participation in BW **Vietnam**, with 10 assessments, our enterprise has positive changes. Before 2016 with the first 5-6 assessments, our factory had many faults related with non-compliance with OSH law, benefit policies, etc. These faults were repeated over several years. The assessment was for the enterprise only a formal procedure to be passed. Since 2016, the number of faults decreased. In 2017, the main faults, such as working time, salary payment, OHS-compliance were addressed.

Since then, we have paid more attention to our training system and environment. We established the OSH-Board, and innovation Board, Dialogue/cooperative Board for implementation of related activities. In the early years, BW and our enterprises focused on faults in non-compliance. In the last 4 years, we are more concerned with gender equality and environment. Beside the assessment of the buyer, we continuously assess ourselves. This helps us to monitor the changes in legal regulation and to improve the enterprise. The current assessment of the buyer recognises the positive change of our enterprise. These changes bring benefit for the employees, the enterprise, and the buyer.

From our practice, such change needs the consensus and commitment of the enterprise management. Every change related to the behaviour of managers and habit of the employee is difficult. It takes time. BW consistently accompany the process of improvement of the working conditions (light, noise, working position, chemical management), and we are happy with that.

Our experience with BW shows that the project helps us to be more sustainable, systematic and to ensure continuous development and improvement. We go from fault overcome to fault prevention in all phases of the production and business, including HR, profile management, fault monitoring).”

Interview with a factory manager from Vietnam

320. However, it is important to note that **the issues in participating factories are not completely resolved**. As presented before, compliance rates are not 100%, meaning there is still room for improvement in factories' behaviour.. A **Cambodian** stakeholder indicated that they had not witnessed significant change in overall factory attitudes. Some factories “*keep pushing workers more than workers' capacity, and command the workers to hit more targets and work faster*”.⁴⁰²

Enhanced competitiveness and productivity of factories

321. As worker well-being inside and outside the factory increases, it is expected in the theory of change that the productivity of the workers increases as well. Both the enhanced productivity and the reputation of compliance of the factory can subsequently enhance its competitive advantage. The Phase IV impact assessment confirmed prior research, namely that factories participating in Better Work gain in revenue and profitability, both through higher export volumes and higher prices. Workers' productivity was also found to increase through BW interventions. Higher costs of compliance are generally exceeded by benefits, such as access to buyers, price offered for product, and order size.⁴⁰³

322. The evaluation survey noted that 75% of respondents noticed enhanced competitiveness “quite a bit” or “to a great” extent”. In some BW countries, **earlier assessments found signs and examples of enhanced productivity**. BW's most recent and concrete evidence stems from **Cambodia** and shows that where targets for workers have been rising, the work output has been rising in tandem with increasing wages (despite the challenges listed above). Based on that, there is good evidence that productivity increases due to participation in the programme. Often the productivity increases are associated with wage increases, but it is not guaranteed.⁴⁰⁴

The BW **Vietnam** programme was found to help enterprises achieve lower staff turnover, higher production efficiency, and increased capacity usage. As a result, factories with better working conditions were up to 8% more profitable than their counterparts. Similarly, the average firm enrolled in BWV increases its revenue to cost ratio by around 25% after four years of participation.⁴⁰⁵ BWV has had a great impact on garment and footwear sectors in

⁴⁰¹ Interview with factory workers in Bangladesh.

⁴⁰² Interview with the Cambodia Labour Confederation.

⁴⁰³ Forthcoming Phase IV impact assessment.

⁴⁰⁴ Interview with BW staff.

⁴⁰⁵ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.67.

general and factories within those sectors, especially in building factories' image to international buyers and in building industry reputation and competitiveness.⁴⁰⁶

Interviewees for the 2021 cluster evaluation covering Indonesia stated that BW in **Indonesia** has had a positive impact in areas such as enterprise business competitiveness. Up to 75% of general managers indicate their firms are preferred suppliers. The enterprise also doubles quarterly profits after four years, achieves better business terms with customers, and over 60% of factories have production capacity utilisation rates of 75% or higher.⁴⁰⁷

The 2022 impact assessment for Phase IV for **Bangladesh** found that after enrolling in Better Work, factories grow at a significantly higher pace relative to factories outside the programme, both in terms of export revenues and volumes. On average, in the period following enrolment, factories export revenues and volumes are 50% higher than non-Better Work firms.⁴⁰⁸

323. Research by the IFC demonstrated similar results. A review of the relationship between female empowerment and productivity, based on feedback from factories, has shown that the activities of BW should contribute positively to productivity.⁴⁰⁹

324. Interviewed employer representatives from **Cambodia** and **Vietnam** confirmed that they witnessed an increase in productivity of BW factories. "Workers have a higher speed and better performance at work, and there is technical sharing on how to meet the quotas. They are more concentrated and serious at work than before".⁴¹⁰ Such improvement was also measured by the declining turnover rates, which employers expect to have a consequence on improvement of productivity and revenue.⁴¹¹ An **Egyptian** buyer and a factory owner also noted that the creation of safe working environments coincided with enhanced productivity of participating factories.⁴¹²

325. Besides the impact on company culture and productivity in participating factories, **there are signs that the BW programme may affect non-participating factories (and countries as well)**. Namely, the programme has strengthened its partnerships with the key European and US-based brands and retail chains during Phase IV which is contributing to long-term impact beyond the immediate supplier subscribers.⁴¹³ A factory owner from **Nicaragua** indicated that they are replicating the programme structure in countries where some factories have branch offices, such as Guatemala. The management organisation has seen the changes and improvements the factory has undergone in Nicaragua and tried to do the same.⁴¹⁴

326. However, similar to the issue of workers' well-being, **one interviewed buyer and one employer representative from Cambodia indicated that they had not witnessed a concrete increase in the productivity of the factories they work with**.⁴¹⁵ This, again, may be a gap in the dissemination of programme results by BW.

3.5.2. Impact on cross-cutting concerns

This section describes to what extent the BW programme has also resulted in impact towards ILO's cross-cutting concerns regarding gender equality, persons with disabilities, environmental sustainability, ILS, and social dialogue. As demonstrated in the previous chapters, limited activities have taken place targeting persons with disabilities and addressing environmental sustainability. Therefore, no impact in these areas has been found.

Improved gender equality across the sector and country

327. Impact on gender equality comprises a change in well-being and job quality of female garment workers, a change of attitudes of factory management and changes in laws and policy at national level.

328. Prior evaluations noted that **the introduction of specific, targeted activities for women in the garment sector has contributed to higher impact on gender equality during this phase**.⁴¹⁶ The Phase IV impact assessment found that the BW programme managed to address various forms of discrimination (while others

⁴⁰⁶ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.67.

⁴⁰⁷ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.67.

⁴⁰⁸ Forthcoming Phase IV impact assessment.

⁴⁰⁹ Interview with IFC representatives.

⁴¹⁰ Interview with Employer representative – Fashiontext, Cambodia.

⁴¹¹ Interview with the Bureau for Employers' Activities, VCCI, Vietnam.

⁴¹² Interviews with a buyer and with a factory owner from Egypt.

⁴¹³ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.17.

⁴¹⁴ Interview with a factory owner from Nicaragua.

⁴¹⁵ Interview with a representative of a global buyer, and with the Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia.

⁴¹⁶ Interview with BW staff.

persist) and sexual harassment in participating factories. Surveys carried out for the impact assessment found in various countries that workers were less concerned about sexual harassment after the BW interventions.⁴¹⁷

329. The current evaluation survey found that 76% of respondents perceive enhanced gender equality in this sector “quite a bit” or “to a large extent”. In terms of well-being and job quality, examples were provided in prior evaluations and during interviews of changes in factory policies. In **Jordan**, examples were provided of the expansion of provision of childcare services.⁴¹⁸ Donors noted a tendency that women were not able to operate some technology, and now those positions are more open to women. Similarly, there are more opportunities for women to be in management positions.⁴¹⁹ A **Cambodian** stakeholder noted more equitable pay for women and men in similar positions, and equal opportunities for career growth.⁴²⁰

“Our factory joined the ILO Better Work Programme in **Ethiopia** in early 2020. The reason why we started engaging with the ILO Better Work Programme was that we observed improvements in working conditions and productivity of factories which were beneficiaries of the ILO BW programme. The key elements in which we participated in the programme are continuous compliance assessment, advisory services and trainings.

We noticed that the BW programme strengthened our existing anti-sexual harassment committee in the factory by providing capacity building trainings for committee members, operators, team leaders, supervisors and factory management on a detailed understanding of the concepts of sexual harassment, sexual harassment preventive mechanisms and other issues related to sexual harassment. The trainings created high level of awareness about sexual harassment among operators, team leaders, supervisors and factory management. The training also improved the reporting capacity of the anti-sexual harassment committee. Consequently, the incidences of sexual harassment have declined after capacity building trainings that strengthened the anti-sexual harassment committee and the workers and factory management.

The programme also provided training on women’s leadership development, which improved the capacity of women working in the factory. The capacity building training led some women to become team leaders from the level of operators and others become supervisors from team leaders following the capacity building trainings.”

Interview with factory managers in Ethiopia

330. The integration of the gender dimension in all capacity building activities in Jordan has led to changed attitudes to gender representation and diversity within the trade union.⁴²¹ The prior evaluation of BW in **Indonesia, Vietnam and Cambodia** noted a significant impact on improved gender-related practices among the workers leading to reduced discrimination in the workplace.⁴²² A **Cambodian** stakeholder also pointed out that women have been more active in raising their voices – breaking their silence if they experience any discrimination, harassment, labour exploitation, or something unusual, and will complain or report work issues to the factory compliance office.⁴²³

A factory compliance manager from **Nicaragua** noted: “Before the sexuality discrimination seminar, I wasn't aware of all the discrimination the LGTB+ community experiences daily. Now I'm more observant, empathetic, and courageous enough to stand up whenever I see a harassment situation. We're working on promoting tolerance in any form”.

331. It is important to note that various issues regarding gender equality remain to be addressed. While discrimination and sexual harassment have decreased, they have certainly not been eradicated fully. Women with children still face additional challenges in the workplace, such as unpaid care work and incorrectly paid maternity benefits. The gender pay gap also remains visible as does occupational segregation within the garment sector.⁴²⁴ The positive impact that BW had on various dimensions of gender equality in the garment sector shows that efforts must continue to address the remaining challenges.

⁴¹⁷ Forthcoming Phase IV impact assessment.

⁴¹⁸ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.25.

⁴¹⁹ Interview with a Better Work Donor.

⁴²⁰ Interview with the Cambodia Labour Confederation.

⁴²¹ Final Internal Evaluation – “Better Work Jordan: Strengthening the Capacity of the Trade Union in Jordan’s Garment Sector” p.32.

⁴²² BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.64.

⁴²³ Interview with the Cambodia Labour Confederation.

⁴²⁴ Forthcoming Phase IV impact assessment.

Improved industrial relations and social dialogue

332. While the Better Work programme Phase IV is predominantly presented as an enterprise-level programme, several achievements were made to strengthen social dialogue at the sectoral and national level. This topic is elaborated in more detail in *Case Study 4, in Annex 1*.

333. The survey results show highly positive results in this regard, namely that **86% of respondents perceive increased social dialogue at sectoral/national level “quite a bit” or “to a large extent”**. However, interviews with stakeholders and data from prior evaluations show only **sporadic signs of impact on social dialogue at national level**, with results differentiating strongly per country. Progress on sectoral and national-level social dialogue has been strongest in the countries where forms of association are permitted by the law and where Better Work has been able to demonstrate the importance of social dialogue to improve working conditions.⁴²⁵

In **Jordan**, social dialogue at the sectoral level resulted in the first Collective Bargaining Agreement in 2013, on avoiding discrimination. Since then, various additional CBAs have been negotiated, demonstrating the increasing role of social partners in determining working conditions in the garment sector.

In **Indonesia**, tripartite constituents used Better Work as a platform to discuss labour and industrial relations challenges in the sector. After raising this issue, constituents decided to establish a separate permanent tripartite body, informally called the “garment dialogue forum”. The first meeting in September 2019 focused on the implications of new digitalisation and Industry 4.0 for the Indonesian garment sector and how to leverage the services of BWI and other initiatives to improve labour conditions further. BWI supports the logistics of this process but has made the decision to take a back-seat role on the substance and let the constituents manage it independently.⁴²⁶

In May 2013, **Bangladesh** set up a high-level National Tripartite Committee (NTC) to monitor the implementation of a National Tripartite Plan of Action (NTPA) to ensure fire safety and structural integrity in the ready-made garment (RMG) sector. The committee, comprised of key RMG and knitwear industry stakeholders including government agencies, academic institutions, employers’ organisations, and trade unions, has met three times since 2017 based on document review. In addition, RMGP II also established a tripartite programme steering committee which has met twice since 2017.⁴²⁷

334. The ITUC noted in particular that ILO and Better Work enabled opportunities for dialogue that were not possible before.⁴²⁸ For example, in **Cambodia**, the BFC programme has been able to create a safe space to discuss topics such as sexual harassment, which employers and the government find difficult to talk about.⁴²⁹

335. **Vietnamese** stakeholders indicated in relation to BW that the design of the 2019 Labour Code was facilitated by social dialogue and included the perspectives of social partners, which is a great improvement compared to the Labour Code revision in 2012. The employer representative indicated that they participated in negotiations on the salary policy and working conditions.⁴³⁰ The Vietnamese trade union representative similarly indicated that there is currently a strong dialogue between the three constituents, where all perceptions and recommendations are considered for policymaking.⁴³¹

336. However, as noted above, **impact on social dialogue was not achieved everywhere**. Stakeholders interviewed for the Mid-Term Evaluation of Phase IV noted that Better Work country teams themselves are not sufficiently capable of engaging in policy dialogue and supporting social dialogue.⁴³² This is partially explained by the fact that national-level social dialogue was not an integral part of the design of the programme.

337. In countries without freedom of association, there has been a limited opportunity for BW staff to build the capacity of worker representatives beyond the factory level. A **Jordanian** stakeholder explained that, when it comes to policymaking in Jordan, the perceptions of social partners are not always considered by the Labour ministry, particularly in the field of gender equality.⁴³³ A **Cambodian** stakeholder explained that the mere

⁴²⁵ Interview with BW staff.

⁴²⁶ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV.

⁴²⁷ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation of RMGP II and BWB and its affiliated projects, September 2020, p.21.

⁴²⁸ Interview with an ITUC representative.

⁴²⁹ Mid-Term Cluster Evaluation of Better Factories Cambodia, Better Work Indonesia, and Better Work Vietnam programmes, p.64.

⁴³⁰ Interview with the Bureau for Employers’ Activities, VCCI Vietnam.

⁴³¹ Interview with the HCMC Confederation of Labour in Vietnam.

⁴³² Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV p.35.

⁴³³ Interview with Jordan Garments, Accessories & Textiles Exporters’ Association (JGATE).

presence of dialogue does not mean that the needs and requests of social partners are also considered in policymaking.⁴³⁴

3.5.3. Further opportunities and barriers for impact

Enablers, opportunities, and facilitating factors

338. The achievements of Better Work with buyers have created an important enabling factor for the impact of its programme. There are two distinct ways in which buyer engagement has enhanced impact:

339. Firstly, the **pressure of buyers on factories to join the BW programme** has caused more factories to join and improve compliance with national standards. Multiple interviews across all programme countries noted that factories join BW predominantly to increase their opportunities with buyers. However, improved internal practices and capacity of buyers means that they can apply similar standards and approaches to factories outside the current scope of BW as well. Therefore, the engagement of buyers, for example through the BW Academy, can expand the impact of the programme. One interviewed buyer mentioned, for example, that BW helped them develop a new internal strategy on working conditions at their factories.⁴³⁵

340. Secondly, buyers play an important role in **enhancing working conditions in factories**. Namely, besides audits and compliance assessments, buyers have become more engaged in advisory services to factories and in discussions on how working environments can be improved. BW staff noticed a clear shift in mindset of some of the more mature members of BW, from a push for better compliance results to actual improvement within factories. As such, buyers have become intrinsic partners of BW in creating impact for factories and workers.⁴³⁶ Furthermore, the willingness of buyers to use the compliance assessments of BW (rather than their own audit forms) has contributed to the efficiency of factory assessments, which changed from multiple audits (one from each buyer, using different standards) to one audit based on national standards. This facilitates improvements in factories as there is only one uniform standard they need to comply with and work towards.⁴³⁷

341. Prior evaluations of ILO programmes, as well as the recent evaluation of BW Vietnam, have demonstrated the potential of **leveraging trade agreements to achieve improved working conditions**. The Phase IV impact assessment noted that in Bangladesh and Egypt, trade agreement incentives encouraged the government to adopt ILO's recommendations on labour law reform. Better Work is used as a means to demonstrate to trade partners that progress is being made towards improving national laws and ILO conventions, which are requirements in certain trade regimes, such as the EU's Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) arrangement for sustainable development and good governance (GSP+).⁴³⁸

342. A BW team member explained that certain countries include (minimum) labour standards in their trade agreements, which the trade partner needs to comply with in order to sign the agreements. The Better Work team tried to use such opportunities to promote policy changes that would improve working conditions and simultaneously create new trade opportunities.⁴³⁹

Vietnam closed a Free Trade Agreement with the European Union, which included requirements for Vietnam to comply with International Labour Standards on freedom of association and collective bargaining, as well as other regulations. The 2019 revision of the Labour Code was conducted with support from social partners and reflected many of Vietnam's obligations under the trade agreements.⁴⁴⁰ The EU noted that Better Work was an active partner of the government during the design of the new Labour Code and to prepare them for the ratifications of the ILS.⁴⁴¹

343. Although not covered by the Phase IV evaluation, it is important to note that the Better Factories programme in Cambodia commenced in 2001 following a trade agreement between **Cambodia** and the US, The US-Cambodia Bilateral Textile Agreement. Initially covering 2000 and 2001 and later extended until 2004, the agreement provided incentives to increase the quota for Cambodian garment exports to the US, linked to ongoing improvements in labour conditions in garment factories.⁴⁴²

⁴³⁴ Interview with the Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia.

⁴³⁵ Interview with a representative of a global buyer.

⁴³⁶ Interview with BW staff.

⁴³⁷ Interviews with BW staff.

⁴³⁸ Forthcoming Phase IV impact assessment.

⁴³⁹ Interview with BW staff.

⁴⁴⁰ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation.

⁴⁴¹ Interview with a Better Work Donor.

⁴⁴² BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation.

344. However, limited evidence was found of concrete leverage by BW of such trade negotiations between BW countries and their trade partners like the EU and US to enhance the impact of the Better Work programme during Phase IV. There are therefore opportunities for BW to enhance its use of such opportunities.

345. Various examples have been collected through interviews and reviews of prior evaluations, demonstrating that there is a high level of trust among constituents and beneficiaries. The BW **Haiti** staff noted that “now we are at the level where the government asks us for our support in terms of the data that we have. The worker association also uses our data. Even if we cannot do anything to solve the problem, they still trust us. The level of trust that in the 3 years that I have seen, has grown every year”.⁴⁴³ As a result, BW is not only implementing its planned activities, but also responds to requests for support from the constituents. It is also a clear sign of commitment of constituents to the objectives of BW.

346. Similarly, the BW office in **Nicaragua** has received requests from the government and other stakeholders to expand their activities. For example, staff from other sectors asked to participate in BW trainings on sexual harassment, allowing the impact of BW activities to expand beyond the garment sector.⁴⁴⁴ An **Egyptian** employer representative pointed out that they would like the BW programme to be expanded to other industries as well.⁴⁴⁵

A trade union representative explained that: “BW **Nicaragua** had a magnificent approach to the launch of BW in 2011, by learning about our culture, traditions, and the nature of our workforce. The programme adapted to Nicaragua and hired national talents to be part of their advisory team. That is why we, as a trade union respect them and decide to join them, and are still committed to their work for the foreseeable future.”⁴⁴⁶

Barriers and challenges

347. One of the main barriers to national-level impact, mentioned in various evaluations and interviews, is the stability and turnover in the governments. While factory-level activities are carried out, political instability can hinder the accompanying improvements in national legislations. In **Jordan** and in **Ethiopia**, country evaluations mentioned the delays in achieving impact due to lengthy processes (e.g., to adopt new legislation) and due to reorganisations and reshuffling of officials within government departments.⁴⁴⁷

348. The recent declaration of a state of emergency by the **Ethiopian** Government is a potential further barrier to the finalisation of policy changes. Ethiopia has also gone through a period of political turmoil with a civil conflict erupting in the Tigray Province in November 2020. Opportunities for nationwide impact decreased as the goals of the Ethiopian Government changed due to the crises. This is increasing the time for policy changes to be approved by the various stages of Government.⁴⁴⁸

349. Similarly, the opportunities for impact in **Nicaragua** are hindered by the current political situation that limits the ability of BW to work directly with the government.⁴⁴⁹

350. An important barrier to impact caused by COVID-19 has been the delays in finalising policy changes and achieving institutional capacity change. As the focus of policymakers and institutions was drawn to the pandemic response, the focus on obtaining agreement and approval for work on policy change and moving forward on plans which would strengthen institutional capacity were delayed.⁴⁵⁰

351. While the interviews and prior evaluations have noted significant improvements in the compliance of factories with labour standards, there remains a group of factories in each country that does not comply with required working conditions. The Better Work Programme does not have the authority to impose measures or fines on these factories and is fully dependent on the national authorities to do so.

352. In most cases, national BW teams indicate that little action is taken (besides advice and training) to address non-compliance, especially at government level. The **Haitian** team noted that lack of enforcement by the Ministry of Labour is the main reason that non-compliance is still high, despite the fact that the Ministry does its own inspection.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴³ Interview with Better Work Haiti staff.

⁴⁴⁴ Interview with Better Work Nicaragua staff.

⁴⁴⁵ Interview with an Egyptian employer representative.

⁴⁴⁶ Interview with a Nicaraguan trade union representative.

⁴⁴⁷ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.80, and Jordan evaluation.

⁴⁴⁸ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.40.

⁴⁴⁹ Interview with Better Work Nicaragua staff.

⁴⁵⁰ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.78.

⁴⁵¹ Interview with Better Work Haiti staff.

353. In **Cambodia**, one challenge is that the vast majority of the factories are not owned by Cambodians. This makes it less interesting for investors to do anything. Namely, setting up a factory is quick and subsequently departure from the country is fast. It is therefore easier to leave than to comply.⁴⁵²

354. Only a few CTAs (e.g., **Cambodia, Jordan**) indicated that they coordinate with national ministries on issues of compliance. For example, they report factories that consistently non-comply to the Ministry of Labour. However, the consequences depend on the policies (e.g. a zero-tolerance policy) and capacities of the ministry. In other countries, BW staff rely on their own services or on pressure from buyers.

This is further elaborated in Case Study 3 on OSH.

355. While the programme has made clear the impact on participating factories and workers, the impact on the wider sector or national level has not become clear in most countries, due to the strong focus on the enterprise level. Aside from sporadic examples, most interviewees had not witnessed indications of spillover effects to other sectors or to factories beyond the programme factories. Various interviewees from BW and several stakeholders noted that BW did not systematically focus on more national-level activities, due to the design and resource allocation of the programme, and possibly due to lack of collaboration with ILO's technical units.

356. This is confirmed to some extent by the Phase IV impact assessment. There are large differences found in wages and in OSH compliance between BW factories and non-participating factories. While this demonstrates the clear importance of BW, it also shows the limited wider impact achieved through, for example, system-level changes.⁴⁵³

357. As expressed during the March 2022 sustainability and impact workshops, *"Better Work's big dilemma is that demand for and trust in the programme is growing, but the enterprise-facing change model is not easily scalable. The improvements in working conditions depend on the constant provision of assessment, advisory and training services"*.⁴⁵⁴

358. The enterprise-level focus is how the model of Better Work was designed, and therefore the lack of spillover effects cannot be considered as a "failure" of the programme or as unmet targets. However, it has become clear that within this current model, there are limited opportunities for Better Work to create wider impact.

3.6 Sustainability

359. The concept of "sustainability" as described in the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria assesses whether the benefits created by the intervention are likely to last, especially when the project has completed.⁴⁵⁵ This requires a review of the main social, economic, environmental, financial, and institutional capacities of affected systems to maintain the achievements of the programme.

This chapter is a shortened version of the case study on sustainability.

3.6.1. Sustainability strategies

360. In 2019, the Better Work staff enhanced its focus on the sustainability of Better Work, taking into consideration the maturity of the programme in some of the countries (e.g. Cambodia where the programme has been active since 2001). The BW staff prepared a **Guidance Paper on Sustainability**, which included the following understanding of the concept:

361. *"Governments, employers and workers sustain and further improve compliance with labour law and core labour standards through enforcement and industrial relations, supported by responsible business practices in the supply chain and other activities that promote these outcomes"*.⁴⁵⁶

362. The Guidance Paper further states that *"we will develop a strategy with our partners where they provide long-term solutions to sustain compliance in the industry with eventually a minimal or no role for our programmes. That is our sustainability strategy"*.⁴⁵⁷

363. Better Work staff noted that the overall global framework for sustainability was developed in a cooperative manner across the BW countries. This ensures that we have a similar understanding of the concept of

⁴⁵² Interview with Better Work Cambodia staff.

⁴⁵³ Forthcoming Phase IV impact assessment .

⁴⁵⁴ Better Work: How will Better Work ensure its compliance impacts are scaled and sustained? March 2022.

⁴⁵⁵ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

⁴⁵⁶ Guidance Note sustainability version 30 April 2019 (footnote from the BFC_BW1_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.77).

⁴⁵⁷ Guidance Note sustainability.

sustainability (especially since some BW staff noticed that sustainability was understood differently across the BW countries). However, since each country is different in terms of their context and needs to enhance sustainability, each country subsequently initiated the development of their individual roadmap for sustainability.⁴⁵⁸ In many of the countries, examples of sustainability strategies or approaches were found.

BW Indonesia created its 'Roadmap to Sustainability' document.⁴⁵⁹ By the end of phase II, BWI had laid much of the groundwork for the establishment of a national institution to deliver the programme, and an independent foundation to take on BW services was launched in early 2017.⁴⁶⁰

BW Vietnam has an outcome centred on sustainability which does indicate an appreciation of the importance of sustainability and the programme attempts to address it through a sustainability lens. BW has strengthened its operational sustainability through enhancing and diversifying the skill sets of its staff. During phase II it increased national partner ownership and capacity to contribute to the delivery of programme component and has invested in a sustainability scoping study to guide the model in the current phase.⁴⁶¹

364. BW staff pointed out that there was a plan to develop sustainability strategies in each country during Phase IV, but this was not achieved due to COVID-19, and due to the fact that conversations with constituents on BW sustainability had not yet properly taken place everywhere.⁴⁶²

365. Several examples were found of activities focusing specifically on enhancing sustainability through enhanced capacity of constituents to take responsibility for current BW activities.

The **Indonesian** Better Work Foundation was established in 2017 and has a mandate to improve working conditions in the garment and other sectors by providing core services (assessment, advisory services, and training) on behalf of BWI. The establishment of the Foundation promotes ownership of the programme to the tripartite constituents. This, in turn, is being used to encourage, promote, and support the national authorities to take over those core services and allow BW – over time – to withdraw most of its support.⁴⁶³

366. Capacity-building initiatives are not only targeted at national constituents, but also at buyers. Namely, long-term sustainability of Better Work's results is also affected by the extent to which buyers continue monitoring compliance of factories and promoting improvement of working conditions. The BW Academy, a training programme for compliance officers of brands and retailers aimed at building their skills on ILS, is an important tool to continuously build the capacity of buyers to engage in dialogue with factories about working conditions and perceive the benefits of workers' well-being on productivity and competitiveness of both factories and buyers themselves. Buyer representatives interviewed for the interim evaluation of BW Bangladesh spoke highly of the BW Academy training.⁴⁶⁴

367. Despite the existence of guidelines and strategies for sustainability, the current evaluation found that **the actual sustainability of the programme (if BW were to withdraw its support) remains very limited**. Almost 30% of survey respondents believe that constituents would not at all, or barely, be able to continue sustaining the results in case of a total stop of all BWs activities. On the other hand, about a third of respondents believe that constituents would be able to continue activities in such cases.

⁴⁵⁸ Interview with Better Work Vietnam staff.

⁴⁵⁹ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.76.

⁴⁶⁰ BWV BWI Phase II Final Cluster Evaluation, p.39.

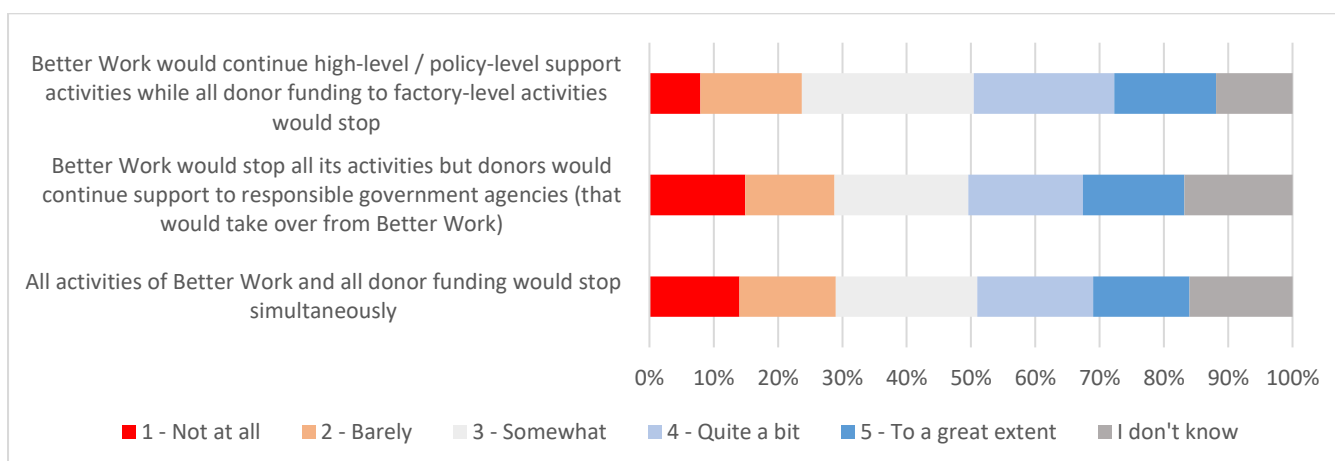
⁴⁶¹ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.76.

⁴⁶² Interview with BW Staff.

⁴⁶³ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.70.

⁴⁶⁴ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.32.

Figure 23. Continuation of activities in various scenarios



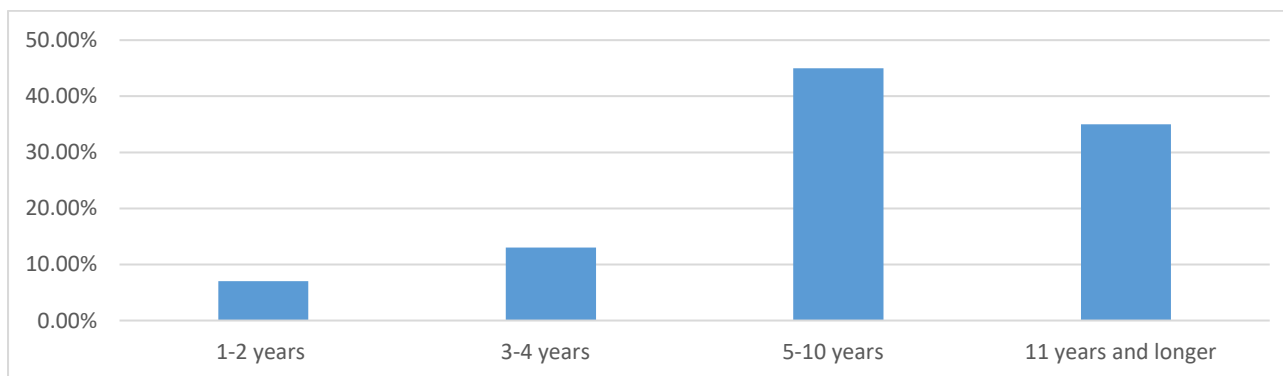
Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff, constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=100). "To what extent do you think the Better Work programme would be able to maintain its activities and results in case of the following situations?"

368. There are various arguments that explain the lack of sustainability of the programmes. The BW programme has been implemented for many years, even decades in some countries, with no examples of successful exits so far. Despite interest and work on sustainability strategies in recent years, those have not been sufficiently well conceptualised and operationalised. The programme also lacks a clear conceptualisation of "maturity" and indicators to measure whether a country is mature enough to commence a phasing-out process.

369. Furthermore, no clear phasing-out pathways have been conceptualised for countries at different stages of maturity in the programme, and no transition of activities takes place to support phasing out.

370. When asked about the time needed to effectively phase out BW support and transfer responsibilities to national stakeholders, without losing the results of BW so far, the vast majority of survey respondents (80%) believe this would take more than 5 years, or even more than 11 years.

Figure 24. Perceived time needed to phase out BW activities



Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff, constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=100). "Over how many years could Better Work be phased out in your country (or the country you have worked in as part of or in relation to Better Work) without the risk of many of the achieved results being reversed?"

3.6.2. Opportunities and barriers to sustainability

Factors facilitating the sustainability of Better Work

371. The review of prior evaluations has demonstrated that there are **signs of interest and commitment** of constituents to continue working on progress created by Better Work.

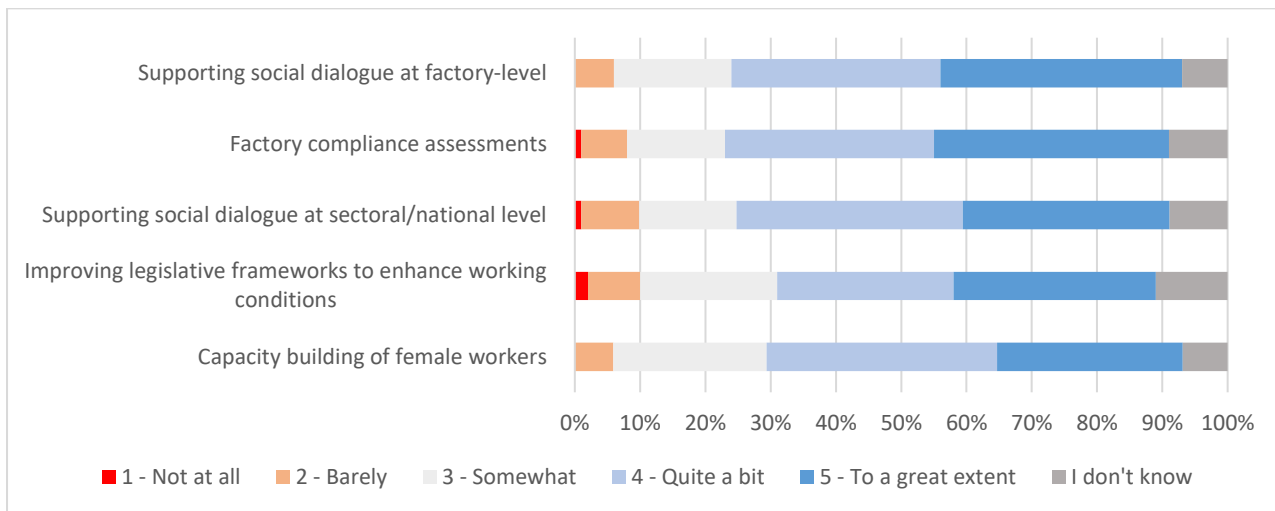
The commitment of the **Vietnamese** government is demonstrated through its ongoing efforts in legal reforms intended to align its laws and regulations with core international labour standards and ILO Core Conventions. The recent adoption of ILO Conventions 87 and 98, and consequent revision of its labour law (which was adopted by the National Assembly in June 2020), and the issuance of implementing decrees further indicate this commitment.⁴⁶⁵

⁴⁶⁵ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.75

BWJ signed an MoU with the **Jordanian** Ministry of Labour to ensure the continuity of their activities with the inspection department. Labour inspectors' mentality related to the inspection, and that of their department as whole, is transitioning from a simple penalty system toward a mechanism to provide advice and support to factories. The secondment program with the MoL is thorough and includes accompanying labour inspector' reports on factory visits and evaluating their performance.⁴⁶⁶

372. Similarly, the survey results show predominantly positive replies regarding the *increased* capacity of constituents to continue working on BW activities. However, it is important to note that this survey asked whether this capacity has increased, rather than whether the capacity is actually sufficient. Nevertheless, the results indicate that there is a growing capacity and future potential for takeover by constituents.

Figure 25. Perceived increased capacity of constituents to continue BW main activities



Source: Evaluation survey among BW and ILO staff, constituents, buyers and other stakeholders (N=100). "To what extent has Better Work increased the capacity of governments, workers' organisations and employers' organisations to implement the following activities without additional Better Work involvement?"

373. The fact that a large share of the BW country budget is obtained from factories means that the programme could sustain itself more easily were donor funding to cease. The programme would need to retain and strengthen incentives for factories to continue their membership to the BW programme, which is facilitated by the fact that they have been paying such membership fees for several years already.

Factors hindering the sustainability of Better Work

374. **The vast majority of interviewed BW staff and constituents believe that BW is currently not yet sufficiently sustainable to leave the programme countries.** The exit of Better Work from Lesotho has provided clear evidence that the positive results created by BW were not maintained and a regression of working conditions occurred after the exit of BW.⁴⁶⁷ A variety of challenges to sustainability were mentioned in previous interviews and during the current evaluation interviews. These mainly related to the limited national capacities and programme design, which focuses on factory-level activities.

375. Many of the country-level evaluations carried out during 2017-2022 pointed out that national constituents lack the capacity to take over and take responsibility for the Better Work activities. Better Work staff noted that "there is a danger that we may be relied on too much" instead of building the capacity and motivation of national institutions to take over eventually.⁴⁶⁸ For example, the interim evaluation of Better Work **Jordan**, Phase III, found that labour inspectors started relying on BWJ to manage the inspection of the garment sector and focused their resources on other sectors.⁴⁶⁹

376. Besides enhancing national capacity, interviewed BW staff noted that a takeover by national institutions requires that institutions and the quality of their services are trusted by all stakeholders, in particular the global buyers. In most countries, this is not yet the case.⁴⁷⁰ A donor noted that there is currently no other

⁴⁶⁶ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.28.

⁴⁶⁷ Interview with Better Work staff.

⁴⁶⁸ Interview with Better Work staff.

⁴⁶⁹ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.23.

⁴⁷⁰ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV p.39.

national institution in the programme countries that holds the same reputation and trust as Better Work/ILO.⁴⁷¹

377. Another issue, highlighted by the **Jordanian** evaluation, is the high turnover within the Jordanian government and that of the reliance of stakeholders on BWJ. In regard to turnover, BWJ is required to discuss the programme, its vision and its impact over and over again, at every change within the government. Besides consuming time and human resources to build trust again, the new personnel may have conflicting views and hinder the sustainability of compliance procedures.⁴⁷²

378. While the evaluation has found many positive examples, there are also signs of limited ownership and commitment of constituents. In **Indonesia**, the 2021 evaluation of BW found that a genuine buy-in and commitment to the Foundation from some stakeholders is lacking. Limited signs of ownership of BW **Vietnam** were also found during the same evaluation. The mid-term evaluation in **Cambodia** noted that there are few national bodies that appear willing to take ownership of certain aspects of programme delivery such as audits and inspections even in the medium term.⁴⁷³ The evaluation of the three countries concluded that *"to a certain extent the BW programme has been a victim of its own success with many national agencies and authorities now recognising the benefits of working with ILO and the BW programme"*.⁴⁷⁴

379. The gaps in capacity and ownership experienced among constituents is to some extent related to the design of the Better Work programme, which focuses predominantly on factory-level activities. Some BW staff pointed out in this regard that: *"BW is conducting factory-level activities too much themselves, without engagement of national partners or constituents. This took a lot of resources and left BW with insufficient resources to focus on institutional capacity"*.⁴⁷⁵ Therefore, such an adjustment also requires a reconsideration of the essence of Better Work, focusing on national capacities.

380. Additionally, the focus on national-level social dialogue and institutional capacity falls under the responsibility of other ILO units and departments. As pointed out in previous sections, the BW programme is not sufficiently integrated into the overall ILO system, meaning that BW actions do not always benefit from the technical expertise of ILO staff to enhance institutional capacity. A non-BW staff member of ILO pointed out that more effort should be made to integrate BW into ILO and ensure that relevant units of ILO are consulted and involved in efforts to enhance social dialogue and institutional capacity.⁴⁷⁶

381. Lastly, the initial design of the Better Work Programme did not include a concrete approach to sustainability and exit. Discussions on sustainability have been initiated only in recent years, even though the programme has been active in some countries for decades already. In fact, BW staff noted that even now not all countries currently have a comprehensive sustainability approach. For example, the evaluation of Better Work **Bangladesh** found that *"that it was too soon for the BWB to develop a comprehensive exit strategy"*⁴⁷⁷. Phasing out needs to become part of the design with clear structural, content and funding changes as countries are deemed mature enough to graduate to the next stage (based on specific indicators). There should also be significant symbolic and economic value for countries from graduating to the next stage.

⁴⁷¹ Interview with a Better Work donor.

⁴⁷² Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.28.

⁴⁷³ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.73.

⁴⁷⁴ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.76.

⁴⁷⁵ Interview with BW staff.

⁴⁷⁶ Interview with ILO staff.

⁴⁷⁷ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.viii.

► 4. Conclusions

382. This chapter presents the main conclusions of the evaluations, with consideration given to all findings and criteria holistically, and forms the basis for the recommendations.
383. The information retrieved from various sources and stakeholders has clearly demonstrated that **Better Work Phase IV was of great importance and value for the garment sector**. While the evaluation found certain challenges, it is beyond doubt that the Better Work Programme has played an important role in bringing together garment sector stakeholders, supporting factory processes and working conditions, and improving job quality overall. The relevance of Better Work could be noted in particular by the growing number of participating factories and (global) buyers engaged in the programme during Phase IV.
384. **The design of the programme, relying to a large extent on fees from factories and buyers, has provided unique benefits beyond the mere cost recovery**. The investment of factories in the programme has increased their commitment to improve their working conditions and therefore contributed to the effectiveness of Better Work. The funding model also provides clear opportunities for the sustainability of the programme. The engagement of buyers added to this commitment by putting external pressure on factories to comply with labour laws. Simultaneously, improved buying practices of global buyers may affect working conditions in factories beyond the BW programme.
385. As a result, **Better Work has been mostly successful in achieving its expected outputs and outcomes**, as well as creating signs of impact. Constituents, beneficiaries, and other stakeholders provided a plethora of examples highlighting the factory-level changes that created better job quality. Despite some delays and adjustments made during COVID-19, the work of BW was assessed as timely and effective.
386. **The pandemic increased the importance of the Better Work programme**, and the country staff effectively and efficiently adapted their activities to address changing needs. The pandemic enhanced interest in OSH and social protection for workers, where Better Work was able to provide added value. However, the termination or suspension of contracts by global buyers during the pandemic also highlighted the vulnerability of the sector and the limits of Better Work in liaising with buyers to maintain such contracts.
387. The main challenges faced by Better Work in Phase IV are linked to its **core factory-level services, which are both highly resource-intensive and unsustainable** if Better Work was to exit the programme countries. Over the decades when Better Work was active, the programme has invested significantly in Enterprise Advisers, conducting factory assessments, and providing advisory services. This programme design and allocation of resources has limited the ability of BW staff to focus on capacity building of key national stakeholders, but enhanced BW's status and trust as garment sector partner in the participating countries.
388. As a result, **national stakeholders rely largely on BW** to conduct assessments and provide advice and trainings, given that the stakeholders themselves lack the capacity, ownership, and trust that Better Work possesses. The evaluation found that none of the countries have sufficient measures and responsible parties in place to maintain the Better Work core factory services if the programme were to exit.
389. While the evaluation found evidence of impact within the participating factories, only **limited examples were found of impact beyond these factories**. The limited focus on national capacity-building compared to factory services means that factory-level gains were not always effectively upscaled to national policies. In countries where more attention was paid to capacity building, such as Jordan, clear gains were noted at the national/sectoral level, such as with the sectoral Collective Bargaining Agreement.
390. Another challenge in this regard is the **insufficient interlink between the BW programme and the work of ILO in general**, particularly at country level. The evaluation found that there are efficiency gains to be achieved by integrating BW into other ILO work (for example through the ONEILO approach). However, the impact of BW could also be better sustained if the ILO country offices integrated some elements in their daily work. For example, BW could build on ongoing capacity building efforts of ILO, especially in the field of social dialogue, to influence working conditions both at factory-level and national-level.

► 5. Lessons learnt and emerging good practices

Please see Annex 5 for the Lessons Learnt and good practices templates

5.1. Lessons learnt

391. The findings of the evaluation, as well as interviews with BW staff, have found several important lessons learnt during Phase IV, which will affect the future implementation of the programme and of similar programmes.
392. Firstly, the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted various weaknesses of the garment sector and its relations with global brands. The suspension of purchasing contracts demonstrated the limited resilience of factories and the lack of sufficient mitigation measures. There is a clear need to focus not only on factory compliance, but also on **purchasing practices, accountability, and compliance with ILS by buyers and brands** themselves. In upcoming phases of BW, the programme could enhance its engagement with buyers and focus on developing protection and mitigation measures that would reduce the vulnerability of factories during potential future crises.
393. Secondly, the increased focus on the long-term sustainability of BW during Phase IV demonstrated that there is currently a **disproportional reliance on BW to implement all factory services**. As identified in the conclusions, the factory services are hugely resource-intensive and the lack of capacity and ownership of the programme by national stakeholders means that the activities and results would not last if BW were to exit the programme countries. Therefore, the lesson learnt from Phase IV is that significant additional attention needs to be paid to creating partnerships with national stakeholders and to build their capacity to one day take over the factory services.
394. Lastly, there is a clear benefit of the factory contribution in terms of cost recovery. However, there is also a reliance on donors and other sources of funding. This may become even more prominent if factory-level services are handed over to national stakeholders. The pandemic, as well as global crises such as the war in Ukraine, have shifted donor priorities (e.g., one donor invoked *force majeure* during COVID-19) and resulted in worldwide inflation (e.g., cost of living) that affect workers' needs and well-being as well. Therefore, **the current financial model of BW may not be sustainable** to withstand the changes in donor priorities, global financial fluctuations, and changes in programme activities themselves.

5.2. Emerging good practices

395. A clear new feature of the BW Phase IV has been the more comprehensive focus on gender equality as a core dimension of the programme (and as linked to ILO's cross-cutting concerns). This resulted in the Global Gender Strategy, gender-based monitoring and specific activities targeting female workers and women in management. This evaluation has demonstrated that **this approach significantly increased the results and impact for women workers**. The programme seemed to have been better able to assess the specific needs and challenges of women in the garment sector and enhance not only their capacity, but also the awareness of factory managers of the roles that women can play in management. Therefore, Phase IV's targeted strategy towards gender equality has accelerated the programme's impact on gender equality, and Phase V should continue having a dedicated approach to gender equality.
396. During the pandemic, an immediate need for virtual tools arose to continue connecting BW staff, and connecting BW with factories and constituents, to continue implementing virtual assessments and trainings. The results of this **switch to virtual tools** have demonstrated that various efficiency gains can be made by optimising and further exploring such tools (e.g., by combining virtual assessments by BW staff with in-person assessments by national partners). For the same reason, the new virtual approaches can contribute to capacity building and exit strategies. In Phase V, the opportunities provided by virtual tools should be explored further.
397. In some countries, Ethiopia and Egypt most prominently, the BW programme has been integrated within the overall approach of the ILO country office – The **"ONEILO approach"**. This approach has ensured that Better Work activities are integrated into the holistic support to the country, rather than acting as a stand-alone programme. Besides the clear efficiency gains in terms of administrative and HR costs, there is great potential for this approach to enhance the impact and sustainability of BW. Namely, the expertise of other ILO staff in terms of ILS, social dialogue and freedom of association can be utilised to complement BW's focus on factory-level services. Similar results were noticed for Bangladesh where steps towards a ONEILO approach were also taken in recent years.

398. A pilot project involving environmental sustainability was carried out under BW in Vietnam, which provided a first insight into how topics related to environmental sustainability can be linked to working conditions and therefore be included within the scope of Better Work. Interviews with Indonesian factories pointed at another potential opportunity for Better Work to include environmental sustainability: while BW focuses on social compliance, various buyers are expanding their audits to include **environmental and sustainability considerations** as well.⁴⁷⁸ Given that environmental sustainability is an important cross-cutting concern for the ILO itself, and is growing in focus (e.g. GREENJOBS programme), there is a potential to contribute both to the priorities of ILO and to the shifting priorities of buyers and factories by expanding the scope of BW audits (in as far the environmental concerns are linked with working conditions).

⁴⁷⁸ Interview with Indonesian factory owners

► 6. Recommendations

399. Based on the conclusions and lessons learnt, the evaluation team has prepared the following recommendations:

400. **Recommendation 1: Reallocate (some of the) resources from implementation of factory-level services to capacity building of constituents and stakeholders to take over these activities.** Currently, stakeholders rely extensively on BW for assessments and advice. As a result, the programme has limited sustainability, but also has limited impact beyond the participating factories. Well-trained and trusted labour inspectorates, and similar institutions (e.g., labour inspectorates), can take over the activities, tools, and methods of BW and eventually apply this knowledge to other sectors as well.

Several actions can be taken to implement this recommendation:

- *Invite relevant stakeholders (labour inspectorates, OSH departments, social security services) to accompany enterprise advisers and allow them to contribute to the assessments and advisory services.* A BW staff member can also be seconded to a relevant stakeholder to support their work processes and incorporate the BW activities. This builds their ability to conduct such services independently.
- *Design additional capacity building efforts for sectoral and national-level stakeholders related to factory services as well as policymaking.* This contributes to their ability to discuss and implement laws and policies on working conditions. Capacity building of trade unions, and support to social dialogue should be a priority.
- *Ensure the gradual transition from factory-level to national-level activities.* A quick transition may create confusion and stakeholders may not be ready. Organise workshops with relevant stakeholders to co-create a plan to phase out some of the factory-level activities and identify areas with limited capacity to target through additional capacity building efforts.
- *Adjust budgeting and fundraising accordingly,* to account for the possible reduction of cost recovery due to the reduction of the factory services.

Addressed to:	Priority:	Resource:	Timing:
Better Work Global and national staff	High	Medium (reallocation)	Short-term

401. **Recommendation 2: Enhance the alignment and coordination between Better Work and the ILO as a whole.** There are multiple benefits to be gained from increased cooperation, in particular with ILO experts on social dialogue and tripartism, which are crucial to expand the impact of Better Work in the participating countries.

Several actions can be taken to implement this recommendation:

- *Develop a strategy for regular coordination.* Some interviewees noted that exchange takes place ad hoc, without a clear strategy for engagement between BW and ILO. A set approach for coordination among BW and key ILO units can ensure that more exchange and collaboration take place.
- *Promote the "ONEILO" approach, so that BW becomes part of a wider country approach to decent work.* This ensures that more attention can be paid to national-level activities such as social dialogue and freedom of association, which subsequently enhances the impact of BW.
- *Coordinate, in particular, with ILO units and experts in the field of Freedom of Association and social dialogue,* to strengthen the ability of social partners (and trade unions in particular) to continue discussion the improvement of working conditions on a long-term.
- *Continue engagement with important trade partners on the implementation of, and compliance with, obligations for working conditions laid down in trade agreements.* This should be done in coordination with other ILO units, to coordinate other trade agreement conditions as well.

Addressed to:	Priority:	Resource:	Timing:

Better Work Global and country staff, as well as ILO country teams	Medium	Low	Medium term
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402. **Recommendation 3: Increase attention to sustainability of the programme, within its design, both in terms of its current results and in terms of continuation of its activities.** The current evaluation did not find significant evidence that country-level stakeholders possess the capacity, ownership, resources, and willingness to take over factory services themselves if BW exits the country. Therefore, in most countries, the programme cannot end in future years without a concrete phasing-out strategy and related implementation plan.

Several actions can be taken to implement this recommendation:

- *Integrate a clear sustainability dimension in the design of Phase V*, which includes indicators for country maturity and pathways to phasing out for countries at different stages of maturity. Examples of how this can be approached are included in Annex 8.
- *Already include preliminary sustainability considerations in new country programmes.* This can ensure that a high level of dependency on BW is avoided, and stakeholders immediately build capacity to conduct factory-level services and other activities currently carried out by BW. See also the second Recommendation in the Mid-Term Evaluation of BW Global in this regard.
- *Conduct country-level sustainability workshops to engage stakeholders in the sustainability of the programme.* Identify the main gaps in the capacity of stakeholders and their needs for knowledge and other resources in order to take over the programme (i.e., embedding the activities in national / local labour systems). This can be aligned with the workshop suggested under the first recommendation.
- *Strengthen linkages between constituents, brands / buyers, factories and other stakeholders,* to continue and enhance collaboration without BW as intermediary.

Addressed to:	Priority:	Resource:	Timing:
Better Work Global and country staff	High	Medium	Short and medium term

403. **Recommendation 4: Continue enhancing the engagement of buyers in the BW programme, especially in terms of their capacity building and assessment of working conditions in factories outside the scope of BW.** The evaluation has demonstrated that buyers contribute to enhanced compliance of factories and are an important enabler of spillover impact, and that leveraging buyers more as important enablers can expand the impact of BW. It has also shown, however, that buyers affect factory stability during COVID-19 and therefore have a role to play in supporting the resilience of factories (and thereby working conditions and wages).

Several actions can be taken to implement this recommendation:

- *Involve buyers in capacity-building efforts for national stakeholders.* This ensures that buyers are also aware of the responsibilities of national stakeholders (who may take over the factory assessments) and strengthens their collaboration.
- *Increase activities targeting buyers,* e.g., to develop their understanding of the ILS and how their own practices can support working conditions and workers' well-being.
- *Support buyers to develop contingency plans in case of force majeure.* Such plans should focus on contact and contractual relations with factories during crises such as the pandemic, which disrupt global purchasing practices.

Addressed to:	Priority:	Resource:	Timing:
Better Work Global staff and relevant ILO units	Medium	Medium	Medium term

404. Recommendation 5: Assess the opportunities provided by recent technological developments and invest in updating BW technological resources and technological skills of staff. The pandemic has demonstrated great potential for efficiency gains through the use of virtual tools, both in terms of management and in terms of programme implementation. Combined with the recommendations on capacity building and sustainability, there is great potential for the use of virtual tools by enterprise advisers to support national stakeholders as they commence taking over the factory assessment responsibility.

Several actions can be taken to implement this recommendation:

- *Exchange experiences on the use of different tools and programmes for factory assessments across the BW countries.* Select the approach deemed most suitable for virtual assessments, advisory services, and other activities, ensure that all BW offices have access to it, and ensure BW staff are trained to use it.
- *Explore different tools that can support further improvements in data collection, analysis, data sharing and transparency to promote responsible sourcing.* This can also include technology for workers (with accompanying training) that they can easily access to find information, for example about their rights and about available trainings.
- *Engage national stakeholders in the purchase of the tools and related trainings.* Namely, the national stakeholders taking over the assessments need to be able to use the tools to be in contact with BW staff.
- *Explore how other tools have supported efficiency and effectiveness of the BW programme during the COVID-19 pandemic* and exchange with other ILO units on their experiences. Identify which new technologies have been used (effectively) by the ILO and determine whether BW can benefit from them as well.

Addressed to:	Priority:	Resource:	Timing:
Better Work staff	Medium	Medium / high	Medium term

405. Recommendation 6: Explore the further integration of cross-cutting concerns in the design, implementation and monitoring of BW. Although the evidence is small, various interviewees highlighted that environmental sustainability is a growing interest of BW stakeholders. As BW assessments do not currently include this dimension, buyers still conduct their own audits in this regard. The growing attention to environmental sustainability of ILO as a whole, the technical capacity present in ILO already (e.g., GREENJOBS) and the interest from stakeholders shows that there may be an opportunity to expand BW to include the environmental consideration more prominently.

The efforts made by BW to mainstream gender equality in the programme have been admirable and the impact is clearly visible. However, stereotypes and lack of awareness persist at all levels (factory, sectoral, national). Continued and enhanced efforts are needed to continue pushing for gender equality in national-level policies and factory-level processes.

In selected countries, examples exist of how BW was able to address persons with disabilities within the scope of the programme. BW should explore further how the programme can be more inclusive and how workers with disabilities can be supported through BW.

Several actions can be taken to implement this recommendation:

- *Organise workshops with buyers who already implement environmental audits.* Explore their assessments and determine whether this could be in the scope of the BW programme (keeping in mind that national stakeholders will need to build capacity in this field as well).
- *Explore with national constituents the environmental policies and how they affect working conditions and factory practices.* Based on that, agreements can be made with constituents on what a roll-out of environmental sustainability practices could look like. National stakeholders who should become responsible for assessment in the future should be involved in all discussions as well.
- *Collaborate with ILO technical staff on ILO's priorities for green jobs and environmental sustainability affecting health and safety at work.* Together with ILO experts, BW can develop trainings for factories on how to create sustainable practices.

- *Collaborate with other UN agencies and organisations in the field of environmental sustainability* to explore whether other elements of environmental sustainability (not linked to BW's field of work) could be introduced in collaboration with other organisations.
- *Continue mainstreaming gender equality in all BW activities*, both building on existing projects such as GEAR, and by designing new interventions targeting specific needs at country and factor level.
- *Integrate gender equality at different levels of the programme*, meaning that capacity should also be built to discuss gender equality in tripartite dialogue and to integrate gender perspectives in the design of policies and strategies for the garment sector by government officials.
- *Develop practical tools for stakeholders at different levels to mainstream gender and address gender equality concerns in their work.*
- *Explore lessons learnt from countries that were able to integrate a disability dimension in the BW programme* and explore pathways to support inclusion and OSH for persons with disabilities within the BW scope.

Addressed to:	Priority:	Resource:	Timing:
Better Work Global and national staff	Medium	Medium	Medium/long-term

► Annex 1. Case studies

1. Gender equality

Phase IV stands out compared to previous phases due to its more targeted and holistic approach to gender equality, most prominently visible by the global gender equality strategy designed by Better Work in close collaboration with the ILO GEDI (Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) Branch. The current evaluation provided an excellent opportunity to review the effectiveness and relevance of this strategy so far, and its adoption by national constituents.

1.1. How has BW enhanced attention to gender equality during Better Work Phase IV?

406. During Better Work Phase IV, the ILO and Better Work implemented the Global Gender Strategy 2018–2022.

The Better Work programme and the ILO continued the focus of gender equality mainstreaming and women's empowerment and increased its focus on women throughout Phase IV. They did this by pushing for enhanced attention to gender equality by implementing its new gender strategy at the global level, and offering guidance to country teams within the strategy to help facilitate the implementation of the strategy objectives at the factory level. The Global Gender Strategy, which ties into SDG No.5 on achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls, identifies the following outputs which, when implemented in gender strategies throughout Better Work country programmes, are thought to assist in the delivery of its global gender objectives. These are as follows:

- Awareness raising for all workers on gender equality.
- Women trained to increase career advancement opportunities.
- Women trained to play proactive roles in worker – management committees and trade unions.
- Partnerships with global brands and retailers to scale up initiatives for gender equality in the garment sector.
- Partnerships with national stakeholders and advocacy campaign for gender responsive policies and practices.
- Advocacy campaign for gender responsive policies and practices especially on gender-based violence.⁴⁷⁹

407. Two broad types of interventions promoting gender equality are implemented by Better Work Global. The first is skills-building trainings, which address the unequal access to training opportunities between women and men in factories by strengthening the capacity of women workers. These trainings aim to build the confidence of women workers and to encourage them to take up leadership positions over time. The second is gender-transformative trainings, which build the skills of women workers (soft and/or hard skills) in addition to tackling the adverse gender and social norms that lead to gender disparities in attitudes amongst women and men. Trainings would include reflections on the root causes of gender inequality and encourage women and men participants to actively promote a gender equal workplace for all.⁴⁸⁰

408. Early on during Phase IV, gender held significant importance and relevance in the Better Work agenda, and there has been a growing recognition that gender mainstreaming is important.⁴⁸¹ A takeaway from examining the attention to gender equality by the ILO and Better Work during past phases was that there remained a need to strengthen the prioritisation and implementation of the outputs which have now been clearly identified in the Global Gender Strategy. There is also a need to capacitate Better Work country programmes to more systemically and sustainably develop and deliver quality initiatives that produce discernible results.^{482,483}

409. During Phase IV, the ILO has developed the capacity of all Better Work staff to deliver gender-sensitive advisory and assessment services.⁴⁸⁴ The programme has scaled up its sexual harassment prevention training in factories and among constituents. In addition, the programme implemented the Violence and Harassment Convention No.190 in 2019 to address harassment and violence detected in workplaces and related remediation activities.⁴⁸⁵ This further demonstrated and reinforced on a global level the shift in BW priorities

⁴⁷⁹ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.79.

⁴⁸⁰ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.80.

⁴⁸¹ Interview with a BW donor.

⁴⁸² BWI Phase III Midterm Evaluation, p.37.

⁴⁸³ Interview with BW staff.

⁴⁸⁴ Interview with BW Bangladesh staff.

⁴⁸⁵ Global Annual Report 2019.

towards a stronger focus on gender equality, laying the foundation for the future and for the last half of Phase IV.

410. The Better Work Global Gender Strategy was developed in 2018 at the global level to outline priorities and provide guidance on gender issues, to better capacitate the country programmes, and demonstrate a clear commitment by Better Work to incorporate gender equality into the global programme and to track the implementation of the gender strategy in all Better Work country programmes. There has been a change from past phases in that there is a stronger and more capacitated focus on gender issues by the BW, which has been trickling from top to bottom to country programmes.⁴⁸⁶ Women have long been the main workers in the garment sector, but since 2018 Better Work has taken action to further increase its focus on women specifically, to contribute to building a more resilient and sustainable sector. BW has shifted towards a strategy geared around assisting the country programmes to begin and continue to initiate and deploy exit strategies, thereby enabling national stakeholder to take over many core Better Work factory services.⁴⁸⁷ The Better Work programme and many country programmes interviewed define sustainability as the successful withdrawal of BW influence.⁴⁸⁸ The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 further highlighted for BW the need to focus on building better resiliency and more sustainability within the sector.⁴⁸⁹ The ILO and Better Work significantly connect gender equality in the sector with building sustainability and resilience, and the global strategy has significantly prioritised this area of focus during Phase IV, especially in the post-COVID context over the last half of Phase IV.

1.2. Relevance of the new gender equality approach and strategy for constituents

Governments

411. The Better Work programme focuses on factory-level activity implementation, collaboration with stakeholders involved in the garment sector, and also with governmental authorities during the process of welcoming a new country to the Better Work programme. While Better Work activities predominantly target factory-level conditions, it is evident from interviews with relevant stakeholders that Better Work initiatives create an impact on the sector and have the ability to influence change within governmental policy and agenda setting. Better Work has played a role in influential meetings and support offered to governments in some participating countries.

412. In this Phase IV, the programme has recognised the importance of remaining an active partner with governments, with a focus on the implementation of countries' labour laws and regulations, aligning country labour laws with International Labour Standards, and on brokering and monitoring country commitments under free trade agreements. With the implementation of the new Global Gender Strategy in 2018, as well as the establishment in 2019 of the ILO's Violence and Harassment Convention No. 190, aimed at ending violence and harassment in the workplace globally, highlighting gender-based violence, the ILO and Better Work have been seeking to use the positive momentum created by the push towards focusing more on gender to strengthen global and national policies and regulations that promote gender equality.

413. Better Work country programmes report increased efforts to discuss issues of gender equality and sexual harassment with governmental stakeholders. Additionally, the new gender strategy has increased capacity-building activities for unions and workers representatives, and has also helped increase the number of women in such roles, providing these groups with information and tools about gender equality. In turn, it has been observed during this evaluation that some unions and representatives have taken on the task of using this opportunity to pressure their governments to sign and ratify the ILO Convention which addresses sexual harassment and violence, and have pushed to raise awareness about sexual harassment during negotiations and meetings with governmental stakeholders.^{490,491} Furthermore, some country teams and union members have reported that they feel more empowered to approach the government about specific cases of sexual violence, child abuse, and exploitation, and some have reported successful responses by governments.⁴⁹²

414. While there is still a lack of clear evidence about the relevance of the gender strategy for governments, Better Work pushed towards gender mainstreaming its Convention and activities, and helping its country

⁴⁸⁶ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV p. 32; Interview with BW Nicaragua staff; Interview with BW Bangladesh staff

⁴⁸⁷ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.70

⁴⁸⁸ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.76, 78

⁴⁸⁹ Interview with BW staff

⁴⁹⁰ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.13

⁴⁹¹ Interview with the Cambodian Federation of Independent Trade Union (CFITU)

⁴⁹² Interview with BF Cambodia staff

programmes and union partners to raise awareness on gender issues, which has certainly introduced very positive momentum and opportunities that are relevant to the Better Work partnership with governments. As Better Work continues to increase its focus on gender equality, while continuing to focus on efforts to align country labour laws with International Labour Standards, the significance of the opportunities to come cannot be overlooked.

Trade unions

415. The Better Work new gender equality and gender mainstreaming approach and its targeted initiatives are responsive to women workers' needs regarding working conditions, promotion, and childcare, as expressed by women workers and the trade unions interviewed. The increased push for gender inclusion in areas of worker's rights and at the factory level has benefited workers, women workers especially, by providing additional and gender-specific capacity-building for the unions and promoting women's leadership in the unions. The gender equality approach has increased initiatives raising awareness about wage gaps and equal pay, unequal access to opportunity and leadership, raised awareness about discrimination, harassment, labour exploitation, and empowerment. Women report a stronger sense of empowerment to speak up on issues of sexual harassment and bullying anonymously.⁴⁹³ Evaluations demonstrated changed behaviours around gender representation and diversity within the unions, and some country programmes reported higher numbers of women represented in unions and committees.⁴⁹⁴
416. Representation of women in unions has been evaluated as often limited, and as part of the new gender strategy, the representation of women in unions became a key element, thus the attention paid to trade unions in the gender approach and country programme strategies has increased in this area, and women's representatives reported an increase in cooperation with the programme.⁴⁹⁵ The increased focus on gender by Better Work, and the increase in capacity building of country programmes by Better Work Global, stemming as a result of the newly enhanced gender priorities, have helped result in the strengthening of labour union capacities in some participating countries. Additionally, while some unions seemed reluctant or uninterested in prioritising gender during past phases, some country programme have reported significant and positive shifts towards more gender inclusion in the unions and their activities and representation, or have reported at least an acceptance of gender equality as a Better Work priority issue.⁴⁹⁶
417. Significant impact has been noted on improved awareness of gender issues and practices amongst the workers and reduced discrimination in the workplace. However, there is still substantial progress to be made in strengthening workers' interest (i.e., discrimination against unions, lack of a bargaining process, freedom of association, etc.) which has seen a slower rate of improvement in many programme countries and therefore reduced the ability of trade unions to fully engage in gender equality dialogue.⁴⁹⁷ The new gender equality strategy during Phase IV welcomed a long-awaited increase in support and capacity building of the country programmes by Better Work Global, this in turn resulted in an increase of capacity-building activities for unions in the area of gender equality. Country teams reported an uptick in development and training initiatives for unions and representatives, including Training of Trainer sessions on gender and on sexual harassment prevention. Some unions trained, even unions described as reluctant to prioritise gender in past phases, went on to conduct their own sexual harassment prevention trainings for workers.⁴⁹⁸

Cambodian trade union: *"As a union, we work on providing gender capacity building to our federations and local unions. We promote union leadership, to increase voices and representatives in the union leadership. By now, there are above 40% of women in the union's leadership positions. Most of the women's unions are very brave and they confront the situation, including strike, negotiation, challenging factories and concerned local stakeholders on employment policy or employment issues. This reveals that women are confident and courageous in protecting women and employee's interests."*⁴⁹⁹

Better Work Haiti staff: *"This is why the gender strategy is still relevant even if the country didn't put it in place itself, it was consulted upon on a global level and made to ensure that gender equality is tracked in all countries. That is the effort we are making as a global programme for women, and it is a continuous struggle. For example, for the trade unions, we are still*

⁴⁹³ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28 March 31, 2021), p.27.

⁴⁹⁴ Final Internal Evaluation – "Better Work Jordan: Strengthening the Capacity of the Trade Union in Jordan's Garment Sector" p. 32.

⁴⁹⁵ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.15.

⁴⁹⁶ Interview with Cambodian Federation of Independent Trade Union (CFITU).

⁴⁹⁷ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.64.

⁴⁹⁸ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.13.

⁴⁹⁹ Interview with the Cambodia Labour Confederation.

working to ensure that more women have leadership position in the trade union. More women are having their voices heard at trade union level, but we are there because it was a global strategy.”⁵⁰⁰

Employer organisations

418. The Better Work Global Gender Strategy has promoted a stronger focus on gender equality mainstreaming and women’s empowerment, and has outlined priorities and outputs which are highly relevant to employer organisations, who both benefit from the new gender equality approach and act as implementers of the strategy, as a part of the Better Work programme. Employer organisations have been included as actors of implementation of the outputs described in the Gender Strategy. Namely, Better Work country programmes work with employer organisations to better implement and facilitate activities at the factory level that raise awareness for all workers on gender equality, that help train women and cultivate their roles in the factories, and activities and campaigns that help scale up recognition of women’s rights and needs in the factories, thus delivering on the Better Work global gender objectives.⁵⁰¹ Better Work country teams must play a key role in promoting the involvement of employer organisations and supporting them in creating better working environments at the factory level.
419. Country programme teams have led capacity-building initiatives for employer organisations and representatives, and they have increasingly focused on initiatives to advance the gender strategy throughout this past Phase IV. Employee organisations interviewed have reported receiving training from Better Work programmes on gender and sexual harassment, and reported what they believe is an increase in gender equality and respect for women’s rights at the factory level throughout Phase IV and an increase in the number of women in leadership roles, including in employer organisations.⁵⁰²

1.3. How have countries incorporated the global gender strategy?

Examples of elements that were adopted and successful

420. Advancing gender equality in the sector and strengthening the implementation of the outputs of the global gender strategy within the country programme initiatives and partnerships has been a priority issue during Phase IV. All of the country programmes have reported a strong incorporation of gender issues within most of their activities, and an enhanced implementation of the global gender strategy objectives.
421. Many country programmes have also reported a stronger sense of collaboration with Better Work Global on the implementation of the global gender strategy as well as an increase in received support and capacity building in Phase IV.^{503,504,505} As a result, country programmes reported that gender issues continued to be a big area of focus, and that efforts to implement the gender strategy within various different activities were able to take on a larger role in Phase IV. This in turn has led to an increased development of more varied and sustainable initiatives, as well as a more comprehensive understanding of monitoring and evaluation metrics for gender issues in particular, and clear criteria for measuring the quality of workplace gender policies.
422. The Better Work Global Gender Strategy has been well integrated into the activities and interventions of the different country programmes, who have enjoyed a high level of freedom to adapt the global strategy to their own country contexts, reflecting the recognition that contextual analysis must be invested in identifying what was needed and how it might work in each country programme. Many country programmes reported positive feedback about the level of independence afforded to them in identifying how best to incorporate the Global Gender Strategy into their own interventions, and reported significant success in embedding the Global Strategy and gender-focused policies into a high number of their own policies and activities.⁵⁰⁶ Many country programmes have developed their own detailed Gender Results Frameworks and Performance Monitoring Plans in their efforts to promote gender issues and implement the Global Gender Strategy.⁵⁰⁷ This highlights the value of country programme flexibility to adapt the Better Work Global strategy into workable in-country approaches and solutions.

⁵⁰⁰ Interview with BW Haiti staff.

⁵⁰¹ Interview with Jordan Garments, Accessories & Textiles Exporters’ Association (JGATE).

⁵⁰² Interview with Employer representative - Fashiontext Cambodia.

⁵⁰³ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV p.32.

⁵⁰⁴ Interview with BW Nicaragua staff.

⁵⁰⁵ Interview with BW Bangladesh staff.

⁵⁰⁶ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.80.

⁵⁰⁷ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.80.

423. During Phase IV, key partnerships and targeted interventions led to the development and the expansion of initiatives to promote gender equality in the Better Work countries. Following successful implementation in Bangladesh, the GEAR (Gender Equality and Returns) training programme was replicated by Better Work **Vietnam**, also opening up possibilities for a global adoption in the future.⁵⁰⁸ The GEAR model, which promotes women to become supervisors and grow in their roles, has provided women workers with opportunities to advance their careers and contribute to better dialogue, workplace practices and workplace harmony, while contributing to higher line-level efficiency.

424. Leadership and skills training for women became a key area of focus for many Better Work country programmes during Phase IV, including due to evaluation results in 2016, which demonstrated clearly that women in supervisory roles improved factory productivity, increasing the popularity of programmes like the Supervisory Skills Training programme (SST) amongst Better Work country programmes.⁵⁰⁹ SST has now been implemented in **Cambodia, Haiti, Indonesia, Jordan, Nicaragua, Ethiopia, and Vietnam**, and with an enhanced gender focus during Phase IV. Training geared towards Enterprise Advisers has focused more on gender sensitivity and equality, prevention of sexual harassment, and promotion of gender equality at the factory level, in many country programmes. Furthermore, assessments and advisory services by Better Work have increasingly focused on ensuring that leadership and skills training have a stronger gender emphasis.

425. Interviewed staff from the BW global team made the following observations:

“Impact on women workers has for sure been greater than in previous phases because very specific targeted interventions were put in place. There are some good interventions that are creating impact for women specifically. For example, supervisory skills training and the GEAR programme were adjusted specifically to target either existing women supervisors or future women supervisors. This was unprecedented.”

“We can see impacts on women, not only from the sexual harassment prevention training, but also the leadership skills training for women. We have had the GEAR programme started in Bangladesh and Vietnam. It’s a programme where you promote women to become supervisors and grow in their roles. There were also big projects on care and work for women, ensuring that factories follow policies and have them in place.”

Interviews with BW staff

426. Initiatives like GEAR and SST, which promote gender representation in leadership roles, have spillover effects that help achieve other ILO and Better Work objectives, including targeting sexual harassment and increasing factory productivity. They are also unique to the implementation of Phase IV in that they address observations from past phases which highlighted weaknesses in Better Work initiatives to promote gender equality, on the basis of there being very few women in leadership and supervisory roles and a lack of interventions to address this. By engaging programme partners and stakeholders (such as trade unions) in the design and implementation, such trainings can be conducted in other sectors as well.

427. During Phase IV, each country programme enhanced their sexual harassment prevention initiatives by developing their own versions of the sexual harassment prevention intervention, which have now been implemented on a large scale in many factories and touching many workers and supervisors, with a demonstrated significant impact in terms of awareness raising.⁵¹⁰

Better Work **Vietnam** addresses the issue of sexual harassment (together with other partners such as CARE, Marie Stopes and the IFC, international brands) through the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (POSH) programme. BWV has helped put in place POSH policies and procedures in over 80 factories. BWV has developed and piloted an application called ‘Gopy’, where workers, factory representatives and Better Work Enterprise Advisers can share and update information and engage in dialogue, creating another channel to tackle the risk of sexual harassment in the workplace. Leadership & skills development for women has also been nurtured by BWV through a specially designed project in partnership with International Financial Corporation (IFC) to implement the GEAR (Gender Equality & Returns) training programme.⁵¹¹ BWV also developed new indicators and assessment tools, including CAT, to track its performance in implementing the Global Gender Strategy.⁵¹²

⁵⁰⁸ Better Work Phase IV Fourth Annual Donor Report 2021.

⁵⁰⁹ Interview with BW staff.

⁵¹⁰ Interview with BW staff.

⁵¹¹ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.84.

⁵¹² BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.84.

Better Factories **Cambodia** developed its own three-year gender strategy (2022-2024) to be a stand-alone guidance of how BFC will embed gender into specific areas of work and service delivery, and to align with BWG's gender strategy.⁵¹³ Currently, most of the partnerships are around advancing gender equality in the sector. The programme focuses continuously on preventing and addressing sexual harassment and gender-based violence (with CARE Cambodia), on making progress towards increased capacity of trade unions and their leaders on different topics and aspects around gender equality that affect garment workers, and on supporting brands and buyers to achieve their goals on gender equality through collaboration or through convening meetings with Cambodian garment industry workers.⁵¹⁴

Better Work **Bangladesh** has partnered with UNICEF to implement Mothers@Work, specifically targeting women who are mothers and trying to support them with pre-natal and post-natal care and reintegration to the workforce with childcare support.”

Better Work **Nicaragua** designed a new intervention to support factories in addressing and preventing sexual harassment, taking a more comprehensive and victim and survivor-centred approach in order to address sexual harassment effectively. The intervention outlined a number of conditions and policies that need to be put in place by factories, including having effective grievance mechanisms in place to report cases and an access to support for victims and survivors.

Better Work **Indonesia** implemented the Training of Trainers on the Respectful Workplace programme, which aims to shift the ownership of building a respectful culture in the workplace, safe and free from harassment onto factories; the results following the 2021 training have been encouraging. Most of the factories have conducted a smaller training session targeting management level and supervisors, and socialisation events for workers to raise awareness on sexual harassment issues. Several factories expanded their grievance mechanism, by adding an assigned channel for harassment cases, providing an online anonymous channel, and updating their grievance procedures to include sexual harassment case handling protocols.⁵¹⁵

Examples of elements that were not / less often adopted

428.As Phase IV saw the development of the Global Gender Strategy 2018-2022 and an increased focus on gender equality at the global level and subsequently amongst the country programmes, there are initiatives and analyses that remain in their early stages. In some of the country programmes, comprehensive gender analysis has only just taken place, and some of the activities that have been taking place at the country level have not benefited from a thorough gender analysis until more recently. Going forward, for future programmes at the country level, a gender analysis should be conducted very early in the programme to ensure that the Global Gender Strategy has been incorporated as much as possible, taking into account the country context, and to confirm that the programme does not risk focusing on the wrong issues and miss opportunities for sustainable impacts on gender equality in the sector. Many gender-related programme components, considerations and indicators were added or improved during this past phase, following past revisions and evaluations incorporating a more recently enhanced focus on gender; this left little time during this past Phase IV for the inclusion of some of these gender-specific considerations, lowering the level of impact to date. Therefore, gender considerations have not yet been equally and uniformly mainstreamed in the different country programme project activities.

429.There is still a need to strengthen gender mainstreaming in all of Better Work's activities. A particular area highlighted by several stakeholders, which requires more attention, relates to the limited number of women at the senior and management level. Although the garment sector is mainly recruiting women, at the higher levels there is a limited number of women.⁵¹⁶ Initiatives like GEAR, that promote gender representation in leadership roles, were developed specifically to address this issue and increase the number of women at the senior and management level. However, GEAR and other more gender-focused initiatives emerging out of the enhanced focus on gender during Phase IV remain in their early stages and have not yet been implemented on a wider global level in the different country programmes. While the majority of stakeholders interviewed during the current and past evaluations recognise the importance of gender responsiveness to ensure the needs of women are identified and addressed, gender is not yet considered a priority by all constituents, including some unions.⁵¹⁷

⁵¹³ Cambodia TPR Oct 2021-March 2022.

⁵¹⁴ Cambodia TPR Oct 2021-March 2022.

⁵¹⁵ Better Work Phase IV Fourth Annual Donor Report 2021.

⁵¹⁶ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV p.25.

⁵¹⁷ Final Internal Evaluation – “Better Work Jordan: Strengthening the Capacity of the Trade Union in Jordan's Garment Sector” p.34.

430. Additionally, although Better Work has increased training and development to increase the number of women in leadership roles and to raise awareness about sexual harassment, more effort could be made to help member factories understand and address the potential needs of women workers within and beyond the factory, including amplified care burdens and vulnerability to job loss.⁵¹⁸ Lastly, in some country programmes, gender equality is not being treated with a “programmatic” focus, that is, a holistic approach to gender equality. The main focus is given to training and capacity building-related issues to reduce existing vertical segregation but there is also a need to reduce the existing horizontal segregation towards women. Furthermore, Better Work Global and the Global Gender Strategy lack a clear approach for guiding country programmes to mainstream policies to promote gender equality in the factories.⁵¹⁹

Better Work **Ethiopia** has only recently conducted a gender analysis of its programme activities and has only recently added a gender specialist to the team. New gender-related indicators and additional funding were added only recently during a revision in November 2020, minimising the length of time that the programme could have been including and incorporating these gender considerations into its interventions.⁵²⁰ BWE has not yet systemised the tracking of the recent gender indicators added in 2020 and has not yet clearly defined the indicators and means to measure them.⁵²¹

Better Work **Jordan** evaluations identified a lack of capacity of the worker’s union in Jordan (JTGCU) to act on gender issues, and a lack of desire to do so, with gender not yet being a priority for the union.⁵²² Nevertheless, this seems to be changing since evidence shows that in recent years, unions have embraced gender initiatives and are paying more attention to gender awareness.⁵²³

1.4. How effective and impactful has the enhanced focus on gender equality been?

Examples of effectiveness and impact

431. There has been a growing recognition that gender mainstreaming is important. Phase IV saw an increase in focus on gender issues and a recognition that more concrete measures were needed to systemically implement gender considerations in a tangible way at country level. The development of the Global Gender Strategy in 2018, and the ways in which it reverberated and was applied in different ways among the country programmes has helped to make an impact on gender equality in the factories, helping to build a more resilient and sustainable sector.

432. Many country programmes reported significant and diverse impacts and results of their gender-focused activities and initiatives, describing raised awareness about sexual harassment, gender-based violence, gender wage gaps, power imbalances, maternity and childcare needs, and discrimination. Interviews conducted reflected a shared priority among country programmes and stakeholders around the need to elevate the voices of women in the sector, and all those interviewed agreed that significant gains were made during Phase IV in the area of gender equality.

433. The majority of the country programmes evaluated have sought to ensure the implementation of Gender and Inclusion at factory level as part of the assessment process. Important gains have been made since 2019 in terms of awareness raising and sensitisation on gender and on inclusion, with some initiatives raising awareness about the inclusion of migrants and people with disabilities. A significant number of factories in many country programmes have completed sexual harassment prevention training, and workers in a significant number of factories have also undertaken disability equality training. Programme interventions on gender and inclusiveness have also been developed to promote the employment of people with disability.⁵²⁴

434. There is sufficient evidence from interview feedback that there is an improved awareness of gender issues among female and male workers. Female workers are seen as having more participation within the factory and through the training and seminars have acquired the knowledge and confidence to make their voices

⁵¹⁸ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.vii.

⁵¹⁹ Independent Cluster Evaluation of: Better Work Lesotho (Final); Better Work Nicaragua (Final); Better Work Haiti (Final) p.9.

⁵²⁰ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.31.

⁵²¹ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.10.

⁵²² Final Internal Evaluation – “Better Work Jordan: Strengthening the Capacity of the Trade Union in Jordan’s Garment Sector” p.34.

⁵²³ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.13.

⁵²⁴ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.83.

heard. This has also led to an assessment that the rights of female workers and their working conditions have improved over time as the workers themselves get to know more of their rights, while the factories (mostly medium and larger scale) have taken constructive and serious action to uphold workers' rights. Additionally, the training contributes to some positive change in working culture and behavioural change through the way female workers are now viewed by their male colleagues.⁵²⁵ Country programmes report that work and living conditions for women workers have improved, and that women have increased access to supervisory and leadership roles in multi-development sectors.⁵²⁶

"In some respects, Better Work **Bangladesh** has achieved notable successes, especially about safety, facilitating dialogue, empowering women's issues related to workers."⁵²⁷

"One thing that is refreshing, is that most Better Work **Haiti** factories I go to now, when you ask them about gender-based violence in general, especially harassment, they answer that these cases have become very rare. This is striking when you know that 60-65% of the workforce is made up of women. In management, 90% of the heads of factories told me that the training and interventions of Better Work in the factories have contributed to this."⁵²⁸

"The Better Work **Jordan** (implementation of the) Global Gender strategy contributes positively to enhancing gender equality in the garment sector, and it continues to improve the situation of Jordanian women. The positive effect is noticeable at our factory, where most of the workers are females. The industry is improving gradually thanks to the Global Gender strategy, and we are able to create more jobs and recruit more workers."⁵²⁹

"Better Factories **Cambodia** did women leadership training for the bipartite committees that we are setting up, so while women were focused upon, we also trained men on how to ensure that they are conscious of women needing to speak up and that they are actually heard. Cambodia had some nice results."⁵³⁰

435. There has been progress in gender equality and women's empowerment, as demonstrated by noticeable and reported increases in the number of women representatives in Performance Improvement Consultative Committees (PICC), in Safety Committees (SC), in Participation Committees (PC), in OSH (Operational Safety and Health) Committees, and the number of women in supervisory roles. Programmes like GEAR train factory managers on how to identify, support, promote, and retain female talent.⁵³¹ In addition, feedback from past evaluations demonstrates that behaviours around gender representation and diversity within some of the trade unions are changing. Such efforts to elevate women into leadership roles and empower women workers to advocate and speak up for themselves have led to reduced discrimination, better maternity and breastfeeding policies and infrastructure, more rest time during work, and better access to childcare and childcare facilities, according to the women workers themselves.⁵³² In 2017, the Mothers@Work programme was initiated in **Bangladesh** for the first time and has demonstrated significant impact. Factory workers and managers interviewed by the evaluation team viewed the programme very favourably and noted many tangible improvements to facilities and conditions for young working mothers, including breastfeeding breaks and on-site childcare centres.⁵³³

Across **Better Factories Cambodia, Better Work Indonesia and Better Work Vietnam**, the number of women representatives across the approximately 190 Performance Improvement Consultative Committee's (PICC) has noticeably increased, primarily through factory management bringing in more women.⁵³⁴

In **Better Work Bangladesh**, women's participation and voice increased in the factories following the recent implementation of a national regulation requiring sexual harassment prevention committees which have been reported as successful, and women's participation in Participation Committees rose to 44% in 2020; most of the members of the Executive Committee were women.⁵³⁵ BWB has implemented the Mothers@Work programme in

⁵²⁵ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.82.

⁵²⁶ Interview with the Cambodian Federation of Independent Trade Union (CFITU).

⁵²⁷ Interview with Trade Union Leader Bangladesh.

⁵²⁸ Interview with BW Haiti staff.

⁵²⁹ Interview with Jordan Garments, Accessories & Textiles Exporters' Association (JGATE).

⁵³⁰ Interview with BW staff.

⁵³¹ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation - Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates - February 28-March 31, 2021), p.40.

⁵³² 2021 Independent interim Evaluation - Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates - February 28-March 31, 2021), p.21.

⁵³³ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation - Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates - February 28-March 31, 2021), p.27.

⁵³⁴ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.82.

⁵³⁵ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation - Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates - February 28-March 31, 2021), p.26.

partnership with UNICEF in 105 factories by 2021, improving participating factories' breastfeeding facilities, childcare facilities and knowledge of healthy maternal / child nutrition in the target factories.⁵³⁶

Better Work Indonesia has successfully increased the adoption of policies related to sexual harassment prevention, has reduced discrimination in supported factories, has noted an increase in breastfeeding facilities, an increase in maternity leave, and a correlated 22% increase in factory productivity.⁵³⁷

Comparison with previous phases

436. Country programmes have used this past Phase IV strategically to improve in several ways. For example, by leveraging the newly established global standards in the ILO Conventions aimed at ending violence and harassment, and encouraging governmental partners to ratify the first international treaty to recognise the right of everyone to a working environment free from violence and harassment, including gender-based violence and harassment. Many country programmes reported recognising the stronger shift in focus in Phase IV, and a stronger willingness and preparedness from Better Work Global to support and enable country programmes to better implement gender-focused initiatives. Many country programme representatives interviewed described a focus on gender before Phase IV, but a lack of capacity, resources and knowledge sharing surrounding how to best have an impact on gender equality in the sector.

437. There was certainly a perception among many country programmes that at the beginning of this past phase of more intense attention to gender issues, beginning in late 2016 and then in 2017, that they did not receive as much support or guidance from Better Work Global on the specifics of how to mainstream gender into their work at the country level. As previously noted, one key advantage of the way Better Work Global operates is to allow each programme certain autonomy in its operation, and although this has allowed the programmes to develop and test some gender tools, techniques, and methodologies, it was a generally held opinion that the gender advice from Better Work Global was big on concept and small on practical tools for execution.⁵³⁸ In evaluating Phase IV, teams interviewed reported an increase in capacity-building, communication with important gender focal points, and funding facilitated by Better Work Global on gender in particular, and a subsequent increase in knowledge among country programme staff and the development of improved strategies and projects. Additionally, with a stronger focus on sustainability and resilience.

“We have significant gender earmarked funds in this phase. Big push to implement that strategy and mainstream the strategy. Clearly visible. Everything we do has massive gender focus anyway, so there was actually no huge change, we just made it more clear in monitoring and really drilled down on it. Mainstream is the right word – we took what we had and mainstreamed it.”

“Considering gender issues, some findings 5 years ago were big discoveries. While we had a hunch, we did not have the data that supported putting gender equality as a key driver of change. The drivers of change that Better Work implements, they only work as a driver of change if women were on these committees, elected, and given space to contribute to the conversation; that profitability and productivity were harmed by sexual harassments; the need to train female supervisors; and other examples. Five years ago, the data to support these findings were big findings, and allowed us to put gender as the centre of our strategy as a key driver of change. Before these findings we did a lot of gender work but not consciously, now we see it as an instrument, a vector through which we achieve meaningful engagement.”

Better Work Global staff interviews

438. Additionally, whereas past evaluations recognised a lack of willingness of some stakeholders to prioritise gender equality and a lack of capacity to push for more gender-focused initiatives, with some unions mentioned in particular, most recent evaluations and interviews report more positive engagement in the area of gender, for example, unions in **Jordan** seem to have recently significantly increased their commitment to gender initiatives following capacity building and learning and development activities raising awareness about gender, organised for union staff and organisers by the Better Work Jordan programme. Whereas in past phases, unions in Jordan were identified as not prioritising gender, Better Work Jordan provided a Training of Trainers to union staff and organisers on sexual harassment prevention, leading to union organisers now conducting sexual harassment prevention training for workers. According to Better Work Jordan, the unions have begun advocating on sexual harassment issues at the sectoral level, which

⁵³⁶ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.27.

⁵³⁷ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.83.

⁵³⁸ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.80.

encouraged all stakeholders to agree on the inclusion of a concrete clause on violence and harassment in the sectoral CBA based on ILO Convention 190, requiring employers to adopt relevant policies.⁵³⁹

2. COVID-19

While the impact of COVID-19 on the Better Work programme has been evaluated in different countries, the results from different countries have not been compared yet and clear and generalisable lessons learnt were not formulated. The current evaluation explored the way forward, based on lessons learnt from the pandemic.

2.1. Impact of COVID-19 on BW's existing activities

Which activities were modified?

439. Overall, Better Work managed to handle the COVID-19 pandemic well as it found creative ways to continue its activities, support the factories, workers and other stakeholders, and remain relevant in the industry. While a lot of planned activities were modified, the programme was able to adapt and react to different challenges in a swift way and avoid major cancellations of its activities.
440. The COVID-19 pandemic affected most people in one way or another. Various organisations, institutions and companies had to adapt the way they were working to the new normal with high levels of uncertainty, limited travelling and limited social contact. The Better Work programme was no exception. The interviewed staff members of Better Work shared that the team quickly prepared the contingency plans for the programme to prepare for potential additional challenges, such as donors pulling out their funding, and decreased its spending as much as possible without compromising service provision.⁵⁴⁰
441. Still, different teams of the programme were affected in different ways. For example, the BW research and impact team was less affected by the pandemic as it always focused on collecting data in different formats and interactions. While the team had to change the way they operated greatly, they managed to reorganise their work quite quickly through changing their priorities and defining new research questions in the light of COVID-19.⁵⁴¹
442. The staff of country programmes, on the other hand, had to modify their activities a lot as they were not able to access the factories to implement factory assessments, conduct trainings, and provide advice services in the same way as it did before. While it took some time to reorganise the in-person activities to deliver them using online and virtual tools,⁵⁴² available data show that the programme teams managed to ensure minimal disruption in the programme plans and provide needed support and advice even under the changed circumstances.
443. Furthermore, the programme came up with other creative decisions, such as delegating some Better Work activities to other ILO units or actors, to ensure the continuation of the activities.

⁵³⁹ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.13.

⁵⁴⁰ Interview with BW staff.

⁵⁴¹ Interview with BW staff.

⁵⁴² Interview with BW staff.

In **Ethiopia** Better Work Enterprise Advisers were not able to access the factories to conduct assessments. However, the programme cooperated with SCORE division to facilitate some of Better Work's factory visits. As SCORE trainers worked for different institutions than Enterprise Advisers and were following their safety protocols, they were allowed to access the factories sooner than Enterprise Advisers. Consequently, BW entrusted SCORE trainers to facilitate some of the Better Work assessment visits on behalf of the Better Work Enterprise Advisers. Enterprise Advisers supported the SCORE trainers online during the visit. This change required sensitising the SCORE trainers to the Better Work model and close cooperation between the SCORE trainers and Better Work Enterprise Advisers. However, it seems that it allowed for at least partial continuation of the planned factory assessments.⁵⁴³ The programme also modified its activities, including seminars, trainings and factory visits, so that they could be implemented virtually.⁵⁴⁴

Better Work **Bangladesh** introduced different initiatives to modify their activities according to the situation and changed needs and priorities of the stakeholders. The team was in daily contact with the enterprises in the first months of the pandemic and assessed the needs of the workers through a survey designed and disseminated specifically for that purpose to better understand what modifications to the actions were needed.⁵⁴⁵ Other factory services were also modified to allow for virtual delivery.⁵⁴⁶

The Better Work **Jordan** team maintained close communication with all stakeholders during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the support they needed while adapting to the changing situation. The Better Work team focused on OSH issues and conducted a series of phone calls for workers to get information about their situation and needs.⁵⁴⁷ The semi-structured phone interviews helped the Better Work team to get more information about the problems the workers were facing. This new way of consulting the workers was later developed further to also involve trade unions in the consultation process and is now used to get worker input on different issues.⁵⁴⁸

Better Work **Haiti** ensured that the planned factory assessments could still take place, at least to some extent, through close collaboration with labour inspectors. As the assessments require physical presence in the factories, the programme team organised hybrid model assessments with labour inspectors being in the factories and Better Work team members joining the assessments virtually.⁵⁴⁹

444. The presented examples show that Better Work programme modified quite a lot of its activities, but the modifications were generally successful and ensured some continuation of the programme activities. The available evidence indicates that the constituents and beneficiaries in general appreciated Better Work's efforts.⁵⁵⁰

445. However, while the Better Work programme's reaction to the pandemic is perceived positively, the stakeholders also had high expectations for the programme and some of them were not satisfied. For example, the stakeholders from **Bangladesh**, during the evaluation of the country programme at the beginning of the pandemic, shared that while they appreciated Better Work's efforts, they expected more comprehensive support in the future.⁵⁵¹ The evidence from the previous evaluation of Better Work Bangladesh indicates that these expectations were not fully met. More specifically, while some brands were satisfied with the virtual compliance checks, other did not perceive them as sufficient. Furthermore, the programme team was neither able to follow the planned timeline for the compliance reports, as it had to stop factory visits, nor did it manage to meet the demand for new factory enrolment.⁵⁵²

Which activities were cancelled?

446. Based on the available information it seems that Better Work was able to avoid significant disruptions to their activities because of COVID-19 and no major cancellations had to take place. As presented in the previous section, most of the programme countries managed to modify their activities and successfully adjust to the changes brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, there were some significant delays with activities that are implemented in a close cooperation with national stakeholders and the planned expansion of the programme.

⁵⁴³ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.51.

⁵⁴⁴ Final Internal Evaluation – "Better Work Jordan: Strengthening the Capacity of the Trade Union in Jordan's Garment Sector" p.22.

⁵⁴⁵ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.13.

⁵⁴⁶ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.19.

⁵⁴⁷ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.20.

⁵⁴⁸ Interview with BW Jordan staff.

⁵⁴⁹ Interview with BW Haiti staff.

⁵⁵⁰ Better Work Phase IV Fourth Annual Donor Report 2021.

⁵⁵¹ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.49.

⁵⁵² 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.vii.

447. Better Work programme implements a large part of its activities in a close cooperation with national stakeholders. Consequently, during the COVID-19 pandemic, changes in the activities depended not only on the challenges faced by Better Work teams but also on the challenges faced by the national-level constituents. This resulted in some delays in planned Better Work activities due to circumstances that the programme team had no control over. For example, **Better Work Jordan** had to delay training in the satellite factories because the government suspended all operations in satellite factories.⁵⁵³ In **Bangladesh**, in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic the Better Work team had strict restrictions on what work they could implement, and because of the restrictions some factory activities could not be implemented, which potentially resulted in a worsening situation in some factories.⁵⁵⁴ The workers in Bangladesh also noted that during the lockdown due to COVID-19 the Better Work team did not always check whether the conditions in the factories were in line with the requirements.⁵⁵⁵ In **Vietnam** the pandemic negatively affected several joint activities of Better Work and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, including trainings and workshops that could not take place as planned.⁵⁵⁶

448. Another area that COVID-19 had a noticeable impact on relates to the expansion opportunities of the programme. Given that travel restrictions were in place, it was harder to establish a rapport with constituents and stakeholders due to the inherent limitations of virtual tools. Hence, the impact that exploratory discussions could have had were reduced by these conditions. Indeed, the evidence from the previous evaluation of **Better Work Global** indicated that establishment of new Better Work Country programmes in Pakistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Central America had to be delayed due to the travel restrictions as explanatory discussions with relevant stakeholders could not be replaced by virtual meetings and should take place face-to-face.⁵⁵⁷

449. In general, it seems that even though the activities could not take place as planned, they were not fully cancelled but rather delayed. At the time of the current evaluation most of the delayed activities were already implemented (for example, training activities with Jordan, Bangladesh and Vietnam), were at the process of being implemented (expansion to Pakistan and Sri Lanka), or were further delayed due to reasons not related to COVID-19 pandemic (expansion to Myanmar).

2.2. Introduction of new activities

How did BW address new needs and priorities?

450. Given the immediate health and economic risks presented in the early days of the pandemic, and the impact of lockdowns on factory work, the BW programme not only modified or cancelled its planned activities, but also introduced a variety of new activities to address new needs and challenges that arose. **Globally and nationally, Better Work quickly engaged unions, employers, governments, brands, and other actors to seek a coordinated response to the crisis.**

451. At the global level, the BW Global team supported the development of ILO's COVID-19 Call to Action for the Garment Industry which was developed after consultation with global brands, manufacturers and relevant employers' and workers' organisations.⁵⁵⁸ The BW Bangladesh team, for example, pointed out that they facilitated the involvement of tripartite partners in the design of the Global Call.⁵⁵⁹

452. At the country level, together with technical departments across the ILO and national constituents, Better Work supported a coordinated response, including providing technical advice, undertaking joint training sessions and awareness-raising campaigns and joint interventions with other UN agencies and national constituents. These initiatives resulted in the creation of guidelines on retrenchment and a safe return to work, Occupational Safety and Health checklists, collaborations with WHO and UNICEF to disseminate COVID-19 awareness raising material, joint pieces of training with Ministries of Health and Labour Inspectors on COVID-19 and convening to provide updates on labour laws and labour proclamations.⁵⁶⁰

453. Therefore, collaboration was a key element of BWs response to COVID-19:

⁵⁵³ Final Internal Evaluation – “Better Work Jordan: Strengthening the Capacity of the Trade Union in Jordan’s Garment Sector” p.27.

⁵⁵⁴ Interview with a representative of a global buyer.

⁵⁵⁵ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28 – March 31, 2021), p.25.

⁵⁵⁶ Interview with the Bureau for Employers’ Activities, VCCI Vietnam.

⁵⁵⁷ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV pp. 16-17.

⁵⁵⁸ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV p.18.

⁵⁵⁹ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.20.

⁵⁶⁰ Better Work Phase IV Fourth Annual Donor Report 2021.

In partnership with BF **Cambodia**, the Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) and Svay Rieng Labour Department jointly developed and delivered vital training materials on COVID-19 Preventive Measures and COVID-19 Emergency Preparedness. These training materials were tailored to meet the needs of participants and included a focus on gender inclusiveness in how leaders respond to the COVID-19 crisis. With support and coaching from BFC, Labour Officials delivered tailored trainings to workers, customising best practices and guidance so that workers could exercise safe behaviours in the workplace and at home.⁵⁶¹

The BW **Jordan** team maintained close communication with all stakeholders and focused on OSH, ensuring that they were adapted to the COVID-19 situation. The collaboration between stakeholders, including BWJ, led to a very rapid integration of safety and health measures against the spread of COVID-19. Additionally, BWJ facilitated an agreement between the TU and JGATE that employers would cover the cost of the COVID-19 PCR test when it was required to travel back to the country of origin (an agreement that is now annexed to the CBA).⁵⁶²

454. In **Ethiopia**, the ONEILO SIRAYE approach enabled Better Work to collaborate with other ILO programmes (SCORE) to develop COVID-19 checklists for SMEs and COVID-19-related OSH training modules for SMEs.⁵⁶³ Advisory services on OSH were provided to factories through a joint effort between SCORE and BW staff.⁵⁶⁴

455. Most activities focused on ensuring safety in the factories and protecting the health of workers. Additionally, several initiatives were taken to combine such protective measures with capacity-building efforts:

The Learning Hub supported by BW **Bangladesh** was expanded to include trainings for constituents on management responses to COVID-19.⁵⁶⁵

The BW team in **Indonesia** provided input to the government on the sectoral challenges created by the pandemic which resulted in several published guidance documents such as the guidance document for factories on COVID-19 Transmission, Prevention and Management and the Best Practices in the Workplace.⁵⁶⁶

Together with WHO and the IFC, BF in **Cambodia** provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Labour on procedures to enable the safe return to factories. These included step-by-step guidelines for compliance with the COVID-19 measures.⁵⁶⁷

The COVID-19 response in **Ethiopia** included the provision of funding to the Textile Association which enabled them to provide PPE to factories, while simultaneously setting up and building capacity of trade unions inside factories.⁵⁶⁸

456. Due to the recent occurrence of the pandemic, no comprehensive data are available yet on the impact of COVID-19-specific activities on workers' well-being and factory processes. However, some examples were found that showed that COVID-19 outputs were used and appreciated.

457. As a result of the specific COVID-19 activities, BW in **Nicaragua** noted that factories created barriers between staff members to avoid the spread of the virus, and they hired doctors and nurses within factories to provide additional support.⁵⁶⁹ A Nicaraguan factory confirmed that, with the help of BW they were able to promote awareness of COVID-19 prevention, symptoms and assistance, and provided hand sanitisers and face masks.⁵⁷⁰ In several countries, for example **Indonesia**, the enhanced focus on social dialogue and tripartism during the pandemic led to the agreement of social partners to continue such engagement post-pandemic.⁵⁷¹

The BWI, BWV and BFC evaluation found that, in **Vietnam**, the guidance supplied by BW on tackling COVID-19 (including advice on social dialogue) was considered a crucial element for factories managing to retain their workforce during the worst of the pandemic.⁵⁷²

The evaluation of BW **Bangladesh** found that interviewed workers perceived BWs activities as highly effective to improve workers' health and safety in the COVID-19 context.⁵⁷³ Workers interviewed for the current evaluation pointed

⁵⁶¹ Cambodia TPR Oct 2021-March 2022.

⁵⁶² Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.20.

⁵⁶³ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.50.

⁵⁶⁴ Interview with the representative of SCORE.

⁵⁶⁵ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.vii.

⁵⁶⁶ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.67.

⁵⁶⁷ Interview with BF Cambodia staff.

⁵⁶⁸ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.61.

⁵⁶⁹ Interview with BW Nicaragua staff.

⁵⁷⁰ Interview with a factory owner in Nicaragua.

⁵⁷¹ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation.

⁵⁷² BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation.

⁵⁷³ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.vi.

out that: “To ensure the health safety of the workers, especially during COVID-19, factory management has provided us with masks, hand sanitisers and other relevant health safety kits. These initiatives have been undertaken by the factory management.”⁵⁷⁴

What were the challenges to introducing COVID-specific activities?

458. Interviewed stakeholders and the results of desk research show that, predominantly, the response of BW to the pandemic was admirable. However, a few areas for improvement were still noted.
459. With the onset of the pandemic, BW **Bangladesh** reported that it took some specific actions for women, or measures as part of the general commitment to workers’ rights and welfare, that responded to women workers’ needs, such as special guidance provided to women workers and factory management regarding breastfeeding and COVID-19 within the M@W initiative factories. However, the evaluation team considered that a specific needs assessment should have been undertaken to investigate the effects of the pandemic on women and potentially facilitate other assistance to women in coping with the impacts on their work or home lives.⁵⁷⁵
460. Brand partners affirmed that BW **Bangladesh’s** adaptation to maintain its service delivery was effective overall but took a couple of months to be embedded. This was generally understood by buyers given that the situation was so unprecedented. One buyer representative noted, however, that BWB is still facing a backlog of compliance assessments.⁵⁷⁶ Similarly, the Global Mid-Term Evaluation found some critical views as well. One factory representative expressed the view that the response time to start the prevention campaign at the factory level was slow.⁵⁷⁷
461. In **Ethiopia**, stakeholders interviewed for the ILO-SIRAYE evaluation stated that a stronger emphasis on supporting the organisation of workers could have been included in the initial COVID-19 response and, instead of providing PPE to factories, focused on building the capacity of workers to advocate for employers to provide greater protection.⁵⁷⁸

2.3. Did the COVID-19 pandemic reveal any fundamental vulnerabilities of the BW programme?

Which vulnerabilities / weaknesses of BW were revealed?

462. The COVID-19 pandemic brought many unforeseen challenges to all the organisations and programmes, including the Better Work programme. While no major cancellation in planned work appeared, the programme had to modify and adjust some of its activities. The changed circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic also revealed some important weaknesses and shortcomings of the programme. These include lack of action in supporting the workers when liaising with the buyers, a lack of focus on social protection, and inflexible programme fees in the light of crises and shortcoming related to financing possibilities.
463. One of the most important weaknesses highlighted by the COVID-19 pandemic in Better Work’s activities is their limited influence over buyers and limited ability to affect their decisions. The evidence indicates that while Better Work teams advocated for the buyers to maintain their orders, a lot of stakeholders believe that Better Work did not sufficiently liaise with the buyers and had limited influence of their decisions as a lot of buyers still used the *force majeure* clause in the contracts, cancelled orders, or reduced payments. For example, stakeholders from **Bangladesh** interviewed for an interim evaluation of Better Work Bangladesh had mixed views of Better Work team’s response to the pandemic and believed that they did not do enough to influence the buyers and ensure that they honoured their purchase commitments. The government representatives also noted that Better Work and their donors such as the EU and the US should put more effort into influencing the global brands and advocate for responsible business practices.⁵⁷⁹
464. Factory representatives from **Indonesia** also noted that because of the COVID-19 pandemic they faced reduced orders and, consequently, had to reduce the number of workers employed and, in some cases, even

⁵⁷⁴ Interview with factory workers, Bangladesh.

⁵⁷⁵ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.23.

⁵⁷⁶ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.22.

⁵⁷⁷ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV p.19.

⁵⁷⁸ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.40.

⁵⁷⁹ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021).

close their operations.⁵⁸⁰ A consulted Better Work Global staff member also mentioned that while some companies handled the COVID-19 pandemic very well, most of them disregarded the well-being of workers and prioritised themselves.⁵⁸¹ This indicates that while the programme cooperates with the buyers on several activities, it has limited power to affect the decisions of the buyers, especially when the decisions concern the potential revenue of the buyers.

465. Moreover, while the Better Work programme often tried to prioritise well-being of workers during their interventions, the pandemic revealed that the programme has so far not paid detailed attention to social protection topics, something which is crucial for workers particularly during crises. The evidence from **Bangladesh** reveals that the issue of workers' social protection in the case of injury and sickness was neglected before the pandemic.⁵⁸² In **Ethiopia**, Better Work started focusing on facilitating the unionisation of the workers in 2021. However, the stakeholders highlight that during the pandemic response, there was a lack of emphasis on organising.⁵⁸³

466. Another potential shortcoming that was highlighted by the pandemic is the inflexible fee structure of the Better Work programme that makes it more difficult for some factories to continue engaging with the programme when they face challenges. For example, as **Better Work Bangladesh** did not reduce or waive its subscription fees in the light of the pandemic, smaller and less-resilient factories had to pause their involvement with the programme as they could not pay the fees in light of the risk of closing down.⁵⁸⁴ The programme fees also may have discouraged new factories from joining the programme after the start of the pandemic.⁵⁸⁵

467. As regards the financial issues, it also seems that the potential of the Better Work and IFC partnership is not realised. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted that IFC is not sufficiently visible under the framework of Better Work and the potentially improved access to financing for the factories through the partnership of Better Work and IFC is not ensured.⁵⁸⁶ Strengthening this partnership between Better Work and IFC and facilitating factories' access to needed financing in the case of future crises could help ensure that the factories are more resilient to the crises.

Were they addressed?

468. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted some important vulnerabilities of the Better Work programme, namely its limited influence over the actions of buyers, limited focus on social protection, and inflexible programme fees. While the programme addressed its limited focus on social protection, there is a lack of evidence that other vulnerabilities were addressed.

469. As the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the need for the programme to better address the social protection issues, the Better Work programme teams started designing and initiating different activities focusing on the topic. For example, in **Bangladesh**, Better Work, in cooperation with ILO Bangladesh as part of ILO's integrated support to the sector, supported the national stakeholders in initiating national Employment Injury Insurance scheme and assisted with piloting the scheme in the industry.⁵⁸⁷ While the programme teams have been addressing the social protection topic more, it remains to be seen how effective the activities put in place are.

470. Other vulnerabilities that have been highlighted by the pandemic have been addressed to a limited extent or have not been addressed at all. The programme considered adjusting its fees in the light of the pandemic. However, after consideration decided to keep the same fees which depended on the company size which have not been changed since 2017.⁵⁸⁸ Considering the limited power the programme has over the decision of buyers, there is no evidence that the programme in any way tried to increase its influence. As mentioned, evidence indicates that the Better Work teams already advocated the buyers to maintain their orders, but their efforts were unsuccessful.⁵⁸⁹ This may indicate that the programme should consider how it can increase its importance for the buyers to have more influence over their decisions. One potential way to avoid this situation in the future is to already include a crisis response to the programme planning and encourage

⁵⁸⁰ Consultation with factory representatives in Indonesia (Indonesia national level consultations).

⁵⁸¹ Interview with Connor Boyle.

⁵⁸² 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021).

⁵⁸³ ONEILO SIRAYE p.29.

⁵⁸⁴ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021).

⁵⁸⁵ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.44

⁵⁸⁶ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV p. 15-16

⁵⁸⁷ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021) p.14.

⁵⁸⁸ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021) p.23.

⁵⁸⁹ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.vii.

buyers to do the same. However, while the evidence of activities increasing the programme's influence among buyers is lacking, a Better Work Global staff member shared that this experience provided a lesson learnt for the programme to focus less on their work with private sector partners due to their lack of reliability and put more emphasis on increasing the capacities of national constituents that they could protect the rights of the workers and support them in crises.⁵⁹⁰

471. The evidence indicates that while Better Work teams advocated for the buyers to maintain their orders, a lot of factories believe that Better Work did not sufficiently liaise with the buyers as there were a lot of cancelled orders, reduced payments and use of *force majeure* clauses in the contracts.⁵⁹¹

2.4. Opportunities brought forth by the pandemic

Did the pandemic bring any good practices and new ideas?

472. While the COVID-19 pandemic has presented many significant challenges to the Better Work programme and resulted in modification of various planned activities, it also resulted in some good practices. The most visible improvement was the fluent transition of some activities to the virtual mode. While some of the activities, like factory assessments, are now again being implemented face-to-face, some activities, such as training, are also being implemented virtually.

473. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Better Work teams were forced to explore virtual delivery models for their activities as face-to-face activities could not take place. While such delivery was not considered before the pandemic, the experience of the pandemic proved that some activities indeed can be conducted using virtual and online tools. As mentioned by an interviewed Better Work staff member, this was a great opportunity for the programme to realise that the resource-heavy model of factory-level services, which was used by Better Work, is not the only possibility and introducing some virtual services or hybrid model could significantly improve efficiency.⁵⁹² Once the team was acquainted with the virtual tools, the activities could also be implemented using fewer resources, and have a greater reach. While virtual delivery of some activities, such as factory visits and assessments, may not have the same positive results as face-to-face delivery, activities like training greatly benefit from the new mode of delivery.

Better Factories **Cambodia** utilised technology and virtual tools to ensure that staff could work in a safe way, being isolated but still working together. The tools used allowed the team to more strategically harness the experience of the staff in the most important areas, such as gender and OSH, and use them in the service provision.⁵⁹³

Better Work **Bangladesh** designed from scratch a realistic virtual alternative for factory assessment, the Virtual Compliance Check. The tool adhered to ILO Bangladesh and Government safety guidance and involved the use of mobile phone cameras and reliance on factory and managers and workers during the assessment and advisory processes. Training using virtual methods was also implemented and improved the efficiency of the activities.⁵⁹⁴ While this may not necessarily be a better way to conduct assessments than face-to-face assessments, the developed tool could be used again in case of any future health crises.

474. Another important good practice that was further highlighted by COVID-19 pandemic is improved communication and cooperation between Better Work and other ILO units as well as other actors. While some cooperation existed before the pandemic, the changed situation forced Better Work to better consider the existing synergies between different activities and how different units could cooperate to benefit each other. For example, as highlighted before, the Better Work country and global teams, seeing the need, worked on increasing communication between each other. This contributed to a better understanding of the situation on the ground as well as the ability to respond to such changes and implement the needed measures.

475. In the light of the pandemic, the global team started reaching out significantly more and the management practices implemented became less hierarchical, with Better Work Global giving fewer instructions and instead Better Work Global and country teams working together to come up with the best way forward.⁵⁹⁵ Similarly, cooperation with other ILO units and non-ILO projects also increased. It was noted that in **Ethiopia** during COVID-19 an impact assessment which focused on workers and managers involved multiple

⁵⁹⁰ Interview with Connor Boyle.

⁵⁹¹ 2021 Independent Interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021).

⁵⁹² Interview with Connor Boyle.

⁵⁹³ Better Work Stage IV Fourth Annual Donor Report 2021.

⁵⁹⁴ 2021 Independent Interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021).

⁵⁹⁵ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV p.32.

programmes within ILO which included VZF, Better Work and SCORE. Better Work Ethiopia, under the framework of ONEILO also cooperated with other non-ILO projects to ensure better provision of services even though this cooperation was not built into the initial project design.⁵⁹⁶ Better Work and SCORE also exchanged ideas on how to implement virtual activities in **Vietnam**. At **global** level, Better Work and SCORE also cooperated to prepare a specific OSH training module focusing on COVID-19 related issues.⁵⁹⁷

476. Finally, some of the initiatives that have been developed specifically to ensure needed support during the COVID-19 pandemic proved to be very useful and successful and the Better Work teams decided to develop them further after the pandemic. For example, **Better Work Bangladesh** established a Learning Hub as a platform to make it easier for the tripartite constituents to access virtual trainings on COVID-19 and resource management-related topics.⁵⁹⁸

Was BW able to integrate these ideas and good practices to continue benefiting from them post-COVID?

477. The overview of the good practices identified in the light of COVID-19 indicates that while significant challenges were faced, Better Work was also able to use COVID-19 as a learning opportunity. The main good practices that were highlighted during the pandemic are the use of virtual tools and closer cooperation between with other ILO units, non-ILO projects and national constituents. These good practices are being developed further even after the pandemic. It is also important to mention that some of the initiatives that were created as a COVID-19 response are being further developed due to their positive outcomes.

478. As already mentioned, during the pandemic it was realised that some of the Better Work trainings could be delivered using fewer resources and reach more individuals if they are offered online or using virtual tools. Consequently, country programme teams started considering virtual trainings together with their face-to-face activities and some countries even developed online learning strategies. For example, **Better Work Bangladesh** used this opportunity to develop online learning strategies with an increased focus on OSH management systems and social dialogue.⁵⁹⁹ The existing evaluations indicate that virtual advisory and assessment services in Bangladesh are being implemented smoothly despite some initial challenges. After a while as workers and factory managers became comfortable with using technology, the advisory and compliance activities could be handled virtually.⁶⁰⁰ The virtual advisory services were positively received by the stakeholders,⁶⁰¹ which strengthens the argument for the further use of virtual services. The **Better Work Haiti** team also indicated that they would continue providing some of their trainings virtually. The team found such trainings to be very beneficial as they allow the constituents to join the trainings in the virtual space at a time most convenient for them and thus they can reach more individuals.⁶⁰²

479. Another aspect which the Better Work programme was capable of integrating in the light of the pandemic is the tighter communication between the country and global levels of the programme. This remains in place as knowledge sharing takes place relatively often and has changed the way the programme interacts, given that at the global level Better Work has become increasingly collaborative at the country level. The pandemic also facilitated closer communication between the programme and some of the national actors. For example, in **Indonesia**, the Better Work team realised that it is well-positioned to engage with different actors in the supply chain and can now further improve that engagement.⁶⁰³

480. Finally, as already mentioned, some of the activities developed specifically for the COVID-19 pandemic proved to be so successful that they are being developed further outside the scope of Better Work's response to the pandemic. The most visible example is a Learning Hub established by **Better Work Bangladesh**. Through the Hub the programme made training materials on COVID-19 response, human resource management and productivity available for the tripartite constituents. As this platform was widely used and positively perceived by the constituents, Better Work Bangladesh continues to use and improve it. Better Work Bangladesh is planning to expand the Hub to involve trainings on more topics, including working conditions and social dialogue. The initiative seems to have good results and may potentially be applied to other programme countries in the future.⁶⁰⁴ It is also important to mention that some of the work done by the programme at country level continues to remain relevant due to the COVID-19 guidelines which were created. For example,

⁵⁹⁶ ONEILO SIRAYE p.51.

⁵⁹⁷ Interview with the representative of SCORE.

⁵⁹⁸ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021).

⁵⁹⁹ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.20.

⁶⁰⁰ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.22.

⁶⁰¹ Better Work Stage IV Fourth Annual Donor Report 2021.

⁶⁰² Haiti interview p.7.

⁶⁰³ Better Work Stage IV Fourth Annual Donor Report 2021.

⁶⁰⁴ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021).

in **Jordan** Better Work contributed to an agreement that is part of a collective bargaining agreement between the trade union and JGATE. It ensures that employers would have to pay for COVID tests when an employee has to return to their home country.⁶⁰⁵

3. Occupational Health and Safety (OSH)

Occupational safety and health is a very important topic for the Better Work programme. While some prior evaluations touched on the topic, it has not received more systematic, cross-country attention. In particular, the topic of addressing non-compliance lacks a comprehensive review, which the current evaluation explored further.

3.1. How has BW Phase IV focused on OSH in factories?

Which activities and objectives did Phase IV have?

481. Occupational health and safety (OSH) has been an important topic of Better Work activities. In general, the aim of Better Work activities related to OSH has been to improve working conditions for factory employees so that they would face fewer risks for health and safety while at work. Considering the specific activities, the programme included OSH issues in its factory compliance assessments, touched upon OSH-related topics during its trainings and offered advice and support for the factories and relevant actors when tackling the challenges related to OSH issues. However, many different topics can be related to occupational health and safety, including biological hazards, safety hazards, mental health, and even gender-based violence.⁶⁰⁶ The conditions related to OSH are also different in different contexts. Hence, the objectives and activities focusing on OSH during Better Work Phase IV varied depending on the specific topic and region in question. The results from different activities also varied between the country programmes.

Better Work Bangladesh safety committee members engaged on various issues related to OSH, including electrical and structural safety, fire monitoring, use of protective equipment and engineering controls, hygiene measures to prevent spread of viruses, and similar topics. This engagement resulted in some evident improvements. For example, problems with loose electrical wires were eliminated and workers became more aware of important OSH topics.⁶⁰⁷

In **Ethiopia**, the programme, with the support of LABADMIN/OSH officers, aimed to address a gap in mechanisms for ensuring compliance with labour legislation in Ethiopia through various activities. For example, a training curriculum for labour inspectorates, which also included OSH topics, was prepared. The existing evidence points to greater recognition of the importance of health and safety in the workplace due to the implemented activities.⁶⁰⁸

482. The OSH-related activities during Phase IV of the Better Work programme were tailored to the needs of the constituents in each country and planned thinking about the sustainability of their results. Firstly, the country programmes tried to follow a demand-driven approach and take into account the knowledge gaps identified during the compliance assessments as well as requests for trainings and support from the factories. Hence, the focus of the activities implemented, including those related to OSH, tends to shift depending on the priorities in the country. For instance, in spring and summer of 2020, in the light of COVID-19 pandemic, Better Work country teams were prioritising offering support on health and safety issues, coordinating information campaigns and trainings for national constituents, and providing support and political advice for tripartite constituents as well as global buyers in their efforts to develop joint response strategies.⁶⁰⁹ Moreover, an example from **Ethiopia** indicates that since the pandemic the demand for OSH training from factories, especially focusing on hygiene issues, has increased significantly.⁶¹⁰ The programme teams also tried to work more closely with the national stakeholders, including the ministries of labour and departments focusing on OSH, to help them improve their capacities and knowledge on the topic and in that way lead a path towards more sustainable impact of the activities.⁶¹¹

483. While OSH issues have been an important focus of Better Work Phase IV, it seems that the improvement is modest, which calls for reconsideration of OSH activities. A consulted staff member of Better Work Global noted that the programme team was in general not satisfied with OSH activities and their results and too much fluctuation was observed. The team was constantly trying to find the ways to improve them and achieve

⁶⁰⁵ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.20.

⁶⁰⁶ Interview with BW staff.

⁶⁰⁷ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.39.

⁶⁰⁸ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE.

⁶⁰⁹ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV p.17.

⁶¹⁰ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.60.

⁶¹¹ Interview with BW staff.

more significant results. For example, the team was revisiting the possibility to include buyers in advocating for better OSH conditions in the factories.⁶¹²

What were the perceptions of constituents?

484. The activities of Better Work related to occupational health and safety were seen as important and as of high quality by the constituents. For example, government representatives from **Bangladesh** were highly satisfied with the Better Work and RMGP II activities on OSH policy and appreciated Better Work's complex approach to the issue that includes a mixture of activities such as capacity building, awareness raising and tripartite stakeholder interventions.⁶¹³ Factories in **Ethiopia** found the multi-prolonged programme approach focusing on OSH, among other topics, to be very relevant to their needs due to the holistic package the programme offers.⁶¹⁴ The programme can address OSH issues in a way that is most relevant for the constituents because it focuses on sectoral- and national-level issues and stakeholders and has a clear perspective of the existing needs and concerns. For example, in Ethiopia the programme pushed for the revision of the National OSH Directive as it was seen as outdated by many stakeholders.⁶¹⁵

485. While Better Work's role regarding OSH seems to be important for stakeholders, several factors are hindering its relevance. Some stakeholders in general question whether Better Work is the right actor for ensuring and improving labour standards, including OSH regulations, in the sector. An employer representative from **Cambodia**, who was consulted for this evaluation, believed that compliance assessments, including those focusing on OSH, should be implemented countrywide, not only in Better Work factories, and should therefore be handed over to other stakeholders to have greater effect on OSH issues.⁶¹⁶ It also seems that Better Work is facing challenges in pushing the improvement of OSH issues because it is not a national stakeholder. In **Ethiopia** the programme faced challenges in navigating the lengthy approval processes to get approval for updating National OSH Directive. The process became especially challenging due to the government restructuring and state of emergency declared by the government.⁶¹⁷ While these issues would hinder the process for any actor, national stakeholders, such as a governmental institution, would be better equipped to deal with such situations faster.

486. Finally, some stakeholders were questioning the relevance and practicality of some of the OSH conditions Better Work was advocating for, which may indicate that Better Work was not in the best position to focus on OSH regulations. For example, a representative of the employers' association in Cambodia shared that while employers are required to apply a specific lighting measurement according to OSH regulations, in reality, according to the employers' association representative, such lighting is too bright and inefficient as regards energy resources.⁶¹⁸

3.2. Compliance with OSH

What have been the main successes of improving compliance with OSH?

487. Occupational health and safety (OSH) has been an important topic for Better Work and many of its activities focused on the topic. The activities were in general relevant for the national stakeholders and while progress has been slow, some significant improvements can be observed because of Better Work activities.

In **Vietnam**, advisory and training services provided by the Better Work team resulted in a drop of non-compliance in OSH management systems in the factories involved in the programme. During 8 years of the programme (until 2019) non-compliance regarding the existence of a functioning OSH unit in the factories decreased by 20 percentage points.⁶¹⁹ A trade union representative from Vietnam consulted for this evaluation also noted a visible improvement in compliance with OSH regulations.⁶²⁰

According to **Better Work Bangladesh** compliance reports, non-compliance with the requirements for storage of chemicals decreased from 75% to 41%, and non-compliance with the regulations for inventory of hazardous substances decreased from 75% to 42%. The visible improvements are also observed in areas such as awareness on

⁶¹² Interview with BW staff.

⁶¹³ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.18.

⁶¹⁴ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE pp.27-28.

⁶¹⁵ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.80.

⁶¹⁶ Interview with Employer representative - Fashiontext Cambodia.

⁶¹⁷ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p.80.

⁶¹⁸ Interview with the Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia.

⁶¹⁹ 2019 Annual Report Vietnam.

⁶²⁰ Interview with the Bureau for Employers' Activities, VCCI Vietnam.

national labour laws and international labour standards, greater presence and capacity of PCs, and awareness on the importance of compliance among the management.⁶²¹

In **Jordan** Better Work activities contributed to the improvement of several OSH areas. This includes fire prevention and healthcare. In the light of COVID-19, separate spaces for isolation of workers with the virus also appeared.⁶²²

In **Ethiopia**, the Better Work programme reached some of the planned targets for OSH. More specifically, it reached its target of 50,000 workers benefiting from the PICCs and PICCs and OSH committees had a higher ratio of female to male workers than the target. Despite the pandemic the programme also achieved its goals in training labour inspectorates; 28 labour inspectors received initial training on OSH and working conditions.⁶²³ Moreover, the Better Work team, under the framework of ONEILO and in cooperation with other ILO units, focused on conducting thorough assessments and addressing the issues that assessments highlighted. As the assessments were focused on factory-, sectoral- and national-level drivers, the data collected provided the knowledge needed to argue for the revision of the National OSH Directive, which was seen as outdated.⁶²⁴ The OSH-related activities can also be linked to the assessment of environmental concerns as they focus on safe storage and disposal of chemicals and similar issues.⁶²⁵

In **Cambodia** the Better Work team OSH specialist put together an OSH leadership programme for factories. This programme aims to facilitate the cultural shift that is necessary for long-term improvement.⁶²⁶ Moreover, Better Work activities supported the workers so that they would take more responsibility on OSH matters and general improvement of the company culture, which resulted in an improved work culture.⁶²⁷

488. The observed improvements in OSH compliance are linked to different factors that range from specific traits of the programme to specific developments in the industry. For example, in **Cambodia**, the OSH specialist from the national team was cooperating and communicating with the global team to ensure that the national team had a good understanding of the relevant issues and could provide informed advice and support to the factories.⁶²⁸

489. Another important factor contributing to visible improvements can be the high commitment of brands supporting the implementation of different improvements in the factories, including development of internal OSH systems for sustaining compliance.⁶²⁹ In **Jordan**, factories wish to work with Better Work and focus on increased compliance because Better Work is highly regarded by the government and international brands and association with the programme and visible compliance improvement may result in a better reputation for the factories.⁶³⁰ In **Vietnam**, improved compliance and improved conditions in the factories are linked to participation in the Better Work Vietnam programme and availability of open data on compliance.⁶³¹

490. Finally, the pandemic has highlighted the importance of OSH issues in the workplace. Consequently, the factories started prioritising OSH-related topics and concentrated on improving conditions in the factories. This can be observed in **Ethiopia**, where in the light of COVID-19, factories wished to receive support on the development of COVID-related OSH protocols and similar issues.⁶³²

3.3. Non-compliance

What is the scope of non-compliance? Is it increasing/decreasing?

491. As shown by previous country evaluations, as well as the Phase IV impact assessment, non-compliance with proper occupational safety and health conditions remains, despite visible improvements.⁶³³ However, while in general Better Work activities, especially training and support services, are often linked to the improved compliance, assessments themselves are not always effective and may even bring more confusion to the factories. The assessments were criticised by the global brand representative interviewed for the study as

⁶²¹ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.28.

⁶²² Final Internal Evaluation – “Better Work Jordan: Strengthening the Capacity of the Trade Union in Jordan’s Garment Sector” p.3.4

⁶²³ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE pp. 57-58.

⁶²⁴ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p. 63.

⁶²⁵ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE.

⁶²⁶ Interview with BW staff.

⁶²⁷ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.65.

⁶²⁸ Interview with BW staff

⁶²⁹ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation.

⁶³⁰ Interview with Jordan Garments, Accessories & Textiles Exporters’ Association (JGATE).

⁶³¹ 2019 Annual Report Vietnam.

⁶³² Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p. 51.

⁶³³ Forthcoming Phase IV impact assessment, p. 91.

they neglected certain OSH topics, such as fire safety or safety of elevators.⁶³⁴ Factory managers from **Bangladesh** interviewed for this evaluation also criticised Better Work assessments as being difficult to understand. According to them, Better Work did not have a clear checklist for assessments with all the health and safety issues that are being considered and this makes it difficult to understand the results of the assessments.⁶³⁵

492.As mentioned, many different topics can be related to occupational health and safety, including biological hazards, safety hazards, mental health, and even gender-based violence. Hence, as the OSH topic is very broad, non-compliance with the regulations fluctuates greatly and overall significant improvement in non-compliance is slow.⁶³⁶ The scope of non-compliance with OSH issues remains widespread despite some improvements.

According to the **Better Work Bangladesh** annual report 2019 some of the OSH issues are problematic across the factories and most of them fail to ensure compliance. A total of 85% of factories were non-compliant with the regulations related to social benefits, 99% did not have required OSH management systems in place, 96% were non-compliant regarding overtime payments, and 58% did not follow the requirements on wage information and deductions.⁶³⁷ According to 2021 figures, non-compliance rates for some OSH issues remained high. Up to 36% of factories lacked emergency exits, 39% did not have a functioning fire alarm system, and 85% of factories assessed did not meet the requirements for a functional Safety Committee.⁶³⁸

According to the 2019 annual report, in **Vietnam**, 50% of factories did not have sufficient on-site medical facilities and staff, 31% did not have a functioning fire alarm system. A total of 78% of all factories participating in compliance assessments were non-compliance with monthly overtime limits, and 74% were non-compliant with annual overtime limits⁶³⁹.

In **Ethiopia**, the Better Work programme reached some of the planned targets for OSH, such as the milestone of 50m000 workers benefiting from the PICCs, but was behind the target percentage of factories with non-compliance zero-tolerance issues.⁶⁴⁰

In **Cambodia**, around 50% of the factories do not comply with the work standards in terms that they do not manage the risks in the factories and do not ensure safe working environments.⁶⁴¹ A consulted factory manager listed several problems that are common in factories in the country. These include long working hours (10-12 hours and more) and no overtime bonuses.⁶⁴²

In **Jordan**, the factories often fail to comply with OSH regulations related to safety requirements. The safety measures needed are often not in place and the number of doctors and nurses in the factories is lower than required.⁶⁴³

493.Non-compliance on OSH issues was reported in the evaluations of previous periods of the programme as well, which indicates that the problem is persistent. Such persistent widespread non-compliance may be stemming from a limited commitment towards the improvement of OSH conditions. Consulted national stakeholders from **Vietnam** noted that one of the main factors hindering OSH compliance is the attitude of employers to the issue.⁶⁴⁴ The enterprises often have a perception that using protective gear will result in lower productivity, so they are not encouraging their use.⁶⁴⁵ To meet OSH requirements, enterprises should also invest more resources than they wish to invest.⁶⁴⁶ Moreover, there is a lack of incentives to comply with OSH requirements. An interview stakeholder from **Jordan** shared that as there are no strict penalties for non-compliance, some factories may be less motivated to improve the conditions in the factories.⁶⁴⁷ Finally, non-compliance seems to depend on the size of the factories and when the factories joined Better Work programme. For example, evidence from **Jordan** reveals that it is more difficult for smaller factories to improve their compliance as improving OSH conditions often requires more resources than smaller factories

⁶³⁴ Interview with a representative of a global brand

⁶³⁵ Interview with factory managers Bangladesh

⁶³⁶ Interview with BW staff

⁶³⁷ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.45

⁶³⁸ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28 – March 31, 2021), p.28

⁶³⁹ 2019 Annual Report Vietnam

⁶⁴⁰ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE p. 57-58

⁶⁴¹ Interview with the Cambodia Labour Confederation

⁶⁴² Interview with Employer representative - Fashiontex Cambodia

⁶⁴³ Interview with Jordan Garments, Accessories & Textiles Exporters' Association (JGATE)

⁶⁴⁴ Interview with the Bureau for Employers' Activities, VCCI Vietnam

⁶⁴⁵ Interview with the HCMC Confederation of Labour Vietnam

⁶⁴⁶ Interview with the Bureau for Employers' Activities, VCCI Vietnam

⁶⁴⁷ Interview with Jordan Garments, Accessories & Textiles Exporters' Association (JGATE)

actually have.⁶⁴⁸ **Better Work Indonesia** staff also noted that the Better Work factories have a varying level of compliance because the time period they were involved with the programme differed.⁶⁴⁹

How does BW deal with non-compliance? Is this effective?

494. The overview of the compliance with OSH regulations presented above indicates a high level of persistent non-compliance with some issues such as fire alarm systems or compensation for overtime work. However, while the compliance assessments conducted by Better Work allows the programme to indicate the factories with unacceptably poor conditions, the activities the programme implements to address non-compliance are scarce. These activities are usually limited to meetings with relevant stakeholders, facilitation of social dialogue, and awareness raising. For example, the **Nicaragua** Better Work team focuses on facilitating social dialogue involving workers on the main non-compliance issues and supports the factories in preparing the action plan for improvement.⁶⁵⁰ The assessment results usually feed directly to advisory services⁶⁵¹. In **Haiti** the Better Work team focuses on providing impartial advice⁶⁵². **Better Work Vietnam** targeted non-compliance through organising discussions between worker representatives, the management and the focal point in the factory. While this work seems to be impactful, it takes time to see results.⁶⁵³

Better Work **Vietnam** is the first country to implement Better Work's Persistent Non-Compliance Protocol to address non-compliant factories that demonstrate an inability or unwillingness to improve compliance over two full BW cycles. After a factory has been designated as persistently non-compliant it will not be admitted to a new cycle of BW services. BW will provide the Inspectorate with the factory's name and publicly reported non-compliance issues. BW will request the Inspectorate to prioritise the factory for inspection as regulated by national law.⁶⁵⁴

Non-compliance with 4 or more issues in one assessment:
FIRST FORMAL WARNING

Non-compliance with 4 or more issues in two consecutive assessments:
SECOND FORMAL WARNING

Non-compliance with 4 or more issues in three consecutive assessments:
PERSISTANT NON-COMPLIANCE

To support the factory in making improvements after PNC designation, Better Work will convene a meeting with subscribing buyers and national stakeholders. The meeting will focus on identifying ways for the factory to come into compliance on key issues, possibly with assistance from stakeholders and services providers.⁶⁵⁵

495. In other countries, BW has a clear relationship with national authorities. In **Jordan**, BW has an MoU with the Ministry of Labour, establishing a zero-tolerance protocol for severe non-compliance. This enables BW and the Ministry to take action when severe violations of labour law are noted. Additionally, non-compliance is reported in the Global Transparency Portal.⁶⁵⁶ Similarly, a zero-tolerance protocol was designed with the **Egyptian** government recently, but it has not yet been implemented.⁶⁵⁷ In **Cambodia**, the BF office reports persisting non-compliant factories to the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Commerce, who can consider withdrawing their export licence. They noted that the Ministries actively engage with such factories and express zero tolerance for persistent non-compliance.⁶⁵⁸

496. There are several reasons for the lack of measures tackling OSH non-compliance by Better Work. More specifically, the programme may have limited power to enforce the compliance. As noted by a trade union representative from **Cambodia**, participation in Better Work is voluntary, so the programme team has no authority to put pressure on non-compliant factories. Consequently, their activities have to be limited to organising tripartite discussions on OSH topics and raising awareness on important issues.⁶⁵⁹ Better Work

⁶⁴⁸ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.22.

⁶⁴⁹ Interview with factory representatives in Indonesia.

⁶⁵⁰ Interview with BW Nicaragua staff.

⁶⁵¹ Interview with BW staff.

⁶⁵² Interview with BW Haiti staff.

⁶⁵³ Interview with BW Vietnam staff.

⁶⁵⁴ https://betterwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/PNC_Guidance.pdf.

⁶⁵⁵ https://betterwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/PNC_Guidance.pdf

⁶⁵⁶ Interview with BW Jordan staff.

⁶⁵⁷ Interview with BW Egypt staff.

⁶⁵⁸ Interview with BF Cambodia staff.

⁶⁵⁹ Interview with the Cambodian Federation of Independent Trade Union (CFITU).

also may not want to implement harsh measures as they are dependent on the factories for their existence. The Better Work team from **Nicaragua** noted that as their programme is small, they do not have an option to, for example, kick out the non-compliant factories. Instead, they can only focus on awareness raising and rely on buyers to pressure the factories to be more compliant.⁶⁶⁰ The **Haiti** team explained that a lack of enforcement by the national authorities also hinders compliance. For example, to their knowledge no non-compliant factory has ever received a fine.⁶⁶¹ Lastly, the **Vietnam** BW office mentioned that many factories simply lack knowledge about compliance and national legislation.⁶⁶²

497. There are several ways that the activities of the Better Work to tackle non-compliance could be improved. As noted by a trade union representative from **Cambodia**, Better Work should work more closely with the buyers to address non-compliance issues.⁶⁶³ In countries where the Better Work programme is voluntary the programme team may have limited influence, but the factories are more likely to take the needed measures to improve conditions if they feel pressure from buyers. An interviewed Better Work Global staff also noted that as OSH is a very broad issue including many different topics, the programme needs to have a more systematic approach to the issue.⁶⁶⁴

4. Industrial relations and social dialogue

Strengthening social dialogue and tripartism are a key objective of the BW programme, but also of ILO in general and are an important element supporting sustainability. During Phase IV, BW increased support to social dialogue, focusing (in some countries) specifically on the role and strength of trade unions, in light of freedom of association. This evaluation provides insights on the achievements and challenges towards social dialogue and the position of trade unions in particular.

4.1. Social dialogue and tripartism

What have been the main achievements to enhance social dialogue at the governance levels?

498. The Better Work strategy and activities place a strong emphasis on establishing social dialogue at the factory level, for example through the establishment of PICCs. However, to ensure broader impact of Better Work in the garment sector, beyond the participating factories, social dialogue should expand beyond the factory level. Namely, enhancing the roles of employer organisations and trade unions in policymaking and sectoral agreements ensures that the results of Better Work can be sustained over a longer period of time. Unionisation and social dialogue have been recognised as crucial to support compliance in the sector.⁶⁶⁵

499. Interviews with Better Work staff at country level pointed at different levels of increased social dialogue over the past 5 years. **Jordan**, **Bangladesh**, and **Indonesia** have witnessed clear examples of increased participation of social partners at the sectoral and national level, influencing working conditions and developments in the garment sector.

In **Jordan**, social dialogue at the sectoral level resulted in the first Collective Bargaining Agreement in 2013, on avoiding discrimination. Since then, various additional CBAs have been negotiated, demonstrating the increasing role of social partners in determining working conditions in the garment sector.

In **Indonesia**, tripartite constituents used Better Work as a platform to discuss labour and industrial relations challenges in the sector. After raising this issue, constituents decided to establish a separate permanent tripartite body, informally called the “garment dialogue forum”. The first meeting in September 2019 focused on the implications of new digitalisation and Industry 4.0 for the Indonesian garment sector and how to leverage the services of BWI and other initiatives to improve labour conditions further. BWI supports the logistics of this process but has decided to take a back-seat role on the substance and let the constituents manage it independently.⁶⁶⁶

In May 2013, **Bangladesh** set up a high-level National Tripartite Committee (NTC) to monitor the implementation of a National Tripartite Plan of Action (NTPA) to ensure fire safety and structural integrity in the ready-made garment (RMG) sector. The committee, comprised of key RMG and knitwear industry stakeholders including government agencies, academic institution, employers’ organisations, and trade unions, has met three times since 2017 based on

⁶⁶⁰ Interview with BW Nicaragua staff.

⁶⁶¹ Interview with BW Haiti staff.

⁶⁶² Interview with BW Vietnam staff.

⁶⁶³ Interview with the Cambodia Labour Confederation.

⁶⁶⁴ Interview with BW staff.

⁶⁶⁵ Advancing Decent Work and Inclusive Industrialisation in Ethiopia – ONEILO SIRAYE. P.80.

⁶⁶⁶ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV.

document review. In addition, RMGP II also established a tripartite programme steering committee which has met twice since 2017.⁶⁶⁷

500. Progress on sectoral and national-level social dialogue has been strongest in the countries where forms of association are permitted by law and where Better Work has been able to demonstrate the importance of social dialogue to improve working conditions.⁶⁶⁸

501. The ITUC noted in particular that Better Work enabled opportunities for dialogue that were not possible before.⁶⁶⁹ For example, in **Cambodia**, the BFC programme has been able to create a safe space to discuss topics such as sexual harassment, which employers and the government find difficult to talk about.⁶⁷⁰

502. Both employers' and workers' organisations in **Cambodia** have grown from a virtually zero base in the early 1990s to increasingly more representative organisations with a progressively greater capacity to advance and protect the interests of their members. Membership of the Cambodian Federation of Employers and Business Associations (CAMFEBA) is steadily increasing and its capacity to analyse and to play a constructive and influential role in advocating policy positions on the basis of research and facts has been strengthened.⁶⁷¹

What were the main challenges to improving social dialogue?

503. While some of the BW countries have experienced increased social dialogue at the national level, the evaluation interviews also found clear examples where factory-level dialogue has not yet spread to sectoral and national level.

504. There are a variety of barriers that hinder the participation of social partners in policy discussions and debate on working conditions. Firstly, stakeholders interviewed for the Mid-Term Evaluation of Phase IV noted that Better Work country teams themselves are not sufficiently capable of engaging in policy dialogue or supporting social dialogue.⁶⁷² In this regard, an interviewed ILO staff member pointed out that ILO experts on social dialogue and association are often not consulted or engaged in discussions on enhancing social dialogue.⁶⁷³ Stronger collaboration between Better Work and ILO could provide opportunities for BW to benefit from the technical expertise of ILO staff.

505. Secondly, interviewed BW staff noted that laws and policies of the countries hinder the meaningful establishment and involvement of trade unions. In countries without freedom of association, there is no opportunity yet for BW staff to build capacity of worker representatives beyond the factory level. This is further discussed in 4.2.

506. In countries with (a degree of) freedom of association, examples were provided of policies and laws adopted without consultation with social partners. For example, the Indonesian Omnibus law was adopted without a clear consultation process with social partners by the Indonesian government. The BWI team has encouraged tripartite discussion of the bill, but due to its complexity and a lack of understanding about the topics covered in the bill, the BWI constituents preferred to wait and see the impact of the bill. The lack of a clear consultation process with social partners by the Indonesian government is generating higher levels of mistrust and risks fragmenting the union movement.⁶⁷⁴

507. Despite progress made to strengthen the capacities of social partners, the overall state of industrial relations in Cambodia's garment sector remains highly conflictual. BFC reports that there is limited trust at the sectoral and factory level between employers and trade unions. Unfair labour practices by both employers and trade unions are commonplace in the industry. At the same time, trade unions have employed unhelpful IR practices, including extortion, intimidation, falsified membership records and triggering strikes at factories in which they have no members.⁶⁷⁵

⁶⁶⁷ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation of RMGP II and BWB and its affiliated projects, September 2020, p.21.

⁶⁶⁸ Interview with BW staff.

⁶⁶⁹ Interview with an ITUC representative.

⁶⁷⁰ Mid-Term Cluster Evaluation of Better Factories Cambodia, Better Work Indonesia, and Better Work Vietnam programmes, p.64.

⁶⁷¹ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Factories Cambodia, p.82.

⁶⁷² Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV p.35.

⁶⁷³ Interview with ILO staff.

⁶⁷⁴ Mid-Term Cluster Evaluation of Better Factories Cambodia, Better Work Indonesia, and Better Work Vietnam programmes, p.42.

⁶⁷⁵ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Factories Cambodia, p.82.

4.2. The role of trade unions

What progress was made to enhance the capacity of the trade unions to participate in social dialogue?

508.As part of the BW programme, some activities and interventions of BW also targeted national- and sectoral-level stakeholders. For example, trainings for trade union staff were conducted in most countries.

In **Jordan**, the BW programme was able to enhance the capacity of the JTGCU to promote social dialogue at the enterprise and industrial zone level and provided support to address the concerns of workers and supervisors. In collaboration with the Union, the BW team conducted a comprehensive induction programme to support bipartite dialogues, delivering trainings, and resolving grievances in factories.

In addition, the BW team focused on the capacity of the JTGCU to engage in collective bargaining. The development of the 2019 CBA was participatory in consultation with workers and committees, which had never happened before.⁶⁷⁶

509.BW **Bangladesh** and the ILO have begun expanding training for TU leaders to facilitate their engagement in social dialogue. Additionally, BW offered opportunities for trade unions to engage in dialogue, for example through the BW Advisory Committee and through improved communication with the national constituents regarding BWG and ILO's efforts to advocate for responsible purchasing practices.⁶⁷⁷

510.In **Cambodia**, clear examples were provided of how the activities of Better Factories resulted in the enhanced capacity of trade unions to engage in enhancing national-level social dialogue. A trade union representative noted that⁶⁷⁸:

- "Before, the unions were not together as one voice. Now we have more compromised agents for the national interests.
- Trade Unions try to mobilise funds and build capacity to strengthen capacity in order to challenge."

511.A **Vietnamese** interview pointed out that BW supports triple party dialogue between MOLISA, VCCI, VGCL, which contributes directly to mutual understanding, to more consensus towards various activities, to more harmonic meetings between the parties, and to policy dialogue. Constituents are satisfied with these developments.⁶⁷⁹

512.Additionally, through social dialogue facilitated by BW **Indonesia**, there is now a joint commitment between Trade Unions Federations in Indonesia, APINDO, API and APRISINDO to sustain their collaboration after the pandemic, through promotion and implementation of social dialogue based on good faith and to unveil more innovative, supportive solutions and various policies / strategies / practices to deal with the pandemic.⁶⁸⁰

What progress was made to introduce and secure Freedom of Association?

513.An important challenge faced by the BW programme, hindering the establishment of meaningful social dialogue, is the limited Freedom of Association allowing trade unions to exist. A key barrier to support to trade unions is the lack of Freedom of Association in various countries. While the majority of BW countries ratified the Convention on Freedom of Association, this has not always led to concrete improvement in the position of trade unions (e.g. in Egypt, where ratification has not led to real Freedom of Association).

Table 9. Ratifications of ILO Convention C087 – Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise

Ratified the Convention	Did not ratify the Convention
Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Egypt, Haiti, Indonesia, Nicaragua,	Jordan, Vietnam

Source: ILO NormLex.

514.Consolidating on previous trade agreements, including the European Union–Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), the

⁶⁷⁶ Final Internal Evaluation – "Better Work Jordan: Strengthening the Capacity of the Trade Union in Jordan's Garment Sector" p.21.

⁶⁷⁷ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.34.

⁶⁷⁸ Interview with Cambodia Labour Confederation.

⁶⁷⁹ Interview with the HCMC Confederation of Labour, Vietnam.

⁶⁸⁰ Mid-Term Cluster Evaluation of Better Factories Cambodia, Better Work Indonesia, and Better Work Vietnam programmes, p.42.

Vietnamese National Assembly ratified the ILO Convention 98 on Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention in June 2019.⁶⁸¹

515. Better Work **Egypt** is still in its infancy and was officially launched in March 2020 (after a pilot phase in 2017-2019). However, the BW pilot phase (2017-2019) has already contributed to the government's revision of the trade union legislation, as ILO made this a pre-condition for the establishment of a BW country programme. This demonstrates a leverage effect of the close collaboration between Better Work and other ILO units at the policy level.⁶⁸²

516. In **Cambodia**, an interviewed stakeholder considered that the right of collective bargaining is difficult to exercise in practice, and some local unions still face discrimination at some of the compliance factories. Usually, non-complying factories do not meet the responsibilities of the Labour Law.⁶⁸³

What challenges hindered the improvement of trade union's participation in social dialogue?

517. Despite the efforts of the BW country teams, numerous challenges continue to hinder trade unions' ability to meaningfully participate in social dialogue.

518. As pointed out by some BW country teams in previous evaluations, the promotion of trade union formation is beyond the scope of the BW programme.⁶⁸⁴ Similarly, an ILO staff member pointed out that the BW mandate includes social dialogue at factory level, but that national-level social dialogue should be addressed and promoted in close cooperation with ILO's technical experts on the topic.⁶⁸⁵

519. As a result of this limited focus on trade union formation beyond the factories, a country-level BW evaluation found that some Trade Unions still feel they are not fully involved in the programme, are marginalised within the factory and that the programme is not proactive in its approach to dealing with this issue.⁶⁸⁶ A donor perceived that BW works predominantly with governments and with employers, while their weakest link is working with the unions. They need to improve their current strategy and methods working with those unions.⁶⁸⁷

520. Country-level circumstances also hinder trade union engagement in social dialogue. Despite the 20-years of implementation of Better Factories **Cambodia**, the trade union movement remains fragmented, divided by political affiliations, personality, and tactical differences. The fragmentation of unions overall is a significant obstacle in trade union efforts work collaboratively on wage and policy matters, and also creates confusion and conflicts at factory level.⁶⁸⁸ Interviewed stakeholders considered the main challenges to participation in social dialogue for Cambodian Trade Unions as follows:

- Many union activists were threatened and pressured, and many union workers were arrested and jailed.
- Most of the unions are under the government and therefore they are not independent.
- Lack of harmonisation of ideas and use of "one voice" by workers in trade unions
- Limited knowledge of the unions on labour rights, and lack of technical skills necessary to engage effectively in social dialogues.^{689 690}

521. Furthermore, the prior evaluation of BW **Bangladesh** found that representatives of several TU federations represented in the National Coordination Committee for Workers Education (NCCWE) and the Workers' Resource Centre do not perceive that BWB is firmly supporting the right to organise. While there is evidence to the contrary from the evaluation's factory interviews, the TU representatives construe BWB's effort as promoting PCs over TUs.⁶⁹¹

⁶⁸¹ 2019 Annual Report Vietnam.

⁶⁸² Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV, p.22.

⁶⁸³ Interview with Employer representative – Fashiontext, Cambodia.

⁶⁸⁴ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.24.

⁶⁸⁵ Interview with ILO staff.

⁶⁸⁶ Mid-Term Cluster Evaluation of Better Factories Cambodia, Better Work Indonesia, and Better Work Vietnam programmes, p.25.

⁶⁸⁷ Interview with a BW donor.

⁶⁸⁸ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Factories Cambodia, p.82.

⁶⁸⁹ Interview with the Cambodia Labour Confederation.

⁶⁹⁰ Interview with the Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia.

⁶⁹¹ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.16.

5. Sustainability

522. The Better Work programme has been in place for many years (starting with Better Factories in Cambodia in 2001), meaning that there is an interest to explore exit strategies and assess to what extent the programme has created sufficient capacity and willingness among constituents to move forward without Better Work support. The current evaluation assessed the current sustainability strategies in place as well as the main challenges to sustainability.

523. The concept of “sustainability” as described in the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria assesses whether the benefits created by the intervention are likely to last, especially when the project has completed.⁶⁹² This requires a review of the main social, economic, environmental, financial, and institutional capacities of affected systems to maintain the achievements of the programme.

5.1. What plans are in place at BW HQ and country offices to ensure sustainability?

How do Better Work staff and constituents understand the sustainability of Better Work?

524. In 2019, the Better Work staff enhanced its focus on the sustainability of Better Work, taking into consideration the maturity of the programme in some of the countries (e.g. Cambodia where the programme has been active since 2001). The BW staff prepared a **Guidance Paper on Sustainability**, which included the following understanding of the concept:

525. *“Governments, employers and workers sustain and further improve compliance with labour law and core labour standards through enforcement and industrial relations, supported by responsible business practices in the supply chain and other activities that promote these outcomes.”*⁶⁹³

526. The Guidance Paper further states that *“we will develop a strategy with our partners where they provide long-term solutions to sustain compliance in the industry with eventually a minimal or no role for our programmes. That is our sustainability strategy.”*⁶⁹⁴

527. Better Work staff noted that the overall global framework for sustainability was developed in a cooperative manner across the BW countries. This ensures that we have a similar understanding of the concept of sustainability (especially since some BW staff noticed that sustainability was understood differently across the BW countries). However, since each country is different in terms of their context and needs to enhance sustainability, each country subsequently initiated the development of their individual roadmap for sustainability.⁶⁹⁵

528. The sustainability of the programme requires the increased involvement and capacity of various stakeholders. Regarding factory-level activities and impact, the evaluation of BW **Bangladesh** describes that *“sustainability is envisioned as the increased and sustained commitment and capacity of the enterprises themselves to internalise and operationalise a culture of decent work standards.”*⁶⁹⁶ There is no plan to graduate factories out of BWB once they reach a high level of compliance, but after the programme eventually exits, national entities and the industry as well as buyers are expected to reinforce and sustain the standards attained.⁶⁹⁷ In Cambodia, BW has worked with its partners on a Joint Plan for Sustainable Compliance among constituents and buyers/brands.⁶⁹⁸

529. Therefore, long-term sustainability requires enhanced capacity of governments to guide industry compliance with labour standards and national laws. The transition in **Bangladesh** to the “ONEILO” approach would support the continuous capacity building of the government.⁶⁹⁹ As noted by one of BW’s donors, the implementation of macro-level activities, including capacity building of government actors, is a crucial element to enhance impact and sustainability of BW. The donor considers that, in the next phase, more attention should be paid to macro-level, rather than factory-level activities and to training the private and public sector to take over compliance assessments and advisory services.⁷⁰⁰ BW staff provide similar insights, stating that Phase V should focus on identifying which institutions should take over when BW exits the

⁶⁹² <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

⁶⁹³ Guidance Note sustainability version 30 April 2019 (footnote from the BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.77).

⁶⁹⁴ Guidance Note sustainability.

⁶⁹⁵ Inception Stage Interview with Better Work Vietnam.

⁶⁹⁶ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.31.

⁶⁹⁷ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.32.

⁶⁹⁸ Information received from BFC staff.

⁶⁹⁹ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.31.

⁷⁰⁰ Interview with a BW donor.

countries.⁷⁰¹ An interviewed **Vietnamese** employer representative also stated that *"BW should transfer activities to domestic partners to ensure the sustainability of the project."*⁷⁰²

530. Similarly, Better Work staff expressed that *"our motive is to be a catalyst for stronger national institutions and governments, not to be an alternative."* The next phase (Phase V) is planned to increase attention to sustainability even more. This requires an honest assessment by national institutions of their capacity, strategies and milestones, and future support needed.⁷⁰³

What plans and tools are used to guarantee sustainability? What do these plans include?

531. Linked to the enhanced focus on sustainability at the global level, Phase IV has also witnessed increased attention to sustainability at national level. In many of the countries, examples of sustainability strategies were found.

BW Indonesia created its 'Roadmap to Sustainability' document.⁷⁰⁴ By the end of phase II, BWI had laid much of the groundwork for the establishment of a national institution to deliver the programme, and an independent foundation to take on BW services was launched in early 2017.⁷⁰⁵

BW Vietnam has an outcome centred on sustainability which does indicate an appreciation of the importance of sustainability and the programme attempts to address it through a sustainability lens. BW has strengthened its operational sustainability through enhancing and diversifying the skill sets of its staff. During phase II it increased national partner ownership and capacity to contribute to the delivery of programme components and has invested in a sustainability scoping study to guide the model in the current phase.⁷⁰⁶

532. BW staff also pointed out that there was a plan to develop sustainability strategies in each country during Phase IV, but this was not achieved due to COVID-19, and due to the fact that conversations with constituents on BW sustainability had not yet properly taken place everywhere.⁷⁰⁷

533. Several examples were found of activities focusing specifically on enhancing sustainability through enhanced capacity of constituents to take responsibility for current BW activities.

In **Jordan**, BW signed an MoU with the Jordanian MoL to ensure the continuity of their activities with the inspection department and to counter the issue of high turnover of ministers. The secondment programme with the MoL is thorough and includes accompanying labour inspectors on factory visits and evaluating their performance. Labour inspectors' mentality related to the inspection, and that of their department as whole, is transitioning from a simple penalty system toward a mechanism to provide advice and support to factories. This is of particular importance for sustainability. The change in the mindset of labour inspectors regarding their role and their influence on factories increased the level of trust between MoL and factories, which is an important element in promoting sound industrial relations.⁷⁰⁸

The approach to sustainability by **BW Indonesia** by developing the (YKK) Foundation has been innovative and demonstrates an understanding by BW programme Management in-country, regionally, and at HQ that sustainability must be tailored to the national context. In this respect the Foundation approach can be viewed as good practice insofar as it focuses stakeholder attention on the issue and has driven much discussion on how sustainability might be achieved.⁷⁰⁹

The **BF Cambodia** programme itself is encouraging sustainability partly through a shift from direct compliance support to a more systemic change, by supporting the national garment sector through an increased focus on staff professional development of constituents. This should enhance their capacity to contribute to sustainable change (including but not exclusively compliance) in Cambodia's garment sector.⁷¹⁰

534. Besides the enhanced focus on capacity-building activities during Phase IV, several other initiatives were found that can promote long-term sustainability.

⁷⁰¹ Interview with BW staff.

⁷⁰² Interview with the Bureau for Employers' Activities, VCCI Vietnam.

⁷⁰³ Interview with BW staff.

⁷⁰⁴ BFC_BWI_BWV Mid-Term Evaluation, p.76.

⁷⁰⁵ BWV BWI Phase II Final Cluster Evaluation, p.39.

⁷⁰⁶ BFC_BWI_BWV Mid-Term Evaluation, p.76.

⁷⁰⁷ Interview with BW staff.

⁷⁰⁸ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.28.

⁷⁰⁹ BFC_BWI_BWV Mid-Term Evaluation, p.72.

⁷¹⁰ BFC_BWI_BWV Mid-Term Evaluation, p.73.

The **Indonesian** Better Work Foundation (YKK) was established in 2017 and has a mandate to improve working conditions in the garment and other sectors by providing core services (assessment, advisory services, and training) on behalf of BWI. The establishment of the Foundation promotes ownership of the programme to the tripartite constituents. This, in turn, is being used to encourage, promote, and support the national authorities to take over those core services and allow BW – over time – to withdraw most of its support.⁷¹¹

Better Work **Bangladesh** intends to use the RMG Learning Hub as central focus of its sustainability strategy. Its longer-term ambition is to build capacity among the tripartite stakeholders on a wide range of social and labour compliance issues. The Training of Trainers approach strengthens sustainability as it aims to ensure that best practices on training and learning are institutionalised by the stakeholders. Setting milestone targets for application of training by Learning Hub participants and monitoring the application could become a useful element of BWB's sustainability plan.⁷¹²

535. Capacity-building initiatives are not only targeted at national constituents, but also at buyers. Namely, long-term sustainability of Better Work's results is also affected by the extent to which buyers continue monitoring compliance of factories and promoting improvement of working conditions. The BW Academy, a training programme for compliance officers of brands and retailers aimed at building their skills on ILS, is an important tool to continuously build the capacity of buyers to engage in dialogue with factories about working conditions and perceive the benefits of workers' well-being on productivity and competitiveness of both factories and buyers themselves. Buyer representatives interviewed for the interim evaluation of BW Bangladesh spoke highly of the BW Academy training.⁷¹³

5.2. Barriers to sustainability

What are the main barriers preventing sustainability?

536. The vast majority of interviewed BW staff and constituents believe that BW is currently not yet sufficiently sustainable to leave the programme countries. The exit of Better Work from Lesotho has provided clear evidence that the positive results created by BW were not maintained and a regression of working conditions occurred after the exit of BW.⁷¹⁴ A variety of challenges to sustainability were mentioned in previous interviews and during the current evaluation interviews.

537. The main barrier noted by interviewed stakeholders and BW staff is the **lack of ability** (capacity, willingness, trust, ownership, etc.) of national constituents to take over the factory-level activities currently implemented by BW, despite the dominant view that governments (labour inspectorates) should take over these activities.

538. Political will and ownership are critical factors in sustaining BWV's long-term impact and sustainability. While the evaluation has found many positive examples, there are also signs of limited ownership and commitment. In **Indonesia**, the 2021 evaluation of BW found that a genuine buy-in and commitment to the Foundation from some stakeholders is lacking. Limited signs of ownership of BW **Vietnam** were also found during the same evaluation. The mid-term evaluation in **Cambodia** noted that there are few national bodies that appear willing to take ownership of certain aspects of programme delivery such as audits and inspections even in the medium term.⁷¹⁵ The evaluation of the three countries concluded that *"to a certain extent the BW programme has been a victim of its own success with many national agencies and authorities now recognising the benefits of working with ILO and the BW programme."*⁷¹⁶

539. Better Work staff noted that *"there is a danger that we may be relied on too much"* instead of building the capacity and motivation of national institutions to take over eventually.⁷¹⁷ For example, the interim evaluation of Better Work **Jordan**, Phase III, found that labour inspectors started relying on BWJ to manage the inspection of the garment sector and focused their resources on other sectors.⁷¹⁸ The BW Phase IV Mid-Term Evaluation concluded that *"Better Work may remain a quasi-permanent institution, as neither government nor non-government institutions are in a position or willing to take over."*⁷¹⁹

⁷¹¹ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.70.

⁷¹² 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.32.

⁷¹³ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.32.

⁷¹⁴ Interview with Better Work staff.

⁷¹⁵ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.73.

⁷¹⁶ BFC_BWI_BWV mid-term evaluation, p.76.

⁷¹⁷ Interview with BW staff.

⁷¹⁸ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.23.

⁷¹⁹ BWG Phase IV p.39.

540. A BW staff member pointed out that BW should adjust its services to focus more on sustainable outcomes, rather than providing only factory-level support.⁷²⁰ The evaluation of Better Work **Jordan** Phase II made an important observation in this regard: *“Continued training, advisory services and audits may not necessarily lead to sustained improvements within an industry without addressing Decent Work objectives at the national level, including promotion of freedom of association and collective bargaining and a common minimum wage for all workers. At a certain level working toward the development of a Decent Work “oasis” within a single industry is likely not to achieve more positive outcomes without addressing policy at the national level”*.⁷²¹
541. Besides enhancing national capacity, interviewed BW staff noted that **a takeover by national institutions requires that institutions and the quality of their services are trusted** by all stakeholders, in particular the global buyers. In most countries, this is not yet the case.⁷²² In **Jordan**, for example, the interim evaluation noted that enhancing the credibility of the institution responsible for assessments in the future is a key step to take in terms of sustainability.⁷²³ A donor also noted that there is currently no other national institution in the programme countries that has the same reputation and trust as Better Work/ILO.⁷²⁴
542. Another issue, highlighted by the Jordanian evaluation, is the high turnover within the Jordanian government and that of the reliance of stakeholders on BWJ. In regard to turnover, BWJ is required to discuss the programme, its vision and its impact over and over again, at every change within the GOJ. Besides consuming time and human resources to build trust again, the new personnel may have conflicting views and hinder the sustainability of compliance procedures.⁷²⁵
543. **The design of Better Work** is in its essence focused on factory-level support and assessments, and its impact on the garment sector nationwide, and social dialogue at national level is therefore more limited compared to other ILO programmes. Therefore, such an adjustment also requires a reconsideration of the essence of Better Work, focusing on national capacities. An interviewee from **Bangladesh** noted that *“Better Work Bangladesh has been a project approach, which cannot be run for a longer period. There should be an independent committee formed by the Better Work Bangladesh, which will be comprised of all the representatives from different quarters, such as workers, employers, buyers, government officials, etc. This will help Better Work Bangladesh to get a permanent shape and to continue its good impacts over the industries, rather than just being a temporary project-based initiative.”*⁷²⁶ In the strategy for the next phase, BWB plans to hand over systematically many of its services to these actors in the market, taking on more of a role of convener.⁷²⁷
544. Another BW staff member suggested that BW should engage national stakeholders more in factory-level activities to prepare for a handover. Currently, the staff member perceives that BW is conducting factory-level activities too much themselves, without engagement of national partners or constituents. This took a lot of resources and left BW with insufficient resources to focus on institutional capacity.⁷²⁸ However, another BW staff member points out that enterprises have become very dependent on BW, and perceive a resistance to change BW's role. A change in BW's approach would have to be communicated and designed carefully and in collaboration with partners.⁷²⁹
545. Additionally, some donors noted that the exit strategy in many of the mature programme countries is not completely clear.⁷³⁰ In fact, BW staff noted that not all countries currently have a comprehensive sustainability approach. For example, the evaluation of Better Work **Bangladesh** found that *“that it was too soon for the BWB to develop a comprehensive exit strategy.”*⁷³¹
546. Both buyers and Better Work staff perceive that Better Work and ILO in general play a crucial role in the programme countries. For example, COVID-19, volatile markets and low living and working standards of garment sector workers have shown that BW is currently indispensable. Many challenges, such as gender equality, are being addressed but they are far from resolved. Some interviewees perceive that **ILO – as a UN**

⁷²⁰ Interview with BW staff.

⁷²¹ BWJ Phase II Final Evaluation, p.11.

⁷²² Mid-term Evaluation of Better Work Global – Phase IV p. 39.

⁷²³ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.35.

⁷²⁴ Interview with a BW donor.

⁷²⁵ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.28.

⁷²⁶ Interview with an employer organisation from Bangladesh.

⁷²⁷ Interview with BW staff.

⁷²⁸ Interview with BW staff.

⁷²⁹ Interview with BW staff.

⁷³⁰ Interview with a BW donor

⁷³¹ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.viii.

agency – has the obligation to continue supporting the workers and factories until the moment that labour inspectorates and other actors are able to take over this work.⁷³²

What have BW staff done to address these barriers?

547. Given that the main barriers to sustainability all link to the capacity, motivation, and trustworthiness of national institutions, approaches to enhance sustainability should include an enhanced focus on the main national and sectoral institutions. This is not a new finding, as this recognition has led to the joint development of the 2019 Guidance Paper on Sustainability.

548. BW staff explained that Phase IV focused on piloting initiatives to work more with constituents and build their capacity to take over some tasks and roles from the Better Work programme.⁷³³ BW offices have developed strategies and approaches to work with governments on factory-level services, but such approaches differ by country. Capacity building of national institutions, and strengthening partnerships with such institutions, has received a stronger focus during Phase IV.⁷³⁴ An interviewed constituent in **Cambodia** also recognised the strong focus on capacity building during this phase.⁷³⁵ The interim evaluation of BW **Bangladesh** found that the current phase included various initiatives to promote sustainability, predominantly through capacity building of the national constituents and the brands.⁷³⁶

549. While preliminary steps have been taken by BW during Phase IV, interviewed BW staff indicate that Phase V will incorporate more clearly the element of sustainability. It will pay attention to the question of “who can take over” at national level, should BW exit the country. This means a lower allocation of resources to the factory-level activities and stronger focus on institutional activities. However, BW staff pointed out that institutional capacity building is not a mandate of BW only but requires involvement of other ILO units and departments as well.⁷³⁷ A non-BW staff member of ILO pointed out that more effort should be made to integrate BW into ILO and ensure that relevant units of ILO are consulted and involved in efforts to enhance social dialogue and institutional capacity.⁷³⁸

5.3. To what extent do Better Work constituents and stakeholders engage in collaboration and mutual learning to support each other?

550. The current evaluation has found various examples of stakeholder collaboration for the purpose of mutual learning and capacity building, which can form an important enabler of sustainability.

BW Jordan has created a platform of dialogue where even competitors meet to discuss and collaborate on compliance. BWJ has contributed to raising the awareness of stakeholders about the benefits of compliance for the garment sector in Jordan, in general, through their capacity-building efforts. The dialogue between stakeholders is now perceived as a need that should be maintained. The communication between stakeholders is an established way of working, thus ensuring its continuity regardless of BWJ's platform. If BWJ does not maintain their efforts, the dialogue could change shape, but it would not be lost.⁷³⁹

The “convening power” of BF **Cambodia** was seen as a vital factor in its value to buyers, particularly in areas such as collective action underway to address the worker transportation crisis and convening of the highly-valued international and local buyers’ forums. The buyer representatives noted that if BFC was to phase out of Cambodia in the foreseeable future, they would have no option but to step up their own internal compliance efforts.⁷⁴⁰

551. Exchange also takes place between BW offices of different countries. The CTAs have a platform and different working group platforms to share experiences on best practices and challenges faced. CTAs also have weekly calls with global representative to share experiences and to promote mutual learning.⁷⁴¹ Although countries face specific challenges and have different contexts and needs regarding the BW programme, CTAs notice a clear advantage of exchange between countries. For example, newer programmes may try a certain approach that was already tested and deemed ineffective in another country.

⁷³² Interview with a representative of a global buyer, and with a BW staff member.

⁷³³ Interview with BW staff.

⁷³⁴ Interview with BW staff.

⁷³⁵ Interview with the Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia.

⁷³⁶ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28 March 31, 2021), p.32.

⁷³⁷ Interview with BW staff.

⁷³⁸ Interview with ILO staff.

⁷³⁹ Independent Interim Evaluation BW Phase III in Jordan, p.29.

⁷⁴⁰ Mid-term Evaluation of Better Factories Cambodia (BFC) p.58.

⁷⁴¹ Interviews with various CTAs.

552. A few examples were found of exchange between constituents of the BW programme countries. Interviewed CTAs noted different levels of interest for such exchange. In some countries, a willingness for peer learning was mentioned, while in others the constituents have limited interest, for example due to the fear of being perceived as “worse”.⁷⁴² Therefore, the examples are rather sporadic and no systematic approach for such exchange exists.

In, 2018 BW **Bangladesh** sent a group of employer representatives to **Vietnam** to learn about the Better Work Vietnam (BWV) programme experiences, including BWV lessons learnt regarding the positive impact of effective social dialogue on business.⁷⁴³

The success of GEAR in **Bangladesh** also prompted interest from Better Work **Vietnam**, and Bangladesh IFC staff were requested to provide guidance on the programme to BWV officers where the programme has been adapted throughout 2019-2020. GEAR is now being offered as a training by Better Work Vietnam.⁷⁴⁴

553. BW staff pointed out that the current phase has not focused on creating space for countries to exchange, which makes this aspect of BW weaker compared to other elements. Interest in such exchange has only been brought up by countries in recent years.⁷⁴⁵

554. The analysis of other parts of this evaluation suggests that a possible lack of exchange between the countries can also be caused by their limited capacity and concrete involvement in the BW activities. As the focus on institutional capacity and ownership of BW by constituents increases, there may also be a growing space for constituents to engage across countries on their experiences of taking over BW activities.

⁷⁴² Interviews with various CTAs.

⁷⁴³ Cluster Independent Mid-term Evaluation Report: RMGP II and BWB and Affiliated Projects, p.46.

⁷⁴⁴ 2021 Independent interim Evaluation – Better Work Phase II in Bangladesh (evaluation fieldwork dates – February 28–March 31, 2021), p.27.

⁷⁴⁵ Interview with BW staff.

► Annex 2. Achievement of outputs and outcomes during Better Work Phase IV

Table 10. Targets and values for harmonised indicators for all analysed countries (2022)

Indicator (targets and mid-year values for 2022)		Bangladesh	Cambodia	Egypt	Ethiopia	Haiti	Indonesia	Jordan	Nicaragua	Vietnam
Number of workers in the programme	Target	1,200,000	615,000	55,000	60,000	60,000	380,000	65,000	40	750,000
	Actual	1,062,168	615,035	54,119	54,804	53,634	437,128	68,455	39,401	675,202
Percentage of female supervisors in BW factories	Target	8%	60%	50%	65%	45%	67%	43%	25%	70%
	Actual	9%	64%	28%	62%	28%	66%	42%	39%	72%
Number of compliance assessment reports completed in the reporting period	Target	300	463	60	39	30	200	90	26	390
	Actual	160	247	17	18	15	80	46	8	183
Average non-compliance rate on publicly reported issues	Target	12%	3%	5%	8%	10%	6%	9%	2%	5%
	Actual	18%	6%	14%	9%	13%	7%	9%	5%	4%
Average non-compliance rate on gender-sensitive compliance issues	Target	10%	7%	N/A	5%	8%	2%	5%	0%	5%
	Actual	10%	11%	2%	4%	9%	1%	5%	4%	5%
Percentage of factories with no non-compliant publicly reported issues	Target	2%	65%	10%	0%	30%	30%	15%	60%	40%
	Actual	7%	41%	5%	11%	13%	42%	15%	50%	53%
Percentage of factories that have put sound management systems in place for Human Resource Management and Occupational Health & Safety	Target	N/A	17%	70%	65%	75%	97%	70%	70%	50%
	Actual	8%	35%	80%	78%	0%	N/A	53%	70%	30%
Average number of days between an Assessment visit and the factory's receipt of the final report	Target	30	24	30	30	35	30	30	30	35
	Actual	43	24	33	28	41	34	30	34	25
Number of advisory visits in the reporting period	Target	2,160	1,400	360	236	190	900	400	175	2,100
	Actual	917	602	202	103	82	528	176	54	1164
Percentage of PICC worker representatives that are women	Target	50%	50%	50%	70%	40%	65%	75%	50%	65%
	Actual	47%	49%	31%	66%	40%	50%	69%	45%	66%
Percentage of PICC management representatives that are women	Target	20%	50%	N/A	35%	40%	50%	40%	50%	61%
	Actual	19%	48%	11%	34%	29%	43%	34%	55%	62%
Percentage of factories that have established a PICC	Target	80%	92%	N/A	N/A	75%	100%	80%	90%	95%
	Actual	83%	100%	17%	21%	86%	N/A	71%	86%	91%
Number of female worker representatives involved in social dialogue through PICC participation	Target	1,500	540	N/A	N/A	50%	N/A	N/A	340	N/A
	Actual	1,114	575	4	0	19%	353	77	30	392
Number of male worker representatives involved	Target	1,500	540	N/A	N/A	50%	N/A	N/A	340	N/A
	Actual	982	515	0	0	26%	387	30	42	226

Indicator (targets and mid-year values for 2022)		Bangladesh	Cambodia	Egypt	Ethiopia	Haiti	Indonesia	Jordan	Nicaragua	Vietnam
in social dialogue through PICC participation										
Percentage of factories with an active and effective bipartite committee	Target	20%	25%	30%	N/A	50%	50%	38%	40%	30%
	Actual	9%	15%	0%	0%	26%	39%	38%	20%	25%
Percentage of factories that have a CBA	Target	1%	8%	20%	10%	25%	40%	100%	54%	80%
	Actual	1%	5%	0%	5%	0%	N/A	100%	52%	88%
Percentage of factories demonstrating progress toward effective social dialogue and ability to resolve disputes	Target	5%	10%	N/A	0%	55%	25%	25%	20%	18%
	Actual	1%	7%	0%	0%	6%	20%	26%	3%	18%
Percentage of factories that have an effective grievance handling mechanism	Target	10%	25%	25%	90%	55%	50%	50%	50%	41%
	Actual	6%	18%	0%	74%	26%	39%	43%	37%	43%
Number of training sessions	Target	200	95	60	70	20	40	200	70	123
	Actual	86	48	16	23	13	44	79	19	60
Number of industry seminars	Target	60	8	4	5	10	8	6	4	16
	Actual	21	1	1	3	10	2	3	0	2
Percentage of factories that are on track to demonstrate progress in implementing their Learning plan	Target	22%	20%	N/A	50%	40%	55%	50%	25%	30%
	Actual	14%	19%	0%	26%	46%	46%	47%	31%	32%
Percentage of female training participants that reported that they were given opportunities to raise their opinions and participate in group discussions	Target	N/A	80%	N/A	95%	50%	98%	98%	N/A	95%
	Actual	100%	99%	N/A	N/A	67%	N/A	N/A	N/A	98%
Percentage of SST training participants that are women	Target	6%	80%	50%	60%	60%	60%	30%	50%	74%
	Actual	91%	69%	66%	97%	0%	47%	40%	0%	81%

Source: based on information from Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021 and internal information from Better Work on the progress towards set-out targets

Colours of the numbers indicate to what extent the target has been achieved. Green means that the target has been achieved fully. Yellow means that the target has been achieved to more than 80% of its value (underachieved). Red means the target has not been achieved. Grey indicates that there is a lack of information to make the assessment whether the target was achieved.

Table 11. Targets and values for harmonised indicators for all analysed countries (2021)

Indicator (values and targets for 2021)		Bangladesh	Cambodia	Egypt	Ethiopia	Haiti	Indonesia	Jordan	Nicaragua	Vietnam
Number of workers in the programme	Target	900,000	585,764	30,000	50,000	53,000	380,000	68,000	36,000	750,000
	Actual	971,206	568,118	49,374	52,510	49,797	371,315	62,963	33,401	640,568
Percentage of female supervisors in BW factories	Target	7%	60%	50%	65%	40%	67%	40%	40%	70%
	Actual	6%	58%	27%	63%	32%	65%	43%	39%	71%
	Target	250	450	40	40	15	140	81	20	390

Indicator (values and targets for 2021)		Bangladesh	Cambodia	Egypt	Ethiopia	Haiti	Indonesia	Jordan	Nicaragua	Vietnam
Number of compliance assessment reports completed in the reporting period	Actual	143	552	47	35	34	74	87	12	292
Average non-compliance rate on publicly reported issues	Target	12%	2%	5%	10%	10%	6%	10%	2%	5%
	Actual	28%	4%	10%	12%	15%	4%	10%	4%	3%
Average non-compliance rate on gender-sensitive compliance issues	Target	10%	7%	N/A	4%	6%	2%	7%	0%	1%
	Actual	25%	11%	2%	6%	12%	2%	6%	0%	1%
Percentage of factories with no non-compliant publicly reported issues	Target	2%	70%	10%	16%	15%	26%	15%	60%	36%
	Actual	3%	54%	9%	0%	3%	57%	12%	N/A	53%
Percentage of factories that have put sound management systems in place for Human Resource Management and Occupational Health & Safety	Target	20%	19%	70%	70%	40%	97%	80%	90%	50%
	Actual	0%	25%	59%	57%	27%	N/A	72%	50%	50%
Average number of days between an Assessment visit and the factory's receipt of the final report	Target	30	25	30	30	35	30	25	30	21
	Actual	29	22	27	27	38	27	34	37	23
Number of advisory visits in the reporting period	Target	1,650	1,300	250	300	190	900	564	150	2,400
	Actual	1,854	1,221	200	243	177	969	414	116	1,983
Percentage of PICC worker representatives that are women	Target	50%	50%	40%	75%	40%	65%	75%	50%	65%
	Actual	46%	49%	33%	67%	41%	50%	68%	45%	66%
Percentage of PICC management representatives that are women	Target	20%	48%	40%	50%	35%	50%	40%	50%	61%
	Actual	18%	49%	12%	33%	29%	42%	35%	54%	62%
Percentage of factories that have established a PICC	Target	80%	92%	50%	N/A	75%	100%	80%	80%	95%
	Actual	82%	97%	16%	22%	89%	95%	76%	95%	95%
Number of female worker representatives involved in social dialogue through PICC participation	Target	800	540	N/A	N/A	35	700	N/A	300	N/A
	Actual	1,299	569	0	4	57	643	77	27	348
Number of male worker representatives involved in social dialogue through PICC participation	Target	800	540	N/A	N/A	70	648	N/A	300	N/A
	Actual	1,322	532	0	1	82	550	38	32	205
Percentage of factories with an active and effective bipartite committee	Target	20%	25%	30%	0%	45%	60%	25%	30%	30%
	Actual	9%	14%	0%	0%	32%	37%	35%	20%	25%
Percentage of factories that have a CBA	Target	1%	8%	20%	8%	10%	40%	100%	54%	100%
	Actual	2%	5%	0%	6%	0%	36%	100%	53%	78%
Percentage of factories demonstrating progress toward effective social dialogue and ability to resolve disputes	Target	5%	10%	10%	N/A	25%	25%	20%	20%	20%
	Actual	1%	7%	0%	0%	9%	18%	23%	6%	16%
Percentage of factories that have an effective grievance handling mechanism	Target	10%	25%	25%	N/A	45%	60%	50%	40%	41%
	Actual	7%	18%	0%	84%	24%	37%	42%	37%	41%
Number of training sessions	Target	150	85	5	75	75	50	450	50	131
	Actual	189	90	5	60	25	61	452	41	98
Number of industry seminars	Target	40	6	12	4	45	8	6	4	20
	Actual	49	5	2	3	17	5	4	3	15

Indicator (values and targets for 2021)		Bangladesh	Cambodia	Egypt	Ethiopia	Haiti	Indonesia	Jordan	Nicaragua	Vietnam
Percentage of factories that are on track to demonstrate progress in implementing their Learning plan	Target	22%	20%	25%	N/A	65%	55%	53%	25%	27%
	Actual	15%	19%	0%	32%	56%	46%	46%	34%	32%
Percentage of female training participants that reported that they were given opportunities to raise their opinions and participate in group discussions	Target	N/A	80%	N/A	N/A	25%	98%	96%	N/A	95%
	Actual	N/A	97%	N/A	97%	0%	99%	100%	N/A	97%
Percentage of SST training participants that are women	Target	6%	80%	40%	70%	55%	63%	N/A	50%	84%
	Actual	57%	64%	0%	57%	0%	70%	100%	0%	74%

Source: based on information from Better Work Fourth Annual Donor Report 2020 and Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021

Colours of the numbers indicate to what extent the target has been achieved. Green means that the target has been achieved fully. Yellow means that the target has been achieved to more than 80% of its value (underachieved). Red means the target has not been achieved. Grey indicates that there is a lack of information to make the assessment whether the target was achieved.

Table 12. Progress towards achieving longer-term outcomes and outputs by the end of 2021 (BW Global)

Output	Status in 2021	
Outcome 1: By 2022, Better Work will have accelerated improvements in working conditions and business competitiveness through in-factory services		
1.1	Service model is adapted for manufacturing conglomerates	On schedule
1.2	Expansion to Central America	On schedule
1.3	Expansion to Egypt	On schedule
1.4	Expansion to Madagascar	On schedule
1.5	Expansion to Myanmar	Cancelled
1.6	Expansion to Pakistan	On schedule
1.7	Expansion to Sri Lanka	On schedule
1.8	Collaboration with SCORE	On schedule
1.9	Collaboration with other supply chain initiatives	On schedule
1.10	Innovative solutions are piloted and developed to drive greater impact	On schedule
1.11	Use technology and systems for enhanced impact of services	On schedule
1.12	Quality assurance for factory services is systematically and fully implemented	On schedule
1.13	Sound industrial relations are advanced	On schedule
1.14	Gender equality issues are embedded into the core service delivery	On schedule
Outcome 2: By 2022, Better Work will have influenced global retailers, brands and manufacturers in the establishment of business practices that promote decent work outcomes in supply chains		
2.1	Better Work's engagement with the new and existing business partners is strengthened	On schedule
2.2	Better Work business partners integrate BW methodologies in their supply chain	On schedule
2.3	Selected Better Work business partners are supported in testing different approaches to change their sourcing practices	On schedule
2.4	Duplication in compliance assessment/auditing and remediation between Better Work and business partners is reduced	On schedule
Outcome 3: At the national level, the ILO, IFC and WBG will have strengthened institutions and influenced policies that create an enabling environment for decent work and improved competitiveness		
3.1	The capacity of labour inspectorates to promote compliance and enforcement, including the development and implementation of an effective enforcement plan, is strengthened	On schedule
3.2	National action plans/strategies on how to position the garment industry are supported and developed	On schedule
3.3	The capacity and ownership of employers and worker organisations for effective social dialogue is strengthened	On schedule

Output		Status in 2021
Outcome 4: Better Work will have influenced the global policy dialogue on decent work and the SDGs with its unique evidence base and proven examples of success		
4.1	Conduct research on the garment sector as a vector for growth beyond the workplace	On schedule
4.2	Dissemination of research results and proven examples of success is achieved	On schedule
4.3	An effective communications strategy is developed and implemented to support Better Work's activities at the national, regional and global level	On schedule
Outcome 5: Support outcome including finance, systems, HR, fundraising and programming		
5.1	Fundraising	On schedule
5.2	Strategic engagement with donors	On schedule
5.3	Ongoing programming support	On schedule
5.4	Human resource Management and staff development	On schedule
5.5	Support to Better Work finance globally	On schedule

Source: based on information from Better Work Fourth Annual Donor Report 2020 and Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021

Table 13. Progress towards achieving longer-term outcomes and outputs by the end of 2021 (BW Bangladesh)

Output		Status in 2021
Outcome 1: Core service delivery model is applied		
1.1	Better Work Bangladesh will upscale operations and effectiveness in core factory services delivery	On schedule
1.2	Ensure staff, development, operational learning and coordination to maximise effectiveness	On schedule
1.3	Capacities of factory managers and workers to improve and uphold compliance with the labour law are increased	On schedule
1.4	Regular assessments, industry and factory-level compliance reports are produced and published	On schedule
1.5	Training, assessment, advisory and agility are integrated	Cancelled
1.6	Advisory services are delivered	On schedule
1.7	Mechanisms of social dialogue in the garment sector are improved	On schedule
1.8	Key safety issues in the sector (OSH management systems, chemical and boiler safety) receive increased focus	On schedule
1.9	Introduce/scale up Better Work Bangladesh's gender strategy, GEAR and Mothers@Work projects	On schedule
Outcome 2: By 2022, Better Work will have influenced global retailers, brands and manufacturers in the establishment of business practices that promote decent work outcomes in supply chains		
2.1	Buyer partners address factory and/or industry-level challenges	On schedule
2.2	Partnerships with national and international stakeholders are solidified	On schedule
2.3	Better Work informs and shapes national labour laws and policies, as well as industry strategies and plans for the garment, footwear and wider manufacturing sector	On schedule
2.4	Better Work Bangladesh will achieve long-term financial and institutional sustainability (revenue)	On schedule

Source: based on information from Better Work Fourth Annual Donor Report 2020 and Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021

Table 14. Progress towards achieving longer-term outcomes and outputs by the end of 2021 (BW Cambodia)

Output		Status in 2021
Outcome 1: Sustained improvements in working conditions and business competitiveness in factories accelerated, with a special focus on addressing gender discrimination issues		
1.1	Regular public, industry and factory level compliance and progress reports produced and published	On schedule
1.2	Factories have improved their systems and demonstrated improved capacity for effective social dialogue	On schedule
1.3	An industry-owned strategic compliance approach for the sub-contracting sector and low-performing factories was supported	Behind the schedule (delayed)
1.4	The formation of specific partnerships in support of sustained compliance in different areas (management systems, OSH, HR systems) was facilitated	On schedule

Output		Status in 2021
1.5	Gender equality programmes embedded in all Better Factories Cambodia work and staff capacity and implemented in collaboration with partners	On schedule
Outcome 2: A vision and roadmap towards sustained compliance in the industry is formulated by stakeholders		
2.1	Better Factories Cambodia support provided to tripartite constituents and other industry stakeholders to create a roadmap for sustained compliance	On schedule
2.2	The existing joint action plan with the MoLVT further implemented and aligned with the roadmap	On schedule
2.3	In collaboration with the Cambodian trade union movement, a capacity building plan for strengthened trade union representation at factory level developed	On schedule
2.4	Areas of joint collaboration and training with GMAC identified and implemented to support factories in strengthening their management systems	On schedule
Outcome 3: Global retailers, brands and manufacturers are influenced by Better Factories Cambodia to create and expand partnerships in support of the creation of sustained compliance in a competitive and fair garment industry		
3.1	Support provided for the implementation of the Ministry of Economy and Finance's (MoEF) garment sector strategy	Behind the schedule (delayed)
3.2	Close collaboration forged with investment and manufacturing groups to support factories to become leaders in the industry	On schedule
3.3	Partnerships with buyers strengthened and leveraged to address sector-wide challenges	On schedule
Outcome 4: Data and knowledge is measured and used to communicate for improved practices in support of the vision for the industry		
4.1	Better Factories Cambodia data analysed to help inform sectoral and factory-level policies and practices	On schedule
4.2	Better Factories Cambodia impact assessment data used to demonstrate how improved working conditions have an impact on worker well-being, business outcomes and communities	On schedule
4.3	Public communication Campaigns developed and implemented to showcase sectoral and factory level successes	On schedule
4.4	Partnerships with the private sector assessed and created to support outreach and new ways to communicate to workers	On schedule
4.5	Industry best practices and impact results around working conditions formulated and disseminated	On schedule

Source: based on information from Better Work Fourth Annual Donor Report 2020 and Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021

Table 15. Progress towards achieving longer-term outcomes and outputs by the end of 2021 (BW Egypt)

Output		Status in 2021
Outcome 1: Freedom of association and collective bargaining are promoted and effectively implemented in laws and practice		
1.1	Strengthened technical and institutional capacity of the Ministry of manpower (MoM) to implement the revised law and to set in place and manage a transparent and efficient process for the registration of trade unions in line with legislation	On schedule
1.2	Strengthened capacity (technical and organisational) of MoM to manage, oversee and monitor implementation of Trade Union Law in the governorates	On schedule
1.3	Enhanced understanding of the registration process among workers' and employers' organisations	On schedule
1.4	Strengthened knowledge, understanding and capacity of employers and workers and their organisations to apply rights and principles of C.87 and C.98	On schedule
1.5	Support structures put in place to help create an enabling environment for workers' organisations to operate freely	Behind the schedule (delayed)
Outcome 2: An enabling environment for sound labour relations is put in place		
2.1	Technical support provided to tripartite review of the status of the High Council on Social Dialogue (HCSD) including recommendations for its functioning based on international good practice	On schedule
2.2	Strengthened capacity of the High Council on Societal Dialogue (incl its secretariat and members) to perform the role envisioned in the relevant decree	On schedule
2.3	Enhanced capacity of tripartite partners to promote and establish effective tripartite platforms/bodies at sectoral and local (industrial zones) levels	On schedule

Output	Status in 2021	
2.4	The capacity of employer and workers and their organisations to engage in constructive social dialogue and collective bargaining is strengthened, including at the enterprise level	On schedule
2.5	The Government's capacity to develop an effective labour inspection system is strengthened, with a focus on supporting the effective implementation of relevant labour legislation within the framework of the project	On schedule
2.6	The Capacity of MoM to manage effective labour dispute resolution (LDR) mechanisms is strengthened	Behind the schedule (has not started yet)
2.7	Labour Courts are capacitated to enforce national legislation in a more transparent, reliable and independent way	Behind the schedule (has not started yet)
Outcome 3: Enterprises in the textile and garment sector can make better use of business opportunities due to higher levels of compliance with ILS and national labour laws, higher levels of productivity and a more conducive policy environment		
3.1	Phase 1 of the Better Work programme in collaboration with SCORE is established: Up to 100 target factories are supported with a factory level service model including to establish bipartite worker-management committees, improvement plans for compliance with national labour laws and international labour standards and enhanced production flows (2021-2022)	On schedule
3.2	Better Work and SCORE open up to any additional factories from the textile and garment industry in Egypt following a proven factory level service model (2023 - 2025)	Behind the schedule (has not started yet)
3.3	An assessment of competitiveness and business capabilities in the RMG sector (Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification), including compliance data, is undertaken, with a particular focus on the COVID19 pandemic	Behind the schedule (has not started yet)
3.4	Tripartite consultations held to consider available data and define priority areas for reform and collaboration to help the competitiveness of the Egyptian garment and textile industry while protecting workers in the post-COVID-19 situation	Behind the schedule (has not started yet)
3.5	International buyers sourcing from or interested in sourcing from Egypt are regularly kept informed about the status of the industry in Egypt	On schedule (ongoing)

Source: based on information from Better Work Fourth Annual Donor Report 2020 and Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021

Table 16. Progress towards achieving longer-term outcomes and outputs by the end of 2021 (BW Ethiopia)

Output	Status in 2021	
Outcome 1: By the end of 2023, an enterprise system achieving sustainable and inclusive compliance with national labour law, guided by International Labour Standards, protects the workers' well-being in the target areas/sectors		
1.1	Participatory, gender-sensitive and effective mechanisms established for coordination and dialogue between private and public actors engaged in the garment and textile sector	On schedule
1.2	Labour inspectorates of MOLSA and five regional BOLSAs have the technical capacity and resources to carry out regular inspections and assure compliance with international/national law and regulations	On schedule
1.3	A robust system for factory-level assessments and remediation, including public compliance reporting, is established	On schedule
1.4	Gender balanced worker-employer dialogue mechanism was established and operationalised	On schedule
1.5	Labour Inspectorates carry out gender-sensitive workplace inspection and advisory services	On schedule
Outcome 2: By the end of 2023, the Ethiopian garment sector has increased its productivity through the establishment of responsible and sustainable workplace practices		
2.1	Garment and textile industry benefited from the delivery of demand- driven SCORE Productivity training	On schedule
2.2	Workers and managers have workplace cooperation skills enhanced through Better Work trainings	On schedule
2.3	Factories mainstreamed gender equality and diversity principles into their policies, procedures and practice	On schedule
2.4	Tripartite-plus partners' capacity is strengthened for the promotion of the MNE Declaration	Completed
2.5	Women in Participating factories are trained to increase their career advancement opportunities	On schedule
Outcome 3: By the end of 2023, the garment and textile industry benefits from improved and inclusive industrial relations and a minimum wage policy		
3.1	Employers' and workers' organisations effectively represent their membership and have the capacity to engage in dialogue and negotiations that generate quality policy outcomes at all levels	On schedule

Output	Status in 2021	
3.2	Evidence-based studies and research complement capacity building activities and support bipartite and tripartite dialogue at all levels	On schedule
3.3	MOLSA/BOLSA, Labour Relations Boards, judiciary, zone authorities, and legal aid centres are aware of ILS and have the capacity to prevent and resolve labour disputes	On schedule
3.4	The Government, in full consultation with social partners, table, discuss and adopt options for minimum wage-setting mechanism covering the garment and textile sector – in line with ILO advice	On schedule
3.5	National stakeholders are guided in their efforts to establish gender responsive policies and practices	On schedule
Outcome 4: By the end of 2023, workers in targeted industries benefit from a sustainable prevention, protection and compensation system		
4.1	Mechanisms for accurate recording and notification of occupational injuries and illnesses for effective delivery of EII are strengthened	On schedule
4.2	Intervention models based on drivers and constraints to OSH improvements are proposed to stakeholders and implemented	On schedule
4.3	The strategic plan to establish occupational safety and health institute developed	Completed
4.4	Partnerships built to provide women workers access to childcare and maternal health services	On schedule

Source: based on information from Better Work Fourth Annual Donor Report 2020 and Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021

Table 17. Progress towards achieving longer-term outcomes and outputs by the end of 2021 (BW Haiti)

Output	Status in 2021	
Long-Term Outcome 1: Compliance with national labour law and international labour standards sustained in the Haitian garment sector		
Medium Term Outcome 1.1: Factory-level social dialogue mechanisms generate actions to reduce noncompliance of Haitian labour law and international labour standards, including noncompliance issues impacting women		
1.1.1	Participatory, gender-sensitive and effective mechanisms established for coordination and dialogue between private and public actors engaged in the garment and textile sector	On schedule
1.1.2	Employer and worker representatives, particularly women, have increased their technical skills in order to address recurring compliance issues in the bipartite committees	On schedule
1.1.3	The assessment of garment factories identifies gaps in compliance to serve as a baseline for the improvement process	On schedule
Medium Term Outcome 1.2: Employers and workers accurately identify and address issues of non-compliance of Haitian labour law and international labour standards in the workplace, including noncompliance issues impacting women		
1.2.1	Workers, including worker and union representatives, particularly women, have increased skills and tools to identify labour law compliance issues in the workplace	On schedule
1.2.2	Employers adapt, incorporate, or improve management systems to address the root causes of non-compliance	On schedule
Long-Term Outcome 2: Employers and workers accurately identify and address issues of non-compliance of Haitian labour law and international labour standards in the workplace, including noncompliance issues impacting women		
Medium Term Outcome 2.1: Tripartite partners at the sectoral-level engage in sustained dialogue that generates action to improve working conditions and worker well-being, including for women workers		
2.1.1	Tripartite partners (including employer and worker representatives and government entities such as the labour inspectorate, ONA, and OFATMA) have increased awareness that improved working conditions and worker well-being, particularly for women workers, enhance business outcomes	On schedule
2.1.2	The industry-level Social Dialogue Roundtable has more tools and information-sharing capacity to generate and sustain solution-oriented dialogue for addressing labour issues, including those that impact women	On schedule
Long-Term Outcome 3: Government policies and institutions support the promotion of decent work		
Medium Term Outcome 3.1: Workers, especially women workers, increasingly access improved social security services to promote their well-being		
3.1.1	Government institutions such as the MAST labour inspectorate, ONA, and OFATMA have increased organisational capacity to provide eligible services to workers	On schedule
Medium Term Outcome 3.2: Government and labour entities perform more effective inspections and mediations per Better Work standards, to better protect workers' rights, especially that of women workers		

Output	Status in 2021
3.2.1 Labour inspectorates in the garment and textile sector have the technical capacity to develop and implement a Strategic Compliance Plan that meets the agreed standards	On schedule
Medium Term Outcome 3.3: The partnerships would create policy plans to improve governance and sustainability of social protection systems for the garment sector	
3.3.1 Policy changes are promoted and advanced through developing partnerships with the multilateral system	On schedule

Source: based on information from Better Work Fourth Annual Donor Report 2020 and Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021

Table 18. Progress towards achieving longer-term outcomes and outputs by the end of 2021 (BW Indonesia)

Output	Status in 2021
Outcome 1: By 2022, an increased number of factories have internalised decent work in culture and systems and are better equipped to comply with the law and improve working conditions and promote inclusiveness	
1.1 The capacity of factory management and workers to improve working conditions is strengthened	On schedule
1.2 Factories' focus on improvement is shifted through a roadmap approach while building a business case	Behind the schedule (delayed)
1.3 Management system approaches are institutionalised in core services and adopted by factories to sustain compliance	On schedule
1.4 Gender equality, women empowerment and inclusiveness promoted	On schedule
Outcome 2: By 2022, social dialogue in the workplace is institutionalised, inclusive and increasingly made effective by the social partners	
2.1 Capacity of workers and management strengthened to engage in social dialogue including through closer support by employers' and trade union associations	On schedule
2.2 Management-workers committees are empowered to be able to take ownership and responsibility to lead dialogue on strategic workplace issues	On schedule
2.3 Grievance mechanisms are proven to benefit management and workers in voicing and collectively resolving workplace issues	Behind the schedule (delayed)
2.4 Management-workers committees are increasingly gender-inclusive in their representation and operation	On schedule
Outcome 3: By 2022, brands and other supply chain actors increasingly commit and engage with Better Work Indonesia and support the factory improvement process	
3.1 Roadmap approach is used to increase synergies in support of sustainable improvement processes	On schedule
3.2 Capacity and engagement of buyer partners on IR and dialogue with national and subnational constituents on labour policy issues is increased	On schedule
3.3 Better Work Indonesia has strengthened its engagement with supply chain actors (in particular vendors, agents, holding groups, licensees) for better alignment and fair and sustainable purchasing practices	Behind the schedule (has not started yet)
Outcome 4: By 2022, Sustainable mechanisms for effective and evidence-based labour market policies and institutions in the garment sector and beyond are strengthened	
4.1 Knowledge sharing with the ILO tripartite constituents for policy advocacy is improved/increased	On schedule
4.2 Stronger coordination within and between tripartite actors and labour inspection and dispute settlement systems at the sub-national level (district and provincial level) facilitated by Better Work Indonesia	On schedule
4.3 Cooperation with the Ministry of Manpower in the review and enforcement of labour laws and regulations is enhanced	On schedule
4.4 The creation of a garment tripartite body that has capacity and decision-making power to improve policy and address issues is facilitated and supported	On schedule

Source: based on information from Better Work Fourth Annual Donor Report 2020 and Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021

Table 19. Progress towards achieving longer-term outcomes and outputs by the end of 2021 (BW Jordan)

Short-term outcome	Status in 2021
Long-term Outcome 1: The garment industry demonstrates sustainable compliance with national labour laws, guided by international labour standards	

Short-term outcome		Status in 2021
Medium Term Outcome 1.1 Compliance with labour laws at factory level is improved, which sets a standard for a gradual transition to service delivery by national stakeholders		
1.1.1	Gaps in compliance identified in the assessment of garment and non-garment factories	Behind the schedule (delayed)
1.1.2	Improved factory capacity in addressing noncompliance	On schedule
1.1.3	Workers have new skills and enhanced knowledge about their rights	Behind the schedule (delayed)
1.1.4	Better capacity for social dialogue among managers and workers at the factory level	On schedule
Medium Term Outcome 1.2 An enabling institutional environment is created to promote decent work		
1.2.1	Ministry of Labour has new capacity to enforce national labour laws in adherence with international labour standards (USDOL and EU)	On schedule
1.2.2	Union has enhanced capacity to advocate for worker rights on behalf of all workers	On schedule
1.2.3	Increased capacity for factory staff to train management and workers on key topics to promote decent work	On schedule
Long-Term Outcome 2: Policy changes foster a more competitive garment sector with decent job opportunities		
Medium Term Outcome 2.1: Evidence-and consensus-based policy changes are adopted by national stakeholders for a more competitive garment sector with more decent job opportunities		
2.1.1	Social dialogue structures and processes are strengthened among the tripartite partners (the government, employers and workers) and international stakeholders	On schedule
2.1.2	Research for evidence-based policy making is disseminated	On schedule
2.1.3	National and international stakeholders (government, employers, workers, buyers, and embassies) consider solutions on key issues including worker well-being, employment opportunities, and competitiveness in the garment sector	Behind the schedule (delayed)
2.1.4	Cross-cutting themes are embedded in core services (gender and inclusion, Jordanian workers, migration, refugee, People with Disabilities, mental well-being)	On schedule

Source: based on information from Better Work Fourth Annual Donor Report 2020 and Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021

Table 20. Progress towards achieving longer-term outcomes and outputs by the end of 2021 (BW Nicaragua)

Output		Status in 2021
Outcome 1: Working conditions and business competitiveness is improved in the garment sector in Nicaragua		
1.1	Compliance level of participating factories are monitored and regular public industry and factory level compliance reports are produced and published	On schedule
1.2	Ownership of compliance and competitiveness improvement processes through strong social dialogue is increased	On schedule
1.3	Gender equality in the garment industry in Nicaragua is enhanced	On schedule
Outcome 2: The national stakeholders are better equipped to govern the labour market in order to create an enabling policy environment for the garment sector in Nicaragua to grow and for BWN efforts to be more sustainable		
2.1	The public and private sector have improved capacity to identify solutions to labour issues through use of Better Work approaches and tools, and through increased collaboration and ownership	Postponed
2.2	Institutional sustainability of BWN is strengthened through increased national ownership	Postponed
Outcome 3: Better Work Nicaragua has strengthened its role in Nicaragua and established alliances to further impact the garment industry in Central America		
3.1	Additional funding, revenues or in-kind support have been secured for Better Work to continue work in Nicaragua and potentially in the region	In progress
3.2	Progress has been made to design potential interventions in Central America	In progress

Source: based on information from Better Work Fourth Annual Donor Report 2020 and Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021

Table 21. Progress towards achieving longer-term outcomes and outputs by the end of 2021 (BW Vietnam)

Output		Status in 2021
Outcome 1: By 2022, Better Work Vietnam will have accelerated improvements in working conditions and business competitiveness in participating factories while expanding its footprint and positive impact throughout the industry		
1.1	Factory level services are expanded	On schedule

Output		Status in 2021
1.2	Training services are expanded	On schedule
1.3	Strategic partnership established to expand the scope and influence of the Better Work model in driving responsible business and labour compliance	On schedule
1.4	Better Work factories demonstrate greater ownership in the process of improving working conditions and business competitiveness	On schedule
1.5	Gender equality is embedded in the Better Work Vietnam approach and gender-focused policies are adopted at the factory level	On schedule
Outcome 2: Brands (buyers), vendors and supply chain intermediaries demonstrate greater commitment to the Better Work model and approach and adopt business practices that support improved compliance and enterprise sustainability across their supply chains		
2.1	Brand partnerships are strengthened to enhance supply chain transparency and sustainability, and better align their business practices with those of Better Work	On schedule
Outcome 3: By 2022, Better Work Vietnam will have strengthened national institutions and deepened their role in promoting and implementing the Better Work model, and secured greater institutionalisation of lessons and good practices in national policymaking		
3.1	The capacity of tripartite constituents to support delivery of core factory services and embed the Better Work approach into their work is strengthened	On schedule
3.2	The role of the Labour Inspectorate in enforcing labour compliance and upholding international labour standards across the industry is enhanced	On schedule
3.3	Enterprises and tripartite constituents actively support the transition to a new national Industrial Relations framework	On schedule
Outcome 4: By 2022, Better Work will have enhanced overall programme sustainability through reforms to the organisational model.		
4.1	The operational and organisational sustainability of Better Work Vietnam is strengthened	On schedule

Source: based on information from Better Work Fourth Annual Donor Report 2020 and Better Work Fifth Annual Donor Report 2021

► Annex 3. Survey questionnaire

The ILO's Better Work programme is conducting a cluster evaluation of work done during its fourth phase (further – Better Work Phase IV), with a focus on the improvement of working conditions and productivity of the garment sector between July 2017 and June 2022 (Phase IV). This independent evaluation is carried out by PPMI, a team of external consultants contracted to insure the independence of the process. The evaluation team has prepared a short survey related to your experience working with (at) the ILO on the Better Work programme during this phase. The survey should only take approximately 15 minutes to answer.

Your answers to the survey questions are anonymous and will be kept confidential. Only the evaluation team will receive your survey responses. Participation is voluntary; however, we hope you will participate as your points of view are important and will help guide improvements in the work of ILO and the Better Work programme. For more details on how the data will be processed, please see the privacy policy.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact Radvilė Bankauskaitė (radvile.bankauskaite@ppmi.lt).

About you

1. What is your relationship with the Better Work programme (Phase IV)?
 - I work(ed) for Better Work Global during Phase IV
 - I work(ed) for a Better Work country team during Phase IV
 - I work(ed) for the ILO (but not directly for Better Work Phase IV)
 - I represent a national government in a country supported by Better Work Phase IV
 - I am a representative of an employers' organisation in a country supported by Better Work Phase IV
 - I am a representative of a workers' organisation in a country supported by Better Work Phase IV
 - I represent a donor/funding organisation of the Better Work Phase IV
 - I represent a garment sector brand/retailer/buyer (international corporation) operating in a country supported by Better Work Phase IV
 - I represent other organisation that was engaged with the Better Work Phase IV
 - Other, please specify: _____*
2. To what extent are you familiar with Better Work Phase IV's objective of bringing together efforts of various stakeholders to improve working conditions and productivity of the garment sector?
 - 1 – Not at all familiar 2 3 4 5 – Very familiar Don't know
3. To what extent have you personally been involved in Better Work Phase IV's effort to promote better working conditions and productivity of the garment sector?
 - 1 - Not at all involved 2 3 4 5 - Strongly involved Don't know
4. (*If BW country staff, constituents*) Which Better Work programme country were you based in or most involved with between July 2017 and June 2022?
 - Bangladesh
 - Cambodia
 - Egypt
 - Ethiopia
 - Haiti
 - Indonesia
 - Jordan
 - Nicaragua

- Pakistan
- Vietnam
- Other country

5. What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Other
- Prefer not to say

Relevance

6. To what extent do you agree or disagree that Better Work Phase IV addressed specific country needs and priorities?

- 1 – strongly agree 2 3 4 5 – strongly disagree Don't know

7. *(All respondents except Better Work staff)* To what extent do you think Phase IV of Better Work met the needs of your organisation:

8. 1 – Not at all 2 3 4 5 to a large extent Don't know

Coherence:

9. To what extent do you think Better Work duplicates the work carried out by other organisations?

- 1 – Better Work Phase IV completely duplicates the work already done by other organisations 2 3 4 5 – Better Work Phase IV is unique compared to the work of other organisations Don't know

10. To what extent do you think Better Work Phase IV included a focus on:

	1 – No focus at all	2	3	4	5 – Very strong focus	I don't know
Gender equality						
Inclusion of persons with disability						
Environmental sustainability						
Social dialogue and tripartism						
Promotion of international labour standards						

11. *[BW and ILO staff only]* To what extent do you think Better Work Phase IV was able to establish synergies with the organisations, agencies, and their units listed below:

	1 – No synergies	2	3	4	5 - strong synergies	I don't know

International Finance Corporation						
Other ILO projects and programmes						
International organisations (UN Women, IOM, etc.)						
International funding/donor organisations of Better Work Phase IV						
National governments						
Worker organisations						
Employer organisations						

Effectiveness:

12. In your opinion, which Better Work Phase IV activities were the least and the most effective to improve **working conditions** in the garment sector?

	1 - Not at all useful	2	3	4	5- Very useful	I don't know
Training activities for garment factory workers						
Training activities for garment factory owners/managers						
Activities supporting social dialogue in factories						
Assessments regarding factory						

compliance with national laws						
Provision of data on factory working conditions						
Provision of advisory services to factory managers						
Provision of policy advice to governmental institutions						
Delivering analytical / research outputs						
Implementing Better Work academy						
Maintaining Better Work transparency portal						

13. In your opinion, which Better Work Phase IV activities were the least and the most effective to improve **competitiveness of factories** in the garment sector

	1 - Not at all useful	2	3	4	5- Very useful	I don't know
Training activities for garment factory workers						

Training activities for garment factory owners/ managers						
Activities supporting social dialogue in factories						
Assessments regarding factory compliance with national laws						
Provision of data on factory working conditions						
Provision of advisory services to factory managers						
Provision of policy advice to governmental institutions						
Delivering analytical / research outputs						
Implementing Better Work academy						
Maintaining Better Work transparency portal						

14. To what extent do you think Better Work's activities effectively contributed to the following goals:

	1 - Not at all effective	2	3	4	5- Highly effective	I don't know
Enhancing workers' capacity to engage in factory-level dialogue						
Development of new factory-level procedures on occupational health and safety						
Improvement of working conditions within participating factories						
Improving the capacity of labour inspectorates to conduct factory assessments						
Enhancing the capacity of national trade unions to engage in social dialogue						
Development of new laws and policies to improve working conditions in the garment sector						
Enhancing the role of women in factory management						
Enhance the role of global brands, retailers and buyers in promoting better working conditions in factories						
Inform global discussions on decent work						
Addressing changing constituent needs in the context of COVID-19						

15. In your view which of the following factors were the most important for Better Work to achieve its goals?

- a. Expertise of the Better Work team
- b. Perceived credibility of the Better Work programme
- c. Strong buy-in from garment sector constituents and partners
- d. Support for the Better Work programme among global brands, buyers and retailers in the garment sector
- e. Close cooperation with garment factory owners and managers
- f. Close cooperation with government officials
- g. Good quality / reliable data

- h. A strong emphasis on capacity building of the government to monitor compliance of factories with national law
- i. Effective Better Work programme management
- j. Clear strategy for the Better Work Phase IV
- k. Good design of Better Work programme activities
- l. Learning lessons from past phases implemented in the country
- m. The use of good practices and lessons learnt from other countries
- n. Close coordination between the Better Work programme and preferential trade policies of donor governments
- o. Other, please specify: _____

16. In your view which factors hindered the achievement of expected results of Better Work in your country?

- a. The COVID-19 pandemic
- b. Insufficient Better Work staff at the country level
- c. Poor guidance from Better Work Global
- d. Lack of government commitment to the programme.
- e. Lack of trade union commitment to the programme
- f. Lack of employer organisations' commitment to the programme
- g. Lack of involvement of constituents in the project design
- h. Lack of involvement of constituents in the project implementation
- i. Poor communication between Better Work Global and country programmes
- j. Domestic political factors
- k. Overdependence on Better Work's work and expertise
- l. The lack of a well-developed strategy to phase out donor funding
- m. The lack of good quality / reliable data
- n. Lack of capacity by constituents to maintain achievements of Better Work in the future
- o. Lack of continued interest of constituents to maintain the achievements of Better work in the future
- p. Failure to coordinate between Better Work Phase IV and preferential trade policies of the EU and/or the USA
- q. Other, please specify: _____

Efficiency

17. To what extent are you satisfied with the following aspects of Better Work Phase IV activities?

	1 - Not at all satisfied	2	3	4	5 - Very satisfied	Don't know
Availability of tailored publications						
Timely communication before Better Work events						
Timely communication after Better Work events						

Smooth organisation of events						
Timely implementation of factory assessments						
Timely provision of feedback after factory assessments						
Accessibility of information and data collected by Better Work						
Time taken by Better Work to respond to constituent and stakeholder requests						
The extent to which the Better Work seeks feedback from constituents and stakeholders						

18. In what way do you think the following factors affected the achievement of the objectives of Better Work Phase IV?:

	1 - Very negative	2 - negative	3 - Neutral	4 - positive	5 - very positive	I don't know
Number of staff in country offices with technical experience						
Number of staff in HQ technical units with requisite technical expertise						
Ability of staff in HQ technical units to commit sufficient time to providing assistance						
Ability of staff in country technical units to commit sufficient time to providing assistance						
Time required for internal decision-making						

Ability to draw on ILO knowledge base						
Ability to recruit qualified programme staff						
Ability to effectively use financial resources at the country level						
Ability to effectively use financial resources at the HQ level						
Ability to secure and raise funding from donors						
Ability to combine different streams of funding						

19. To what extent do you think Better Work Global was able to provide adequate administrative, technical and political support to the country programmes?

	1 - Completely inadequate	2	3	4	5 - Completely adequate	I don't know
Administrative support						
Technical support						
Political support						

20. [for BW/ILO staff only] How would you rate the effectiveness of collaboration between:

	1 - Completely ineffective	2	3	4	5 - Very effective	I don't know
Better Work country offices						
Better Work country offices and Better Work Global						
Better Work and the ILO						

Impact and Sustainability

21. To what extent have you already noticed or experienced the following examples of Better Work impact:

	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5 - to a great extent	I don't know
Improved living standards of garment factory workers						

Improved working conditions for all garment sector employees						
Regular social dialogue at the sectoral/national level						
Increased number of factories in full compliance with labour standards						
Enhanced gender equality in the garment sector						
Enhanced environmental sustainability of the garment sector						
Improved competitiveness of participating factories						

22. To what extent do you think the Better Work programme would be able to maintain its activities and results in case of the following situations?

	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5 - to a great extent	I don't know
All activities of Better Work and all donor funding would stop simultaneously						
Better Work would continue high-level / policy-level support activities while all donor funding to factory-level activities would stop						
Better Work would stop all its activities but donors would continue support to responsible government agencies (that would take over from Better Work)						

23. Over how many years could Better Work be phased out in your country (or the country you have worked in as part of or in relation to Better Work) without the risk of many of the achieved results being reversed?

- Less than 1 year
- 1-2 years
- 3-4 years
- 5-10 years
- 11 years and longer

24. To what extent has Better Work increased the capacity of governments, workers' organisations and employers' organisations to implement the following activities without additional Better Work involvement?

	1 - Not at all	2	3	4	5 - To a large extent	Don't know

Factory compliance assessments	()	()	()	()	()	()
Capacity building of female workers						
Supporting social dialogue at factory-level						
Supporting social dialogue at sectoral/national level						
Improving legislative frameworks to enhance working conditions	()	()	()	()	()	()

25. Are there any points that have not been addressed in the survey that you would like to make in relation to the implementation and results of BW during Phase IV? *[open answer]*

► Annex 4. List of interview respondents

Inception Interviews	
Deborah Schmidiger	BW Senior programme and Partnership Officer
Arianna Rossi	BW Senior Research & Policy Specialist
Dan Rees	BW programme Director
Better Work Cambodia	BW Country Office
Better Work Jordan and Egypt (2 respondents)	BW Country Office
Better Work Vietnam	BW Country Office
Better Work Indonesia	BW Country Office
Roopa Nair	BW Head, Communication and Partnership
Better Work Ethiopia (2 respondents)	BW Country Office
Better Work Bangladesh	BW Country Office
Better Work Nicaragua	BW Country Office

Global-level In-depth Interviews	
Alexa Hough	BW Finance, HR, and Programming Project Manager
Jeffrey Eisenbraun	BW Technical Officer (Research & Impact)
Arianna Rossi	BW Senior Research & Policy Specialist
Roopa Nair	BW Head, Communication and Partnership
Marie Ledan, Laura VanVoorhees	United States Department of Labour
BF Cambodia (6 respondents)	BW Country Office
Michael Reidick	C&A (Buyer)
Alison Tate	International Trade Union Confereration
Deborah Schmidiger	BW Senior programme and Partnership Officer
Juliet Edington and Isssiree Munar	BW Buyers Team
Ambra Migliore	ILO INWORK
BW Vietnam (4 respondents)	BW Country Office
BW Bangladesh (4 respondents)	BW Country Office

Nathalie and Monica	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)
Conor Boyle	BW Head of programme Development, Learning and Country programmes
BW Egypt (4 respondents)	BW Country Office
Stephan Ulrich	ILO SCORE programme
Ayako Iyama	Fast Retail (Buyer)
BW Jordan (3 respondents)	BW Country Office
Beata Plonka	European Commission
Daniel Fibiger	GAP (Buyer)
BW Haiti (2 respondents)	BW Country Office
Minna Maaskola	BW Sr Technical Specialist, Training & Capacity Building
Raquel Scarpari, Diane Davoine, Nabeera Rahman	International Finance Corporation
BW Nicaragua (3 respondents)	BW Country Office
Dan Rees	BW programme Director
Prof. N. Kabeer	BW programme Advisory Committee, London School of Economics
BW Indonesia (5 respondents)	BW Country Office

No	Constituent group	Interviewee(-s)	Interview type
Bangladesh			
1	Trade union representative	Chowdhury Ashiqul Alam, General Secretary, NCCWE	Individual interview
2	Employers' association representative	Mr. Md. Monower Hossain, Joint Secretary, Research, Development, and Trade Information (RDTI) & Head Sustainability at Brand BGMEA	Individual interview
3	Factory managers	Mr. Tazuddin Palash, Manager (Admin & Compliance) & his colleagues, Factory Name: Four H Lingerie Ltd.	Group interview
4	Factory workers	Asma Akter, Swing Operator, and her colleagues, Factory Name: Four H Lingerie Ltd.	Group interview
Cambodia			
5	Employers' association	Interview Mr. Ken Loo Secretary General of GMAC (Garment Manufacturers Association in Cambodia)	Individual interview

6	Trade union	Ms. Khimnary-President of Cambodian Federation of Independent Trade Union (CFITU) / Cambodian Independent Trade Union (CFITU)	Individual interview
7	Trade union	Mr. Ath Thon-President of Cambodia Labour Confederation	Individual interview
8	Factory managers	Fashiontex, Co.Ltd; interview was attended by compliance assistant, administrative clerk and chief of trade union, TUWFPD Union	Group interview
Egypt			
9	Buyer	Ms. Elham Moussa, Director of social compliance	Individual interview
10	Employers' association	El Sayed Torky –CSR manager in Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI)	Individual interview
11	Factory owners	Abd el Mohsen –Owner's delegate- head of QC Eng. Ihab Nabil – head of compliance	Group interview
12	Ministry of Manpower	Counsellor. Ehab Abd El Aty, Legal Adviser to the Ministry of Manpower Ms. Omnya –Secretary	Group interview
13	Factory worker	MR. Fasheh Nagib Michele – Worker at Tiba Factory	Individual interview
Ethiopia			
14	Workers' organisation	Ato Zerihun, CETU OSH advisor to the president of CETU	Individual interview
15	Workers' organisation	Angesom G/Yohannes, president of Industrial Federation of Textile, Leather and Garment worker trade union	Individual interview
16	Employers' association	Saud Mohammed	Individual interview
17	Employers' association	Hibret Hipia	Individual interview
18	Factory management	Silver factory management	Group interview
19	Factory management	Jay Jay factory management	Group interview
20	Factory worker	OSH committee (workers) from Jay Jay factory	Group interview
Indonesia			
21	Buyers	Meeting with buyers	Group consultation
22	Factory representatives	Meeting with factory representatives	Group consultation
23	Trade unions	Meeting with trade unions	Group consultation
Jordan			

24	Employers' association	JGATE chairman Ali Imran	Individual interview
25	Employers' association	Sanal Kumar, JGATE	Individual interview
26	Trade union	Fathalh Omrani (TU president) and others	Group interview
27	Employers' association	Ihab Quadri, JCI	Individual interview
28	Factory manager	Belal Harb; Century Miracle Jordan, Factory management	Individual interview
29	Factory worker	Century Miracle Jordan, Factory worker	Individual interview
Nicaragua			
30	Factory	Julio Cesar Arzú, CSR Manager, Ismo Textiles	Individual interview
31	Factory	Nuri Choi, Manager, BTF, S.A.	Individual interview
32	Factory	Jimmy Sevilla, Health and Safety Manager, Woojo	Individual interview
33	Trade union	Pedro Ortega, secretary general of the Trade Union Confederation of Workers of the Free Trade Zone	Individual interview
Vietnam			
34	Employers' association	Ms. Mai Hồng Ngọc, Department Head, Bureau for Employers' Activities; VCCI Hanoi	Individual interview
35	Employers' association	Ms. Bùi Thị Ninh, Head of Bureau for Employers' Activities; VCCI HCMC	Individual interview
36	Trade union	Mr. Nguyễn Phi Hổ Deputy Head of Policy and Law Department, HCMC Federation of Labour	Individual interview
37	Trade union	Ms. Hồ Thị Kim Ngân, Deputy Head of Industrial Relations Department; Vietnam General Confederation of Labour	Individual interview
38	Employer (factory owner)	Ms. Trần Gia Lệ (Kelly), Director of General Administration; Chutex International Co., Ltd.	Individual interview

► Annex 5. Lessons learnt and good practices

Better Work Phase IV Final Independent Cluster Evaluation (2017 – 2022)

Project DC/SYMBOL: GLO/17/55/MUL

Name of Evaluator: PPMI Group: Loes van der Graaf, Rimantas Dumcius, Radvilė Bankauskaitė, Tomas Armalys, Lea Roswell

Date: 21 November 2022

The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.

LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	TEXT
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	<p>The Better Work Programme has worked and engaged with buyers throughout programme implementation. However, the Covid-19 pandemic showed that BW had limited leverage to convince buyers not to suspend their contracts with partner factories.</p> <p>There is a clear need to focus not only on factory compliance, but also on purchasing practices, accountability, and compliance with ILS by buyers and brands themselves.</p>
Context and any related preconditions	The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted various weaknesses of the garment sector and its relations with global brands. Namely, lockdowns worldwide reduced sales and therefore reduced the needs of brands and buyers to purchase from garment factories. As a result, many buyers and brands invoked the Force Majeure clause in their contracts with factories and terminated/suspended their payments.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	Brands and buyers; factory owners affected by the pandemic and by suspended contracts
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	<p>The suspension of purchasing contracts by buyer, during the pandemic, demonstrated the limited resilience of factories and the lack of sufficient mitigation measures. Factory representatives noted that they faced layoffs, and, in some cases, even had to close their operations. These challenges also affected working conditions in the factories (e.g. payment of wages).</p> <p>Better Work was not sufficiently able to negotiate with buyers and convince them to respect contracts and find flexible solutions for factories. Additionally, the situation demonstrated that while Better Work was effective in engaging buyers for the purpose of improving factory practices, this did not result in improved practices of buyers themselves.</p>
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	Buyers have expressed their interest to be more involved in the programme, for example through the Better Work Academy. One buyer also noted that Better Work helped them to develop a better social responsibility strategy for their own practices. This shows that buyers may be open to improve their practices.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	The programme should enhance its engagement with buyers, particularly on raising awareness on the role and responsibility of buyers with regards to their factories.

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LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	TEXT
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	The absence of a clear sustainability and exit strategy has led to a disproportionate reliance of national stakeholders on Better Work to implement all factory services. As a result, there are no possibilities for Better Work to leave the countries where it is operating without undoing the progress made in recent years. Currently, national-level stakeholders are unable to take over, and/or replicate, the work of Better Work, even in countries where the programme has been active for decades.
Context and any related preconditions	The Better Work programme has been active in certain countries for decades, yet sustainability concerns were not included in its design or implementation. Stakeholders noted that it might be time to start handing over some of the factory-level activities to national stakeholders in these countries. Key challenges to achieving this are the lack of capacity and ownership at national level.
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	National constituents and stakeholders
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	National constituents and stakeholders in the Better Work countries currently do not have the capacity to implement factory-level activities, which are extremely resource intensive. This is exacerbated by a lack of ownership at the national level. This means that the activities and results will not last if Better Work leaves the countries in which it operates.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	Initial progress to sustainability has been made during Phase IV, namely through the development of the Guidance Paper for Sustainability, and through initial activities to develop national-level strategies.
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	A clear approach to sustainability is needed from the inception stage, taking into account country contexts. During the design and inception stages, significant attention needs to be paid to build the capacities of national stakeholders and to create effective partnerships, so that they are eventually able to take over the factory services, in the context of an exit strategy.

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LESSON LEARNED ELEMENT	TEXT
Brief description of lessons learned (link to specific action or task)	<p>Until recently, the Better Work programme benefitted from both donor support, as well as membership fees of buyers and factories; this promoted financial sustainability.</p> <p>However, Better Work's current financial model may not be sustainable enough to withstand changes in donor priorities (e.g. due to current crises), fluctuations in the global economic situation, and changes in programme activities (e.g. less factory activities so less cost-recovery); this may affect availability of funding, as well as the amount of funding needed in the future. Namely, the programme may lose income by shifting factory-level activities to stakeholders, while increasing capacity-building efforts. To finance these capacity-building activities, reliance on donor funding may increase.</p>
Context and any related preconditions	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic, as well as global crises such as the war in Ukraine, have shifted donor priorities (e.g., one donor invoked the force majeure during COVID-19) and resulted in worldwide inflation (e.g., cost of living) that affect workers' needs and wellbeing as well. As a result, there is uncertainty regarding the amount of funding that will be available for Better Work in the upcoming years, and possible cost fluctuations in the future are unclear.</p> <p>Additionally, changes in programme activities may reduce the involvement of Better Work in factory-level services. This will likely affect existing cost-recovery mechanisms, as the financial resources for factory assessments may be obtained by the labour inspectorates or other stakeholders who will take over such activities.</p>
Targeted users / Beneficiaries	ILO / BW staff
Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors	While the factory fees contribute to cost-recovery of core services, additional funding is needed for capacity-building and activities at national level. If BW adjusts its programme to focus less on core services and more on capacity-building and handing over the programme, it will receive less income from factory fees and become more reliant on other sources of funding.
Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors	There is a clear benefit of the factory contribution in terms of cost-recovery. This element can also contribute to sustainability, since the programme is able to function with limited reliance on donor funding
ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)	There is a need to reconsider funding sources and budgeting. Better Work will need to carefully consider how activities, planned outputs and priorities in Phase V are changing and how this may affect sources of funding.

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GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	TEXT
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	<p>Phase IV of the Better Work Programme has included a clear, evidence-based, targeted approach to gender equality. This has been achieved through the Global Gender Strategy, gender-based monitoring, and specific activities targeting female workers and women in management. Evidence shows that these efforts have significantly enhanced the impact of the Better Work programme on women.</p> <p>The Global Gender Strategy included specific focus areas to be addressed by the global and country Better Work teams, and indicators against which progress on gender equality could be measured. To enhance the relevance of the strategy, the Better Work country teams translated the global priorities to national needs and contexts, often with the main constituents or stakeholders. Many stakeholders noted that this fourth Phase significantly enhanced their awareness of gender inequality and harassment of women. This also helped them to better understand and address gender-related complaints, and to combat harassment in the workplace.</p>
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	<p>Phase IV of the Better Work programme was the first phase to include a specific strategy focusing on women's needs and gender equality considerations, and to develop and implement related activities.</p> <p>This approach was based on evidence from previous phases that demonstrated higher effectiveness on women for activities with a particular focus on gender equality, compared to those targeting all garment workers in general.</p>
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	<p>According to evidence from the evaluation, the positive impact on female workers and increased awareness of gender equality concerns are a direct result of the targeted focus on gender equality during this fourth phase.</p>
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	<p>Both female workers and other factory staff noticed an increased awareness of gender equality and issues facing women.</p> <p>The inclusion of specific indicators on women in Phase IV has led to improved measurement of impact of the Better Work's programme. Interviewed stakeholders mentioned that results have been more visible for female beneficiaries compared to previous phases.</p> <p>There have been improvements in assessments of the specific needs and challenges of women in the garment sector, leading to targeted interventions. This has enhanced the capacities of women, and improved the awareness of factory managers regarding the roles that women can play in management. Therefore, the Phase IV's targeted strategy towards gender equality has accelerated the programme's impact on gender equality.</p>

Potential for replication and by whom	This progress can be replicated in the current programme, by continuing to include gender-specific, evidence-based components in future phases. Other ILO programmes can replicate this experience by including gender-specific components in programmes that predominantly target female beneficiaries.
Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	This good practice is directly related to ILO's general cross-cutting priorities to promote gender equality.
Other documents or relevant comments	The Better Work Global Gender Strategy for 2018 – 2022 can be found here: https://betterwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/BW-GenderStrategy-v4-Web.pdf

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The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	TEXT
<p>Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)</p>	<p>Increased use of virtual tools in the BW programme can lead to efficiency gains and opportunities for programme sustainability.</p> <p>During the pandemic, BW staff were not able to conduct face-to-face meetings with each other or with beneficiaries, and innovative solutions were found, in particular through the use of virtual tools. This increased use of virtual tools responded to an immediate need of Better Work staff to remain connected to each other, and to continue implementing assessments and trainings by connecting virtually to factories and constituents.</p> <p>Efficiency gains were mostly noted in the increase in communication and exchanges that took place, since there were no financial and time expenses related to travel.</p> <p>Furthermore, virtual assessments of factories using online tools also led to more efficient execution of core services. While the use of a virtual tool for assessment is not as effective as a visit, such tools can be used in the context of capacity-building and sustainability, for instance when labour inspectors conduct the actual visits, and Better Work staff monitor the visit online.</p>
<p>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</p>	<p>The main preconditions for the replication and continuation of this practice are the presence of digital tools, connectivity and digital skills among Better Work employees. Without their ability to effectively use such tools, the efficiency gains will not be achieved, and they will not be able to train stakeholders.</p> <p>Access to adequate infrastructure is also essential at the country level for such tools to be used during virtual assessments.</p>
<p>Establish a clear cause-effect relationship</p>	<p>Since virtual communication tools require far less effort than travel, teams were able to communicate more often while using less time and financial resources.</p>
<p>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</p>	<p>The impact was mostly on the Better Work teams, who were able to exchange more regularly about progress and lessons learned.</p> <p>Initial results at the country level (virtual visits) show that there are opportunities to make factory visits less resource intensive.</p>
<p>Potential for replication and by whom</p>	<p>Enhanced communication can be replicated across the ILO, by using available virtual communication tools. The potential gains in terms of virtual factory-visits are more Better Work-specific, and can be implemented in future phases</p>
<p>Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)</p>	<p>Limiting travel leads to a lower environmental footprint of the programme and contributes to ILO Strategic frameworks in the area of environmental sustainability and climate change.</p>

**Other documents or
relevant comments**

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GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	TEXT
Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)	Closer integration of Better Work into overall ILO country programmes, such as the ONE-ILO approach, can lead to efficiency gains and enhance impact. In some countries, Ethiopia in particular, the Better Work programme has been integrated within the overall approach of the ILO country office – The “ONE-ILO approach”. This approach has ensured that Better Work activities are integrated into the holistic support to the country, rather than acting as stand-alone programme.
Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability	The ONE-ILO approach is a development across the ILO. In principle, there is the possibility to apply such an approach in all Better Work countries with multiple programmes/projects. Given that all ILO programmes should contribute to the same objectives (e.g. P&B at global level, DWCPs at country level, cross-cutting concerns), there are sufficient commonalities among all ILO efforts, such as promoting social dialogue and labour standards, to allow for streamlining of different programmes, even if their sectoral focus is different.
Establish a clear cause-effect relationship	<p>Currently, Better Work programmes have their own objectives, CTAs and administrative staff. However, the ILO office in Ethiopia, which implements the ONE-ILO approach, has pointed out that CTAs and administrative staff are shared across different programmes thus leading to efficiency gains in terms of human and financial resources.</p> <p>The evaluation found many examples of cooperation and coordination between programmes at country-level in Ethiopia, Egypt, and to some extent in Bangladesh. Namely, the programmes contributed to similar goals, and coordinated activities focusing on the same stakeholders (reducing the diversity of ILO contact points for stakeholders). A coordinated approach to common goals among the programmes can enhance the chances for impact.</p>
Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries	Increased impact in different areas of ILOs work is expected through the ONE-ILO approach. Namely, the results of Better Work in factories are complemented with national-level engagements of other programmes, and expanded to other sectors as well. Rather than working independently on specific goals, the ONE-ILO approach will have key objectives (e.g. as listed in the DWCP). The programmes that are part of the ONE-ILO approach are streamlined to contribute not only to their specific objectives, but to the objectives of the ONE-ILO programme as a whole. This enhances the likelihood that DWCP outcomes will be achieved.
Potential for replication and by whom	Other ILO offices, such as Bangladesh, are considering the ONE-ILO approach as well. This replication could provide benefits to Better Work as well as other ILO programmes. The ONE-ILO approach can be particularly useful for countries with multiple projects or programmes, where streamlining of resources and alignment of goals and objectives can enhance impact towards common goals, reduce possible overlaps and make more efficient use of resources.

Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	The ONE-ILO approach can enhance the achievement of DWCP outcomes, as the programme is more holistically focused on the DWCP (instead of having separate programmes with separate outcomes).
Other documents or relevant comments	

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The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report

GOOD PRACTICE ELEMENT	TEXT
<p>Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)</p>	<p>During Phase IV, Better Work has achieved promising results when combining environmental sustainability with working conditions. For example, Better Work Vietnam has collaborated with other donors/partners on this topic, such as the joint BW/ILO project with the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry on cleaner production and the Better Work-IFC project on environmental services, which included a Pilot Environmental Compliance Assessment.</p> <p>While the IFC’s input focused more on compliance with environmental legislation, Better Work focused on OSH and the use of harmful chemicals that can affect workers’ health. This clearly showed that environmental concerns can be a part of Better Work/ILO’s overall interventions regarding working conditions.</p>
<p>Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability</p>	<p>The good practice was enabled by the engagement of Better Work with the International Finance Corporation (IFC) who had experience in measuring environmental compliance. Additionally, the expressed interest of factories to explore the environmental dimension of compliance assessments provided a suitable environment for the pilot. Given that various stakeholders in other countries have expressed similar interests, there is a clear opportunity to expand the pilot to other countries.</p>
<p>Establish a clear cause-effect relationship</p>	<p>Buyers and brands are increasingly interested in more sustainably produced garments, leading them to introduce additional audits on environmental sustainability. Since this is a cross-cutting concern of ILO, and an interest of factories and buyers, this can be an area of opportunity for Better Work.</p>
<p>Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries</p>	<p>Given that environmental sustainability is an important cross-cutting concern for the ILO, and is growing in focus (e.g. GREENJOBS programme), there is potential to contribute both to the priorities of ILO and to the shifting priorities of buyers and factories, by expanding the scope of Better Work audits by linking working conditions and environmental concerns.</p>
<p>Potential for replication and by whom</p>	<p>Interviews with Indonesian factories pointed at another potential opportunity for Better Work. Namely, while Better Work focuses on social compliance, various buyers are expanding their audits to include environmental and sustainability considerations as well. Similarly, in Vietnam, factories were interested in, and satisfied with, pilot projects to explore the links between environmental sustainability and working conditions (OSH).</p> <p>Better Work could build on these pilots and respond to emerging demands related to environmental sustainability issues in future phases. There is also the opportunity to collaborate with other ILO units and support them in linking working conditions and environmental sustainability.</p>

Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)	Increased attention to environmental sustainability, as linked to working conditions, would contribute to ILO's crosscutting priorities.
Other documents or relevant comments	

► Annex 6. Intervention logic and evaluation matrix of the evaluation

The following intervention logic demonstrates the evaluation team's understanding of the Better Work interventions in Phase IV.

Table 22. Evaluation intervention logic

LEVEL OF INTERVENTION	Individual	Factory-Level	National
Preconditions	<p>Willingness of beneficiaries and constituents (e.g. MoU) to engage in the activities.</p> <p>Allocations of sufficient human, financial and material resources to the programme by ILO/IFC</p>		
Outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No of people attended training No of people received advisory services No of people attended dialogue meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No of factory compliance and process reports, pointing out areas for improvement No of social dialogue meetings organised within companies No of the company owners and/or managers who received training and advisory services, including on gender equality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No of reports assessing the capacity/needs of public authorities No of tripartite meetings organised Number of policy analysis reports, studies and briefs delivered Number of events organised attended by policy stakeholders
Assumptions	<p>Willingness and ability of participants and target beneficiaries to use the knowledge gained from training and advisory services, and research reports.</p> <p>Willingness to continue discussions and engage in collaboration.</p> <p>Willingness and capacity to implement the global gender equality strategy.</p>		
Results / outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No of people who acquired useful information and skills No of people who used information and applied the acquired skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New company rules and working procedures developed and adopted by company management New services/support made available to employees by the company New company (gender, HR, grievance holding, and so on) policies developed and adopted Sectoral level bipartite or tripartite agreements concluded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tripartite bodies institutionalised at sectoral and/or national level Increased understanding between parties involved on potential win-win Decisions to set up new or strengthening existing units/departments or entire public organisations Adopted new rules of procedure, adopting new methods and approaches to work with factories New proposals suggested for public policy agenda (draft legislation, draft funding programmes and etc.)
Assumptions	<p>General employment culture in the garment sector open to change.</p> <p>Political will to introduce new legal and policy documents.</p> <p>Constituents have the capacity to negotiate and discuss working conditions.</p> <p>Factory managers and directors have the capacity and willingness to introduce change.</p>		
Impacts BW programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No of people whose working conditions improved (shorter/more predictable hours, increased/more predictable pay, promotion, parental leave) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stronger loyalty of current employees Greater attractiveness of the company as a potential employer Higher productivity of employees More female managers Regular social dialogue meetings at sectoral level 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New legal acts and/ or new funding programmes adopted Regular follow-up on implementation through monitoring and evaluation, and labour inspection
Assumptions	<p>General employment culture in the country open to change. Improved working conditions enhance well-being at work.</p> <p>New/improved institutions have sufficient capacity and willingness to monitor factories and assess compliance.</p>		

Enhanced productivity grows company revenue, leading to enhanced tax revenue.

Political context is stable and facilitates trust in institutions and in long-term planning for improved working conditions across other sectors.

Wider combined impacts of ILO (BW and other areas) and its national and international partners

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Increased well-being of workers· Better standards of living ensured for the workers and their families· Children are better nourished, happier, spending more time in education | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Increased competitiveness of the company· Increased competitiveness of the sector· Sound industrial relations· Improved working conditions for sectoral employees | <ul style="list-style-type: none">· Increased number/share of factories complying fully/partially with International Labour Standards and national labour law (as per Better Work Compliance assessment tool)· Spillover to other sectors (harmonisation of conditions across sectors of economy, increased capacity used also in other sectors)· Spillover to other countries through international trade agreements· Increased gender equality |
|---|--|---|

Following the OECD/DAC approach, the evaluation criteria included relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. The specific evaluation questions and data collection tools are listed in Annex 7.

► Annex 7. Data collection matrix

Table 23. Evaluation question and data collection tools per question

Evaluation topic / main question	Evaluation sub-question	Desk review	Interviews	Case studies	Survey
RELEVANCE					
Was the Phase IV strategy and implementation of the Better Work project relevant for constituents, donors, and beneficiaries?	To what extent did Phase IV address the needs and priorities of constituents in the project countries? Were they involved in the strategy design?	X	X		X
	To what extent did Phase IV address the needs of workers and factory owners in the project countries? Were they involved in the strategy design?	X	X		
	To what extent did Phase IV address the priorities of donors, global buyers and international partners?	X	X		
Was Phase IV relevant in the context of COVID-19?	To what extent was the Phase IV overall approach adjusted in the context of COVID-19?	X	X	X	
	To what extent were specific activities altered during COVID-19 to ensure continued relevance of Better Work, and address new challenges?	X	X	X	
COHERENCE					
Was Phase IV aligned with the general strategies and priorities of ILO and IFC?	To what extent does the Phase IV strategy have the same thematic focus and priorities as P&B outcome 7 (output 7.1) and outcome 1, output 1.4. ?	X			
	To what extent does the Phase IV strategy contribute to IFC's general actions and priorities globally?	X	X		
	To what extent do country strategies and interventions of Better Work align with general Decent Work country programmes?	X	X		
Is Phase IV aligned with SDG priorities?	To what extent does the Phase IV strategy consider and contribute to the achievement of SDG 8, SDG 1, and SDG 5?	X			

To what extent do country interventions align with the Phase IV strategy?	To what extent do strategies of the project countries align with the overall Phase IV strategy?	X	X		
Is Phase IV aligned with other international initiatives on improving working conditions in the garment sector?	To what extent does Phase IV align with, and complement interventions of other international actors?	X	X		X
Does Phase IV align with ILO cross-cutting priorities?	To what extent does Phase IV contribute to, and incorporate, ILO's broader strategies on gender equality, disability inclusion, and environmental sustainability?	X	X	X	
	To what extent do Phase IV interventions contribute to the promotion of labour standards, social dialogue and tripartism?	X	X	X	
EFFECTIVENESS					
Did Phase IV achieve its intended outputs?	To what extent were all planned outputs targeting individuals delivered and targets met?	X	X		
	To what extent were all planned outputs targeting factories delivered and targets met?	X	X		
	To what extent were all planned outputs targeting the policy-level delivered and targets met?	X	X		
	To what extent were outputs focusing on gender equality, inclusion of disabled, and environmental sustainability delivered?	X	X		
	What factors hindered or facilitated the implementation of planned activities?	X	X		
Did Phase IV achieve its intended results?	To what extent did the outputs result in enhanced skills and capacity of trained persons?	X	X		X
	To what extent did the outputs result in new factory rules and procedures, new services for employees and new factory strategies for gender equality?	X	X	X	X
	To what extent did the outputs result in enhanced capacity of governments to improve the institutional and policy framework for working conditions in garment factories?	X	X		X
	To what extent did the outputs result in enhanced social dialogue?	X	X	X	X
	What factors hindered the achievement of expected results?	X	X		

Did Phase IV contribute to the achievement of cross-cutting objectives?	To what extent did Phase IV contribute to improved skills and capacity among women and persons with disabilities?	X	X	X	X
	To what extent did Phase IV contribute to enhanced skills and capacity to address environmental sustainability?	X	X		X
Did Phase IV achieve its objectives with regard to COVID-19	To what extent did Phase IV achieve its objectives to address COVID-19-created challenges?	X	X	X	
EFFICIENCY					
Did Phase IV receive sufficient resources to achieve its objectives?	To what extent were financial resources sufficient to meet the project's objectives?	X	X		X
	To what extent were human resources sufficient to meet the project's objectives?	X	X		X
	Could the project have been implemented in a more cost-effective manner?	X	X		
	To what extent did the programme at country levels receive adequate administrative, technical, and political support from Better Work Global?	X	X		X
Was Phase IV implemented in a timely manner?	To what extent were the project activities implemented according to the initial timeline?	X	X		
Was the internal management and coordination structure efficient?	To what extent did the management structure facilitate effective implementation of Phase IV?		X		
	How effective was the collaboration between Better Work and other ILO departments	X	X		X
	To what extent did countries exchange practices and learn from each other?	X	X	X	X
Was Phase IV monitoring efficient?	To what extent were objectives realistic for the project countries?	X	X		
	To what extent did Better Work country teams develop and use monitoring frameworks for project progress?	X	X		
	To what extent did country teams use SMART indicators to monitor project achievements?	X	X		
	To what extent were results of past monitoring and evaluation used to inform Phase IV activities?		X		
IMPACT					

Are there signs that Phase IV will have an impact on decent work, poverty, women empowerment, business competitiveness and inclusive economic growth?	To what extent have specific job quality aspects and well-being at work of garment workers improved and which specific job quality aspects should still be significantly improved?	X	X		X
	To what extent are factories demonstrating change in behaviour and practices towards creating better job quality?	X	X	X	X
	To what extent has the productivity and competitiveness of garment factories in the BW programme increased?	X	X		X
	To what extent have governments introduced new laws, policies, and/or institutions likely to affect working conditions in the garment sector?	X	X		X
	What other trends or indications of impact are visible across the nine countries?	X	X		
	What trends or indications of impact are visible regarding social dialogue, tripartism and promotion of labour standards?	X	X	X	
	What trends or indications of impact are visible regarding gender equality, inclusion of the disabled, and environmental sustainability?	X	X	X	
How is the likelihood of impact affected?	What factors are likely to facilitate and enhance the impact of Phase IV	X	X		
	What factors create, or may create barriers to achieving impact?	X	X		
	How does the likelihood of impact differ between countries and what causes this difference?	X	X		
SUSTAINABILITY					
What is the likelihood that the results of Phase IV will be sustained?	To what extent are sustainability strategies in place at the global and country levels?	X	X	X	
	To what extent do these strategies build on lessons learnt from previous Phases?	X	X	X	
	To what extent do sustainability strategies include a gradual approach to decreasing ILO support?	X	X	X	
	What factors are likely to facilitate and enhance the sustainability of Phase IV?	X	X	X	
	Have BW Phase IV activities enabled and encouraged national and sectoral level actors to implement, reinforce and uphold ILO standards? Will this also be the case when Better Work exits the country?	X	X	X	X

	What factors hinder, or may hinder the sustainability of the project in case the Better Work programme were to end?	X	X	X	X
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► Annex 8. Sustainability Roadmap examples

Sustainability can be achieved by supporting and investing in the capacity of BW countries to design and implement their own BW policies, to build and strengthen institutions and procedures that would enable the countries to gradually take over from the ILO BW as they reach an increased degree of policy and governance maturity. Our examples provide a framework to measure this level of maturity and the progress of BW countries over time as well as indicates the appropriate focus of the capacity-building interventions for each level.

Assuming that Better Work wants to eventually hand over the core services to national stakeholders, the following table (adapted from the ETF model) could serve as inspiration for creating a similar scale for the BW countries and support. This needs to be tailored further to align fully with the BW outcomes and the Phase V strategy.

Table 24. ETF's maturity levels for public policy and governance, adapted to reflect Better Work

Policy stage / implementation level	Descriptor	Modality of work	Target interventions by policy stage
Ad hoc	Roles and responsibilities of actors are not clear, processes are difficult to track, partnerships are not developed, and actors are not connected. There is no clear approach or strategy in place. Consultation with different stakeholders happens ad hoc only.	Awareness and mapping	Mapping of governance structures and modalities, identification of targets. Awareness raising of the importance of partnerships and social dialogue in the context of working conditions. Needs assessment of institutional capacities and mapping capabilities by stakeholder/actor group. <i>In this situation, BW would be completely responsible for setting up and executing the core services, since there is no structure or capacity of governments to do so.</i>
Initial	Individual actors have the need to develop and clarify roles and functions to better contribute to the system's governance. Access to information for all actors is still limited and prevents building coalitions, strategies, and implementation of consolidated approaches. Consultation mechanisms are sporadic, informal, inconsistent.	Conceptualisation and institutional development	Institutional/organisational development. Definition of legal frameworks, procedures, infrastructure. Strategic development and definition of approach. Capacity building of individual actors (at different governance levels and within specific functions). Establishment of institutional performance targets and monitoring mechanisms. <i>At this stage, government actors could start shadowing BW enterprise advisers for the purpose of learning. BW is still responsible for the core services, but also to support the government in developing institutions and an infrastructure that could take over the core services eventually.</i>

Structured	Actors have good capacities in place, as well as processes and procedures. Delivery is weak and policy networks need to be strengthened/defined. Access to information is defined but not always shared by all actors in the system, and randomly used for formal policy negotiations.	Implementation. Delivery of functions by mandate and defined role. Coordination mechanisms development for improvement of delivery and effectiveness Policy networks creation supported	Pilot actions to support the policy implementation, establishment of indicators and monitoring tools to measure progress. Pilot and consolidation of coordination mechanisms (among actors, vertically and horizontally) Competences of actors are developed in relation to participation, negotiation, partnership mechanisms, and policy networking. <i>This would be the phase where core factory services could be implemented jointly by BW and national actors. E.g. identify pilot factories where the governments are responsible to organise assessments and advisory services (together with BW staff who shadow the stakeholders).</i>
Defined	The system's functions, roles and responsibilities are clearly mapped and run. Coordination mechanisms are in place and function. Policy networks are active. Accountability in implementation, joined-up policies, and bottom-up processes need to be streamlined. Innovation needs to be embedded in the system to ensure further adaptation and development of the governance model.	Implementation and monitoring are in place. Introduction of innovative tools for governance and functions delivery and monitoring	Support to monitor implementation and analyse efficiency gains potential. Introduction of innovative tools, methods, arrangements to strengthen and develop governance. Support to policy networks. Trade-off and cost-benefits, and efficiency gain analyses and capacity building for innovation. <i>The national government takes over the core services, but BW is still available to provide advice and support, and to monitor the implementation by the government.</i>
Consolidated	Consolidation is at the core of the system, transparency and access to information is ensured at all levels of governance. The strategy of the government is clear, monitored and improved for the benefits of the sector.	Independent policy learning	The programme can exit the country. It can act as external evaluator/ critical friend. The country should conduct impact evaluations and lessons learnt. <i>Here, peer learning between BW countries also should play a role to facilitate continued learning.</i>

Source: ETF. Mid-Term Perspective 2014-2017. Annex 4.

Besides the different levels assigned to countries to identify their situation and their needs for interventions, the ETF also developed indicators to score governments, which allows ETF to assess governance and identify key gaps to be addressed in its interventions. Some examples are provided below, adjusted where needed to the BW context.

Table 25. ETF principles and indicators for assessing and developing good multilevel governance

Principle	Indicators	Scoring
Relevance	Governance systems support the economic role of the garment sector by providing incentives and beneficial export conditions for factories with good working conditions.	(1)—(2)—(3)—(4)—(5)—(6)
	Governance systems support the social/equity role of the garment sector by ensuring (gender) equality in working conditions.	(1)—(2)—(3)—(4)—(5)—(6)

	Governance systems respond to factory and workers' needs by developing policies that help grow the sector and protect its workers.	(1)—(2)—(3)—(4)—(5)—(6)
Effectiveness	Feedback shows that current governance systems support decent work in the garment sector, and implement reforms to align with ILS.	(1)—(2)—(3)—(4)—(5)—(6)
	Garment sector policies support national development goals and broader labour market, economic, and decent work policies at national, sectoral, and factory-level.	(1)—(2)—(3)—(4)—(5)—(6)
	Goals are formulated in response to shared concerns and identified policy gaps, while taking into account feasibility of resources for implementation.	(1)—(2)—(3)—(4)—(5)—(6)
Subsidiarity and proportionality	Evidence shows that roles and responsibilities of stakeholders do not conflict and do not leave gaps in the policymaking process.	(1)—(2)—(3)—(4)—(5)—(6)
	Both hard regulation (laws, etc.) and soft regulation (recommendations, opinions, cooperation agreements, etc.) are used and apply at each stage and level in the policy cycle.	(1)—(2)—(3)—(4)—(5)—(6)
Transparency	The policy cycle for decent work in the garment sector is an open process that engages the identified relevant stakeholders.	(1)—(2)—(3)—(4)—(5)—(6)
	Policy dialogue is coordinated and supported by relevant documentation, reports, guidelines, etc.	(1)—(2)—(3)—(4)—(5)—(6)
	Management information systems and other data meet the governance needs of the stakeholders.	(1)—(2)—(3)—(4)—(5)—(6)
	Formal and informal mechanisms for sharing information operate, so that information is used regularly by garment sector stakeholders.	(1)—(2)—(3)—(4)—(5)—(6)
Accountability	Governance practices comply with standards, regulations and procedures and are agreed by different stakeholders.	(1)—(2)—(3)—(4)—(5)—(6)
	Governance responsibilities, roles and functions are defined clearly and take into account the outcomes expected by users and stakeholders.	(1)—(2)—(3)—(4)—(5)—(6)
	Decision makers assess and respect the contributions and recommendations of the different VET stakeholders.	(1)—(2)—(3)—(4)—(5)—(6)
Participation	The appropriate range of stakeholders engaged collaboratively throughout the policy cycle.	(1)—(2)—(3)—(4)—(5)—(6)
	Different government agencies (e.g. ministries) and the different levels of government (e.g. national/regional/local) are actively engaged.	(1)—(2)—(3)—(4)—(5)—(6)

	Coordinated participation mechanisms (e.g. social dialogue, consultation, advisory bodies) enable stakeholders to participate at key points.	(1)—(2)—(3)—(4)—(5)—(6)
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Source: ETF (2015) Governance of Vocational Education and Training in the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean.