



► **High-level independent
evaluation of ILO's strategy
and action for promoting fair
and effective labour migration
policies, 2016-20**



▶ **High-level independent evaluation of ILO's strategy and action for promoting fair and effective labour migration policies, 2016-20**

Evaluation Office

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► Abbreviations

ACT/EMP	ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities
ACTRAV	ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities
AMEM	Support for Fair Migration for the Maghreb (Appui à la migration équitable pour le Maghreb)
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CEACR	Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations
CNDS	National Council for Social Dialogue (Tunisia)
COP	Conference of the Parties (United Nations Convention on Climate Change)
CPO	Country Programme Outcome
DC	Development Cooperation
DCOMM	ILO Department of Communication and Public Information
DDG/FOP	Deputy Director-General for Field Operations and Partnerships
DDG/P	Deputy Director-General for Policy
DEVINVEST	ILO Development and Investment Branch
DFAT	Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
DWT	Decent Work Technical Support Team
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EU	European Union
EVAL	ILO Evaluation Office
FAIRWAY	Regional Fair Migration Project in the Middle East
FAIR	Integrated Programme on Fair Recruitment
FUNDAMENTALS	ILO Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GCC	Cooperation Council for the Arab States (Gulf Cooperation Council)
GCM	Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
GMG	Global Migration Group
HLE	high-level evaluation
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development (includes Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda)
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IOE	International Organization of Employers

IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITUC	International Trade Union Confederation
JLMP	Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration
JWB	Justice Without Borders
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MIGRANT	ILO Labour Migration Branch
MoU	memorandum of understanding
MRC	Migrant Worker Resource Centre
MTPS	Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (Ministerio de Trabajo y Previsión Social), Guatemala
NGO	non-governmental organization
NIS	National Institute of Statistics (Tunisia)
NORMES	ILO International Labour Standards Department
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECD/DAC	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Development Assistance Committee
OSH	occupational safety and health
P&B	programme and budget
PARDEV	ILO Partnerships and Field Support Department
PROSPECTS	Partnership for Improving Prospects for Forcibly Displaced Persons and Host Communities
PROGRAM	ILO Strategic Programming and Management Department
RB	Regular Budget
RBSA	Regular Budget Supplementary Account
RBTC	Regular Budget Technical Cooperation
RCM	Regional Conference on Migration
REC	regional economic community
REFRAME	Global Action to Improve the Recruitment Framework of Labour Migration
SADC	Southern African Development Community (includes Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe)
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SKILLS	ILO Skills and Employability Branch
SMART indicators	specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-based
SOCPRO	ILO Social Protection Department
TESDA	Technical Education and Skills Authority

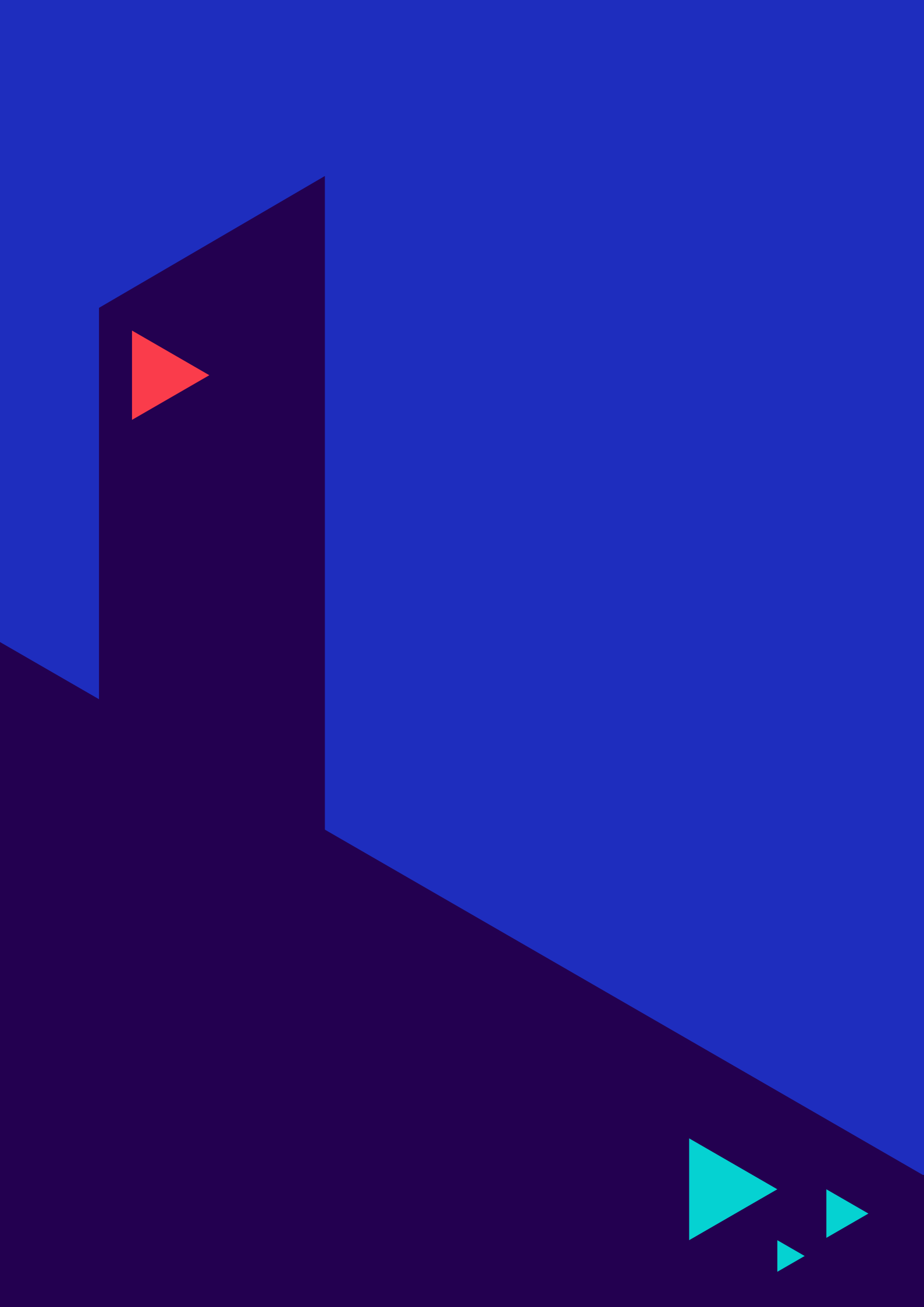
THAMM	Towards a Holistic Approach to Labour Migration Governance and Labour Mobility in North Africa
UGTT	General Union of Workers of Tunisia
UN	United Nations
UN Women	United National Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UTICA	Tunisian Union of Industry, Trade and Handicrafts (Union Tunisienne de l’Industrie, du Commerce et de l’Artisanat)
WHO	World Health Organization
WIF	Work in Freedom (Nepal)
XBDC	Extrabudgetary Development Cooperation

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► Executive summary

Purpose and scope

Following the Governing Body's approval in November 2020 of EVAL's 2021 work plan for 2021, which called for an evaluation of the ILO's work on fair recruitment and labour migration, the evaluation aims to provide an account regarding performance strategy and key results to the Governing Body. It also presents an opportunity to appreciate what are the successes and limits in the ILO's strategy in promoting fair labour migration, all the while assessing the impact and effectiveness of the work on fair recruitment. The evaluation of these factors will act as a possible steppingstone in making mindful decisions in areas related to this theme.

The evaluation focused on the ILO's work on fair and effective labour migration from 2016 to 2020, covering the programmes and budgets (P&Bs) of 2016–17, 2018–19 and half of 2020–21, with a specific focus on Outcome 9 on labour migration (2016–19) and Output 7.5 (2020). Similarly, Outcome 5.3, on the skills of labour migrants, received meticulous attention. The evaluation also reviewed the ILO's work on fair and effective labour migration at a global and strategic level, by approaching regional and interregional examples, as well as country level studies, to get a better understanding of how the ILO conducts its work. Another inclusion within the evaluation is the response to the COVID19 pandemic and the identification of how well the ILO could continue navigating in a significantly altered environment. Furthermore, the evaluation covered cross-cutting issues relating to labour migration, such as gender equality, persons with disabilities, the harassment of migrant workers and environmental concerns.

Summary of findings

Relevance

Key finding 1: The ILO's work is unique in the global area of labour migration, particularly owing to its ability to connect migrants to the labour market. It is the only agency that addresses labour migration through social dialogue and tripartism, which is perceived as its main added value compared with other agencies.

Key finding 2: The topic of labour migration was considered highly relevant to all constituents, including donors and migrant workers themselves. All constituents agreed on the importance of the fair recruitment programmes. Constituents at the regional economic community or international levels more often perceive the ILO's work as relevant and important, in comparison with those at the national level, where a "nationals first" attitude often prevails among certain trade unions.

Key finding 3: The ILO's work has remained relevant during the COVID-19 pandemic, as the Organization has managed to adjust its activities and enhance its focus on returnees and access to social protection, the most pressing issues of the time. Some of these topics, such as that of returnees, were not previously prioritized by the ILO, which shows the flexibility of the Organization to switch its fields of work to address urgent arising needs.

The topic of labour migration is of great importance to constituents, due to the global scale of labour migration and the importance of accessing labour at all skill levels, sending and receiving remittances and salaries, among other issues. Although workers' organizations are more concerned about rights, and employers' organizations are more concerned about skills, the ILO balanced different interests by ensuring involvement of all constituents in its interventions.

Over the evaluation period, the ILO did well to integrate the increased demand for fair recruitment by constituents. The evaluation found a variety of initiatives and projects on fair recruitment, with constituents considering its work highly relevant.

The pandemic enhanced the importance of the ILO's work to protect the rights of migrants and refugees in the labour market. Social protection for migrant workers and integration of returnees were most prominent on the international agenda, and the ILO ensured that efforts were readjusted to meet these demands. Additionally, the pandemic heightened the importance of the ILO's work to combat harassment and negative stereotypes against migrant workers.

Coherence

Key finding 4: The ILO managed to coordinate its interventions in labour migration with other organizations to avoid overlap, although in some instances it could not be prevented.

Key finding 5: Although recognition of the ILO's added value is known, its achievements and interventions are not always clearly visible to all stakeholders. In fact, several stakeholders consider that the ILO sometimes "gets lost" in the plethora of labour migration actors.

Key finding 6: The ILO's work on labour migration is coherent with ILO strategies on gender equality, nondiscrimination and social dialogue, while increasing attention is paid to environmental sustainability. Little evidence was found on the integration of disability perspectives in ILO labour migration interventions.

The ILO actively collaborates with many international organizations, including the World Bank, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), and various United Nations (UN) organizations. This allows for the creation of synergies and complementarity with various other initiatives.

The work of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the ILO on labour migration led to some activities overlapping between them, becoming more prominent due to the ILO's growing involvement with crisis migration, and after the establishment of the IOM's labour migration unit. Despite these initial frictions, both sides are coming to a mutual understanding, illustrated by their ongoing cooperation and recent memorandum of understanding. However, representatives of both the ILO and the IOM indicated that cooperation and collaboration could still improve, notably at the country level.

While the ILO's added value and unique characteristics are recognized by constituents, partners and donors, the sheer number of actors working in the field of migration can cause the Organization to lose its visibility and limit its ability to directly connect the positive impact of its work. The Fair Recruitment Initiative is one area where some stakeholders indicated that too many initiatives took place, and the work of ILO sometimes got "lost".

Effectiveness

Key finding 7: In almost all instances, the ILO met its P&B targets. It exceeded some of the expected results under Indicator 9.1 (2016–17), by supporting Member States and regional or subregional institutions in the process of developing and implementing policy, legislation, and bilateral and multilateral agreements; and under Indicator 9.3 (2018–19), by supporting Member States in the process of establishing or strengthening institutional mechanisms to implement and monitor governance frameworks on labour migration. The P&B for 2016–17 transposes the labour protection resolutions adopted by the International Labour Conference at its 104th Session (2015) by including a commitment to protect migrants and to address the discriminatory impact of wage policies. Some aspects of these resolutions are also reflected in the P&Bs for 2018–19 and 2020–21.

Key finding 8: Of the survey respondents, 66.4 per cent agree that the ILO has a clear approach to fair and effective labour migration (rating 5 or 6). The Fair Recruitment Initiative – specifically the [General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment and definition of recruitment fees and related costs](#) – has high potential to respond to Member States’ needs and respective legal systems.

Key finding 9: Improved capacity of constituents and enhanced social dialogue on labour migration were found to be important outcomes of many ILO interventions.

Key finding 10: The ILO’s cross-cutting work on international labour standards and gender equality was mostly effective. The advancement of compliance with international labour standards positively affected social dialogue and the inclusion of relevant stakeholders. Environmental sustainability is growing as a concern; however, it is hard to assess effectiveness in this regard, as the current consideration of the topic is fragmented and is not integrated in monitoring frameworks. No evidence was found on the effectiveness of the ILO’s work on labour migration for persons with disabilities.

Key finding 11: The ILO’s work on mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic – in particular, its technical support to Member States on protecting the rights of migrant workers and negotiating with other countries on wage payments, as well as its research on the effects of COVID-19 on labour migration – was perceived as one of its most effective fields of work over the evaluation period (by 57.3 per cent of survey respondents).

Enhanced capacity is one of the main outcomes of the ILO’s interventions. Examples include the capacity to conduct social dialogue; monitoring migration processes; and policymaking on labour migration, including knowledge and awareness of migrant-related issues.

Another important outcome was the strengthened social dialogue that occurred, both at the country and regional economic community levels. The ILO’s labour migration projects contributed to the establishment of regional tripartite dialogue measures and of regional employers’ and employees’ organizations (such as the Intergovernmental Authority on Development and the Southern African Development Community (SADC)).

Survey respondents generally perceived the Fair Recruitment Initiative as effective, and examples were found of fair recruitment principles transposed to national policies and laws. However, interviews also highlighted the need for enhanced efforts on this topic, as the principles tend to be only partially implemented locally, making it difficult to govern the fair recruitment of migrant workers.

Efficiency

Key finding 12: Constituents and other stakeholders are generally satisfied with the timeliness, accessibility and availability of the ILO’s work, despite occasional delays in project execution.

Key finding 13: The ILO’s human resources for labour migration issues are perceived as being stretched to meet the volume of projects and demand in the field. Whereas the number of regular budget core staff at the headquarters level remained relatively stable in 2016–20 (11 regular budget core staff at the headquarters level in 2016–20), five P4 positions were nevertheless added (one at headquarters and four in the field) during the same period. Resource mobilization increased substantially between 2016–17 and 2018–19, from US\$24.9 million to US\$57.5 million.

Key finding 14: Existing monitoring and evaluation approaches do not always allow for the effective evaluation of the impact of labour migration projects, due to a lack of data on results, missing baselines and weak or absent monitoring frameworks. However, steps have already been taken to improve these approaches.

Key finding 15: Survey respondents evaluated coordination and collaboration between technical units at the headquarters level (82 per cent) and between headquarters and the field (74 per cent) as highly effective. The survey findings were supported by interviewees providing examples of successful cooperation. Labour migration projects often benefit from the expertise of different branches or departments (for example, the expertise of the Labour Migration Branch (MIGRANT) combined with that of the Social Protection Department (SOCPRO) or the Skills and Employability Branch (SKILLS)), ensuring that labour migration is addressed in different dimensions of the labour market.

Relevant constituents and stakeholders perceived the ILO's work as timely, easily available and accessible. Its effective internal collaboration helps deliver projects in an efficient manner. Interaction between headquarters and field offices only intensified during the COVID-19 pandemic, as more meetings moved online, allowing staff to share best practices.

The majority of interviewed and surveyed ILO staff who work on labour migration issues argued that human resources were insufficient. Staff pressures were eased somewhat by hiring for more positions in 2018–19, yet the number of positions with high technical expertise in the form of staff grades remained low.

Donors often put limits on the share of funds that could be used to hire staff. Interviewed ILO staff were convinced that, in some cases, the caps reduced rather than enhanced project outcomes. This is because, being unable to hire staff, project managers rely on consultants, who need time to get familiar with the country and project context, or are simply unable to deliver some of the project activities at the needed quality. Some donor organizations indicated their openness to flexibility in terms of budget allocations.

The adequacy of monitoring and evaluation frameworks varied – from completely adequate in some countries, to inadequate – when essential information on project activities could not be traced back. The evaluation of the impact of particular initiatives appeared particularly challenging, due to the difficulties in measuring the ILO's outcomes, and the multitude of similar projects, making it difficult to attribute impact to one particular intervention. The limited ability of the ILO to clearly identify its contribution to impact also leads to low awareness and visibility of ILO actions on labour migration.

Likelihood of impact and sustainability

Key finding 16: The most visible and clear impact of the ILO's work is the adoption of legislation and policies facilitating fair labour migration. Examples of legal and policy changes in Member States were noted worldwide, although progress towards the ratification of Conventions related to migrant workers was slow.

Key finding 17: The adoption of legislation and policy frameworks is a crucial facilitator of sustainability. However, impact can be affected by a lack of implementation measures, as well as by labour migration barriers put up by other countries.

Key finding 18: Enhancing impact and facilitating sustainability raise similar challenges, particularly changing political contexts and short project durations that do not allow for long-term implementation support.

The Fair Recruitment Initiative of the ILO is a good example of where more impact can be achieved through the focus on regulatory frameworks at the country level. Constituents believe that the introduction of legislation and policy frameworks applying to all labour migration actors would enhance the impact and sustainability of fair recruitment achievements more than interventions targeting migrant workers and employers alone.

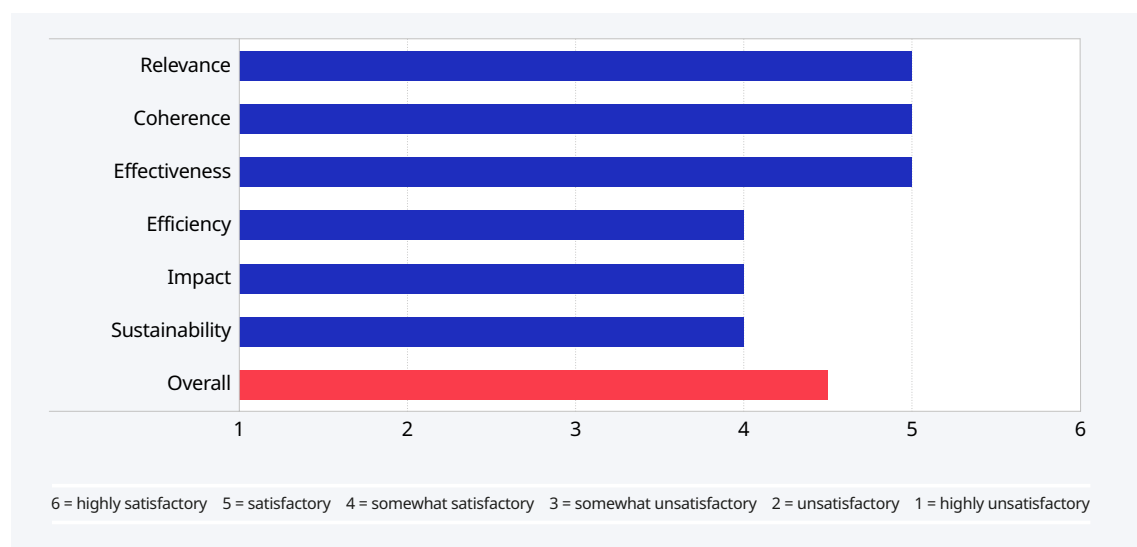
Various examples were found of increased capacity and ownership of results (such as cofunding and buy-in) by constituents, which serve as positive indicators for the likelihood of sustained impact.

The ILO's lack of field presence in Member States where it provides technical support prevents it from providing continuous services, not just during a project, but also in followup of technical assistance to support the implementation of new laws and policies.

Overall assessment

Scores in figure 1 show the performance of the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the ILO's work on labour migration based on survey results, scores from the synthesis report, the P&B results (effectiveness only), and the assessment of the evaluation team. The scale goes from 1, the lowest score, indicating highly unsatisfactory results, to 6, the highest score, indicating highly satisfactory results.

► **Figure 1. Overall assessment of the ILO's work on fair and effective labour migration**



Conclusions and lessons learned

During the period under review, the ILO has made significant progress in its overall work on fair labour migration, including in the context of fair recruitment. It has been able to position itself visàvis other international actors and agencies as an organization with a unique mandate and expertise in respect of the labour market dimensions of migration governance.

Major projects at the regional, interregional and country levels have included legal and political reform among their principal objectives, and ample examples have been found worldwide over the 2016–20 period in the field of labour migration. This is a key element facilitating the impact and sustainability of the ILO's work.

The work of the ILO on labour migration was perceived as highly relevant, useful and effective over the 2016–20 period. Despite one missed target in the 2018–19 biennium, the ILO exceeded its targets set for 2016–17, and demonstrated significant progress in 2020. The work of the ILO in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic was found particularly relevant and effective. However, the impact of the pandemic will persist in the years to come, and will continue to affect labour migration. Therefore, constituents request additional and enhanced efforts from the ILO to address the issues caused by the pandemic in countries of both origin and destination.

The evaluation found multiple barriers to the work of the ILO, related to both internal and external challenges. The changing political context is a crucial factor that affects the work of the ILO. Its work, predominantly at the political level, was found to be both highly valuable and extremely vulnerable in respect of impact and sustainability.

The heavy workload places a substantial burden on ILO staff, and interventions often lack personnel with sufficient technical expertise. Short-term projects witness higher consultant turnover, which increases the work needed to onboard consultants, and limits knowledge management within the ILO. Short-term projects also limit the ability to provide long-term technical assistance, particularly in respect of the implementation of newly adopted laws and policies.

Gaps in the ILO's visibility were identified, both in terms of its overall vision and activities, and in terms of the ILO standing out among other agencies. This is linked to the lack of an ILO presence on the ground in many countries, which would facilitate ongoing engagement and visibility among stakeholders.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1

Increase ILO visibility by expanding capacity to communicate, and by strengthening its participation in global, regional and country-level groups and networks. The ILO should lead initiatives, demonstrate impact and set the agenda in promoting fair and effective labour migration, and in addressing labour mobility issues related to crisis, such as access to labour markets for refugees and those forcibly displaced.

Global advocacy – including through the development of guidance materials and other efforts to share the ILO's strengths and values with international partners – has been of key importance. Ensuring the visibility of the ILO's achievements is also of key importance, particularly in order to demonstrate impact. However, this high-level evaluation has shown that the achievements and roles of the ILO are not always visible, particularly among other international actors.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Labour Migration (MIGRANT), Department of Communication and Public Information (DCOMM), regional offices, Decent Work Technical Support Teams (DWTs)	High	Long-term	Low-medium (dissemination) Medium (on-the-ground presence)

Recommendation 2

The ILO should continue and enhance its work in respect of migration corridors and regional economic communities, through capacity-building and the sharing of best practices with regional economic communities and constituents.

The continuation and strengthening of cooperation with regional economic communities can have a significant impact on various factors affecting labour migration. While in some areas the effectiveness of this approach is already clear, other regional economic communities still require strengthening before impact can be achieved.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
MIGRANT, Governance and Tripartism Department (GOVERNANCE), regional offices, DWTs, International Training Centre (ITC-ILO)	Medium	Long-term	Medium

Recommendation 3

The ILO should ensure that its development cooperation work explicitly identifies a sustainability plan and follow-up, and provides for greater technical support at the country level, to encourage the implementation of and compliance with ratified Conventions, relevant policies and laws, and its global guidelines and recommendations.

The ILO created impact through the design and adoption of labour migration policies and legislation. However, a pressing need for the future is to strengthen mechanisms for implementation and supervision. The high workload and insufficient resources on the ground are key barriers in this regard. The ILO's non-binding documents (guidelines and recommendations) require extensive follow-up and advocacy to ensure their implementation.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
MIGRANT, Partnerships and Field Support Department (PARDEV), International Labour Standards Department (NORMES), regional offices, DWT, Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV), Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP), Strategic Programming and Management Department (PROGRAM)	High	Long-term	High

Recommendation 4

The ILO should strengthen its monitoring and evaluation approaches on labour migration at the global, regional and national levels.

Several reports noted that it was not possible to assess impact, owing to a lack of data, missing baselines and weak, inadequate or absent monitoring frameworks. A similar issue was noted in terms of cross-cutting issues addressed through labour migration projects. Gaps in monitoring and evaluation translate to a lack of evidence on the achievements of the ILO and the impact on migrant workers attributable to the ILO's work.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
MIGRANT, PARDEV, PROGRAM, support from EVAL	High	Medium-term	Medium

Recommendation 5

The ILO should continue strengthening its work on fair recruitment, particularly to better translate global outputs to the national level and enhance synergies between its projects and between ILO initiatives and other organizations' initiatives on fair recruitment.

Whereas the ILO's work on fair recruitment was found to be highly relevant and effective, insufficiency of regulations and enforcement of fair recruitment persists, which could relate to the non-binding nature of the guidelines and the need for increased awareness of the potential of this instrument to support government and constituents. More attention should be paid to the translation of the fair recruitment principles and guidelines to national legal frameworks.

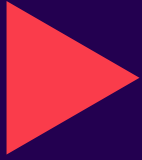
Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
MIGRANT with NORMES, and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch (FUNDAMENTALS)	High	Long-term	Medium

Recommendation 6

The ILO should enhance its efforts to address the challenges caused by COVID-19 on social protection for migrant workers and refugees in the labour market, engagement with both origin and destination countries on decent work opportunities, skills recognition and protection, both in the short term and in the longer term.

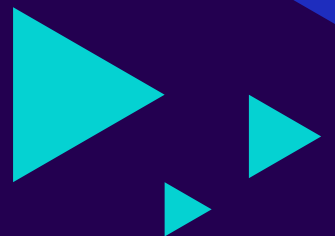
The ILO already conducted some important work on this issue. However, some stakeholders indicate that the ILO can still do more, and the issues related to COVID-19 and labour migration are far from resolved. To restart labour migration and ensure the protection of migrant workers' rights, renewed and enhanced efforts are needed worldwide to address the challenges caused or enhanced by COVID-19.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
MIGRANT, Social Protection Department, GOVERNANCE, Deputy Director-General for Policy (DDG/P), Deputy Director-General for Field Operations and Partnerships (DDG/FOP), DWTs	High Medium	Short-term Medium-term	Medium



1

Introduction



▶ 1. Introduction

This report comprises the high-level evaluation on the ILO's strategies and actions on promoting fair and effective labour migration policies over the period 2016–20. In November 2020, the Governing Body endorsed EVAL's work plan for 2021, which included a call for an evaluation of the ILO's work on the fair recruitment of migrant workers. As stated in the terms of reference, the evaluation examines all of the ILO's work on fair labour migration, with an in-depth focus on fair recruitment, as requested by the Governing Body.

1.1. Purpose of the evaluation

The evaluation considered all efforts by the Office to support the achievement of its commitment to promoting fair labour migration during this period. Past thematic evaluations on labour migration (2013), as well as the 2008 high-level evaluation on the same topic, were used to understand the past context of the ILO's work on this theme, as well as to understand the extent to which the findings and their recommendations have informed the Office's work over the last years.

The main purpose of the evaluation is to:

- ▶ provide an account to the Governing Body regarding performance of the strategy and key results;
- ▶ provide an opportunity to learn what works well, and what works less well, in the implementation of the ILO's strategy for promoting fair labour migration;
- ▶ support the Office and the constituents in making informed decisions about the future directions of this theme;
- ▶ as requested by the Governing Body, assess the impact and effectiveness of the work on fair recruitment.

The evaluation considered the period 2016–20, which comprises the P&Bs for 2016–17, 2018–19 and half of 2020–21. This predominantly included Outcome 9 on labour migration (2016–19), as well as Output 7.5 (2020). Special attention was given to Outcome 5.3 on the skills of labour migrants. As requested by the constituents, the evaluation paid particular attention to fair recruitment. This topic was covered by the evaluation overall and through one large case study. In addition, the evaluation took into consideration the ILO's work on cross-cutting issues relating to labour migration, such as gender equality, persons with disabilities, the harassment of migrant workers and environmental concerns.

Predominantly, the evaluation reviewed the ILO's work on fair and effective labour migration at a global strategic level. Since projects and initiatives are usually executed at a country, cross-country or regional level, the evaluation also reviewed the efforts of the ILO in different regions across the world, as well as the interregional dimension. The evaluation also collects evidence on the ILO's measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It explores how COVID-19 has affected the various dimensions of the ILO's work through projects and initiatives, and what adaptations the ILO has made to continue working in the new pandemic environment. Even though all ILO projects are already subject to mandatory evaluations, they were reviewed through selected case studies, or as examples to support the analysis. For example, the evaluation used the Synthesis Review of project evaluations as a source of data for the high-level evaluation (HLE), which includes country-level information on the work of the ILO.¹

The main client for the evaluation is the Governing Body, which is responsible for governance-level decisions on the findings and recommendations of the evaluation. Other key stakeholders include the Director-General and members of the Senior Management Team at headquarters, the Evaluation Advisory Committee, and the departments and field units involved in promoting fair labour migration. It should also serve as a source of information for ILO donors, partners and policymakers.

¹ Magali Bonne-Moreau, Synthesis Review of ILO project evaluations: Promoting fair labour migration (2016-2020) (2021). Exercise commissioned by the ILO Evaluation Office.

1.2. Methodology

1.2.1. Theory of change and evaluation questions

During its inception phase, the evaluation reconstructed a theory of change for the ILO's Labour Migration programme and strategies, to understand the chain of results and define the scope of the evaluation assessment. The theory of change articulated the following framework:

- **Activities:** Steps taken by the ILO to enhance fair and effective labour migration at national, regional and global levels. The main ILO activities in the field of labour migration include: country-specific advisory services, technical assistance, migrant population statistics, partnerships and advocacy, capacity development and training activities, and the provision of direct services to migrant workers.
- **Outputs:** As a result of these activities, there has been an increase in global and country strategies to govern migration; constituents have received practical guidance on various topics, such as policy coherence and bilateral/multilateral agreements on labour migration and skills recognition; systems for collecting data about labour migrants have been developed; research has been produced on the current concerns and trends in labour migration; and migrant workers have access to an increased number of services.
- **Outcomes:** The outputs are expected to enhance the capacity of constituents to engage in dialogue and policymaking on topics relating to labour migration. They are also expected to enhance the capacity of governments to ensure respect for the fundamental rights of migrant workers.
- **Impact:** The overall impact of the ILO's work on labour migration is expected to enhance effective and adequate protection at work for all, and to create fair and well-governed labour mobility through regional integration processes and major migration corridors. Given the recent time frame of the evaluation (2016–20), the evaluation did not expect to find robust evidence of impact, but focused instead on the “likelihood of impact”.

1.2.2. Evaluation approach

The HLE took a summative as well as a formative approach. Following the criteria of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC), the evaluation assessed the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, likelihood of impact and sustainability of the ILO's strategy, programme approach and interventions (summative). The evaluation is also forward-looking, and provides findings and lessons learned, as well as emerging good practices for improved decision-making within the context of the next strategic framework (formative). The evaluation report, together with the Office's response to its findings and recommendations, will be discussed in the Governing Body session of October–November 2021.

1.2.3. Evaluation criteria and questions

To measure relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, likelihood of impact and sustainability, the evaluation was guided by an evaluation matrix comprising evaluation questions for each evaluation criterion.

► Table 1. Key evaluation questions

Relevance: To what extent are labour migration strategies and approaches well designed to address the needs of constituents at global, regional and country levels?

- How well is the strategy informed by, and does it fit, the needs and concerns of ILO constituents and beneficiaries?
 - Does it address the challenges facing Member States' governments and social partners? How were the constituents' needs assessed by the ILO in formulating and designing its response?
 - To what extent is the ILO's strategy on fair labour migration aligned to the principles enshrined in key Conventions and Recommendations, and to other relevant international instruments on human rights and gender equality?
-

-
- ▶ Are the ILO's strategies and P&Bs responsive to emerging concerns, as expressed in Governing Body/International Labour Conference discussions?
 - ▶ To what extent is the ILO's work relevant to the unique labour migration trends, developments and crises in particular regions around the world?
 - ▶ To what extent has the ILO pivoted/repurposed interventions related to labour migration in the context of COVID-19? To what extent did the ILO's response to COVID-19 base its interventions on the needs of constituents and beneficiaries?
-

Coherence: To what extent is the ILO's strategy compatible with other interventions in ILO Member States, by other international organizations, and within the ILO itself?

- ▶ How well does the ILO strategy complement other relevant national institutions and international agencies working on labour migration?
 - ▶ To what extent are the strategy, the results framework and implementation guided by the ILO's commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially to SDG 10.7 and Indicator 10.7.1, and SDGs 8.5 and 8.8?
 - ▶ How well does the strategy address the need for synergies and complementarities with other outcomes, such as Outcomes 6 and 8?
 - ▶ How well aligned is the strategy, including the Country Programme Outcomes (CPOs), with the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016–17 and 2018–21, and with gender-related SDGs?
 - ▶ How well does the ILO strategy consider the ILO's other cross-cutting policy drivers, such as just transition to environmental sustainability, disability and harassment of migrant workers?
 - ▶ To what extent do synergies and coherence exist between the ILO's projects in specific countries or regions?
 - ▶ How effective is the collaboration among technical units at headquarters level and between the headquarters and field-level specialists with regard to project development, tool development, research, joint actions and information sharing, among others?
-

Effectiveness: To what extent did the intervention achieve, or is expected to achieve, its objectives and results, including any differential results across groups and countries?

- ▶ To what extent has the ILO made progress in respect of its committed outcomes and indicators? To what extent has the ILO fulfilled its objective as defined by, but not limited to, the strategic policy framework and P&Bs of the ILO?
 - ▶ To what extent do the strategy and actions benefit the intended beneficiaries?
 - ▶ Does current monitoring and reporting (outcomes and indicators) allow for the tracking of progress, as well as informing the strategy?
 - ▶ To what extent has the ILO contributed to strengthening the capacities of governments, as well as representatives of workers' and employers' organizations, so that they can better serve the needs of their members?
 - ▶ Does the ILO strategy and results framework respond effectively to the challenges faced by all migrant workers, refugees and internally displaced persons in all their diversity?
 - ▶ To what extent has the ILO been effective and timely in delivering an adapted COVID-19 response and guidance to constituents and partners through its interventions?
 - ▶ How, and to what extent, did the ILO achieve results across cross-cutting issues: gender equality, harassment, climate change and disability inclusion?
-

Efficiency: To what extent did the ILO's interventions deliver, or are likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way?

- ▶ Are adequate resources available to implement the strategy as intended? How adequate are the financial and human resources, and how efficiently are they being used?
 - ▶ How balanced is resource distribution across different indicators, and does this align with constituent needs?
 - ▶ Have different modalities of funding been used strategically to foster complementarity?
-

Likelihood of impact and sustainability: To what extent did the intervention create impact towards fair and effective labour migration, and to what extent will these benefits last?

- ▶ To what extent have the ILO's actions had an impact in the form of the increased capacity, necessary tools and policy improvements needed to work towards promoting fair labour migration?
 - ▶ To what extent are the ILO's actions designed and implemented in ways that maximize ownership and sustainability at country level?
 - ▶ To what extent is strengthened social dialogue likely to contribute to the sustainability of the ILO's work?
-

1.2.4. Data collection tools

The assessment and conclusions of the evaluation were developed from various sources. These drew on pre-existing data, primary data collection and comparisons. The evaluation followed a multilevel approach that allowed data triangulation. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, all evaluation activities were conducted virtually.

The evaluation used the following data collection instruments:

- **Secondary resources:** A collection and desk review of available resources was carried out to analyse all relevant documentation, including declarations, instruments, policies and strategies, guidelines, project documents and published outputs, progress reports, previous evaluations, and data downloaded from the internet. The evaluation relied significantly on the review of the Synthesis Report, which comprises a summary of all labour migration project evaluations.
- **Virtual interviews:** A first round of interviews with ILO staff members was conducted during the inception phase. These interviews served the dual purpose of refining the scope of the evaluation and collecting initial evaluation evidence. A second round of interviews with ILO staff was conducted during the data collection phase. During the data collection stage, interviews were also carried out with country-level constituents and partners. In total, the evaluation conducted a total of 64 semi-structured interviews with 108 participants, both group and individual. Of these, 65 were women and 43 were men. Only in the case studies that were carried out by national consultants were interviews conducted face-to-face.
- **Case studies:** The evaluation included six case studies of ILO initiatives at country or regional level. One case study focused on fair recruitment, and comprised three migration corridors (Philippines–Hong Kong (China), Nepal–Jordan and Guatemala–Mexico). The other case studies included Thailand, Ethiopia, Tunisia, the Regional Conference on Migration in Latin America, and the Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa. Case studies were based on desk research and interviews with constituents and ILO staff.

A regional consultant was engaged to conduct interviews and collect data for the work on the Mexico–Guatemala corridor and the Regional Conference on Migration². The evaluation also coordinated with other ongoing high-level and project evaluations in various regions. In an effort to reduce the burden on key informants of the various ongoing evaluation initiatives, the team worked with the other evaluation teams to conduct joint interviews where possible, as well as collaborating to include survey questions into other planned surveys, and utilizing the notes of other evaluation teams. The High-Level Evaluation on Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) in South Asia provided an opportunity to collaborate on interviews, survey and evaluation team notes from Nepal, as well interview notes and the evaluation report for input into Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Pakistan; and an ongoing project evaluation in Ethiopia provided key information from interviews in Ethiopia. Ongoing Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA)- and Development Cooperation (DC)-funded project evaluations in Colombia, Peru and Ecuador provided additional case study data.

- **Online surveys:** To gather information across a broad number of stakeholders, the evaluation carried out two surveys:
 - **ILO staff:** A questionnaire was distributed to 239 ILO staff at headquarters and in the regional and field offices to collect information on the ILO's labour migration strategies, approaches and outputs across the evaluation criteria. The survey was open for three weeks and available in English, French, Spanish and Thai. Feedback was gathered from 73 ILO staff working on labour migration issues, including both headquarters (29) and field (44) staff. This resulted in a response rate of 30.5 per cent. The surveys were issued to all staff and tripartite partners, not to a randomized sample. The sample therefore consisted of those who volunteered to respond. Because the sample was ultimately based on those who self-selected for participation, rather than a probability sample, it

² A national consultant was recruited for Jordan but for reasons beyond the team's control, interviews were unable to take place due to various scheduling conflicts. Constituents and ILO staff in Jordan were however part of the online surveys.

was not possible to estimate margins of error. Furthermore, the data have not been weighted to reflect the demographic composition of each target population.

- **ILO constituents and other stakeholders:** A questionnaire was distributed to 117 constituents, donors, UN partners and other partners who were interviewed as part of the case studies. The survey was provided in English, French, Spanish and Thai, and also remained open for three weeks. In total, 38 constituents and other stakeholders completed it. Based on the initial selection (117), the response rate would be equivalent to 32.5 per cent, although the true rate is probably slightly lower, given that respondents had the possibility of sharing the survey link with other stakeholders familiar with the ILO's work on labour migration.

The collected qualitative data was organized using Data Collection Templates, and subsequently analysed according to the evaluation criteria. For survey data, the software Superior Performing Software System SPSS was used to conduct statistical analysis.

The team conducting this evaluation involved women as well as men in consultation, evaluation analysis and evaluation. All team members have adequate gender expertise, and have addressed gender issues in previous evaluations. The team members were also familiarized with the ILO's policies regarding the inclusion of gender concerns into independent evaluations.

Furthermore, the evaluators adhered to ILO Guidance Note 3.1 when designing the approach to the evaluation.³ This evaluation considers the inclusion of gender equality and other human rights in ILO strategies and the measures taken by its projects. It probes these dimensions through desk research and interviews, to understand the root causes of gender gaps and challenges in labour migration through the case studies, information and data that are disaggregated by sex, to the extent that such were available. It assesses the relevance and effectiveness of gender equality-related strategies and outcomes within the purview of the ILO's work on promoting fair labour migration.

The evaluation methodology responded to the ILO's normative framework, following Guidance Note 3.2.⁴ This was achieved by focusing on identifying the norms and Conventions relevant to labour migration, and the ratification status of the Conventions. The evaluation also touches on the complaints mechanism used in the event of violations. In practice, impact was measured mostly in relation to normative frameworks for labour migration. The evaluation methodology also considered the tripartite nature of the ILO, both by involving constituents as interview and survey respondents, but also by engaging constituents (mostly from the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)) in the inception stage, for the design of the evaluation methodology. The evaluation focused on measuring improvements in social dialogue at different stages of projects and interventions, and measured the importance of social dialogue for the creation of impact. Lastly, the evaluation methodology articulated relevant questions and data collection tools to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the ILO's work in promoting fair labour migration and a just transition to environmental sustainability.

1.2.5. Limitations

The evaluation team would like to point out a number of limitations to this study:

- **Time frame:** The time frame of the evaluation spans four years (from 2016 to 2020). Some of the projects prioritized in this evaluation are still ongoing, and have been impacted by significant adaptations that have been put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, it was difficult to definitively assess the contribution of the achievements of some of these projects.
- **Evaluation of data collection.** Information-gathering for this HLE took place primarily online, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite the highly experienced team, this created some difficulties. During the interviews, team members experienced some technical difficulties (linked to bad internet connections, sound and video quality, lack of technological appliances for the interviewees, among other

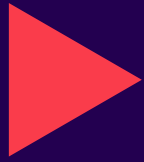
3 ILO, *Guidance Note 3.1.: Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation*, June 2020.

4 ILO, *Guidance Note 3.2: Adapting evaluation methods to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate*, June 2020.

things), as well as the non-participation of some interviewees at the agreed time and place. The evaluation team considers that in some cases, the interviewees may have withheld certain information, or there were concerns that the internet environment did not create the environment of trust that could be achieved through face-to-face interviews. Online interviews also prevented the evaluation team from having an immersive experience of the case study destinations.

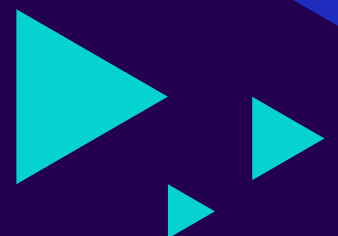
While carrying out the survey, the evaluation team also became aware that the sample achieved was rather small, with only those constituents identified as key informants in the case study countries being surveyed.

- ▶ **Political and social situation:** In some countries and territories – including the prioritized case study locations such as the Philippines and Hong Kong, China – certain political and societal events are having a direct effect on the impact and sustainability of the ILO's work. Ethiopia has been affected by a major humanitarian crisis, and elections were taking place during the data collection. Furthermore, all countries in the evaluation sample continue to be affected by COVID-19, turning national constituents towards crisis responses. The impact of these political and social events is difficult to factor into this evaluation, despite the best efforts of the evaluation team.



2

The ILO's work on fair and effective labour migration



► 2. The ILO's work on fair and effective labour migration

2.1. The ILO's mandate on fair and effective labour migration

The ILO is the only UN agency that has a constitutional mandate to protect migrant workers. Since its establishment in 1919, the ILO has worked to promote international labour standards and led to the creation of “soft” legal instruments regulating the global governance of labour migration. The ILO calls upon its Member States to implement the rights-based approach to migration enshrined in these standards and instruments, and to provide adequate protection for, and prevent abuses against, migrant workers.

The ILO's rights-based approach is also reflected in both binding Conventions and non-binding Recommendations, the main forms of international labour standards. The ILO's work is also enshrined in other non-binding policy guidelines, which are also widely referenced by various international bodies, reflecting the impact of the ILO's work on benchmarking in fair recruitment and labour migration overall. Examples are the *ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration: Non-binding principles and guidelines for a rights-based approach to labour migration*,⁵ adopted by the Governing Body in March 2006; and the [General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment and definition of recruitment fees and related costs](#), adopted in 2016. Both documents have become widely referenced internationally by the private and public sectors alike, despite their non-binding nature.

Two ILO Conventions currently in force relate specifically to migrant workers and their protection. These are the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97); and the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143, both parts). Convention No. 143 supplements the earlier Convention No. 97. Both instruments establish the basic principles of equality of opportunity and treatment for migrant workers in specific identified areas. Convention No. 97 provides detailed guidance in its annexes on the recruitment, placement and conditions of labour for migrants in relation to employment recruited under government-sponsored arrangements and otherwise. Convention No. 143 addresses abusive conditions, with particular attention to the suppression of “clandestine movements” of workers and the prosecution of “manpower trafficking”. Moreover, Convention No. 143 extends the scope of equality between legally resident migrant workers and national workers beyond the provisions of the 1949 Convention (No. 97), to ensure equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of employment and occupation, social security, trade union and cultural rights, and individual and collective freedoms. Neither of these two Conventions has been widely ratified by ILO Member States. As of late April 2021, there had been 53 ratifications of Convention No. 97 and 28 ratifications of Convention No. 143. The Conventions are also accompanied by Recommendations that provide further significant guidance to the Conventions and their implementation.

Many other ILO Conventions are also of relevance. Some are of general application; others are designed to improve protection for particular categories of workers, many of whom are likely to be migrant workers in particular occupational sectors. The Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181) (37 ratifications) is notable for its prohibition of private employment agencies charging, directly or indirectly, any fees or costs to workers, and its requirement that, where recruitment is international, Member States should consider concluding bilateral agreements to prevent abuses and fraudulent practices.

Of those standards that cover particular occupational sectors, one key instrument is the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189). Overall, this Convention seeks to extend to domestic workers the rights and protections enjoyed by other members of the workforce, in a number of specific areas. Its coverage includes migrant domestic workers, specifically providing that they shall be protected from forced labour. National laws and regulations shall require that migrant domestic workers who are recruited in one country for work in another receive a written job offer or contract of employment that is enforceable in the country in which

5 Available at https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/labour-migration/publications/WCMS_178672/lang-en/index.htm.

the work is to be performed. Convention No. 189 entered into force in September 2013, and by April 2021 had already received 31 ratifications.

Consistent with its commitments, the ILO addresses gender equality, inclusion and environmental sustainability through initiatives that are integrated into work plans and Conventions. The Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156) addresses male and female workers with family responsibilities, but also domestic workers, to support their work-life balance. The Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) addresses men, women and migrant workers. The ILO approach to the inclusion of persons with disabilities is grounded both in assuring the rights of persons with disabilities, as well as recognizing the economic benefits of inclusion through the ILO Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), as well as the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111). The ILO also promotes a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies through its [Guidelines for a just transition towards environmentally sustainable economies and societies for all](#). Designed to promote decent work on a large scale and ensure that social protection exists where necessary, these non-binding guidelines also include mechanisms for social dialogue among governments, workers and employers' organizations throughout policymaking processes at all levels.

Overall, the various policy frameworks, including the P&B, suggest that the promotion and implementation of ILO standards are central to its strategy on labour migration. The 2017 International Labour Conference Resolution indicates as its first priority to promote the ratification and effective application of ILO Conventions and Recommendations, as appropriate; and to raise awareness of these standards and frameworks, demonstrate their flexibility and “defuse misconceptions about the meaning of certain provisions, through user-friendly materials”. Accordingly, the 2018–22 Plan of Action observes that the Office will scale up technical assistance and cooperation in priority areas, including international labour standards. The Office will “promote, as appropriate, the ratification and effective implementation of ILO Conventions and Recommendations, including legislative and policy frameworks relevant to the governance of labour migration in line with International Labour Standards”.

In practice, ILO standards can be applied and implemented in different ways. They can be addressed in technical cooperation projects at country level or broader levels. Projects can include components to promote the ratification of ILO standards, or to influence national law and policy, in line with the provisions of ILO standards. This is all part of its *promotional* work, ideally carried out with the full participation of ILO constituents, in order to promote a rights-based approach to subjects such as labour migration.

The ILO also conducts *supervisory* work, carried out in the first instance by the independent Committee of Experts on the Application of Conventions and Recommendations (CEACR). The CEACR has its regular supervisory procedures, in the form of comments (direct requests and observations) made to Member States on matters relating to ratified instruments. This is part of the normal dialogue between the ILO and its Member States, which are required to provide regular reports on the application of ratified Conventions (once every four years in the case of the labour migration instruments). In addition, there are special procedures involving *representations and complaints*.⁶

In its comments on the ratified instruments, there is scope for the CEACR to advise on the ways in which governments can address concerns, either in law or practice, through its technical cooperation projects and programmes. With regard to Conventions Nos 97 and 143, there is limited indication that this occurred during the period under review. Recommendations have been made at the global level, within the framework of the 2016 General Survey, but not at country level through the regular supervisory procedures.

⁶ Both procedures are governed by the ILO Constitution. Under the representations procedure, an industrial association of employers or workers has the right to present to the ILO Governing Body a representation against any Member State which, in its view, “has failed to secure in any respect the effective observance within its jurisdiction any Convention to which it is a party”. A complaint may be filed against a Member State for not complying with a ratified Convention by another Member State which has ratified the same Convention, a delegate to the ILC, or by the Governing Body on its own motion. Upon receipt of a complaint, the Governing Body may establish a Commission of Inquiry.

2.2. Context of the ILO's work on fair and effective labour migration

Since the turn of the century, there has been a steady increase in global attention to the governance of migration, seeking common approaches and improved coordination among international agencies. In 1999, the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants was established. A UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families entered into force in 2003. The Committee on Migrant Workers was established pursuant to the international Convention, and includes an official consultative capacity for the ILO.

A Global Commission on International Migration was set up in 2003 with the purpose of addressing legal and normative gaps in regimes for migrants, and enhancing coordination. It identified six principles for action, accompanied by 33 Recommendations. In response, the Global Migration Group (GMG) was established, bringing together the heads of 17 UN entities, including the ILO, to promote the application of international and regional instruments relating to migration; and to encourage more coherent, comprehensive and coordinated approaches to the subject. In July 2013, the GMG established a new Working Group on Migration, Human Rights and Gender, as well as a Task Force on Migration and Decent Work. The ILO chaired the GMG for the first time in 2014.

A key milestone was the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly, in December 2018, of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). In addition, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, with its SDG Targets 8.8 and 10.7 addressing migration concerns. The Global Compact on Refugees, adopted in 2018, is also key; in addressing commitments to livelihoods, it also includes commitment to decent work. The ILO has also pioneered new global policy instruments in the area of fair recruitment, and most recently on specific aspects of fair recruitment, such as the charging of fees to migrant workers for their employment. At its 328th Session in November 2016, the Governing Body approved the ILO [General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment and definition of recruitment fees and related costs](#). In March 2019, the Governing Body approved the dissemination of the definition of recruitment fees and related costs adopted by a Tripartite Meeting of Experts in November 2018.

Within the ILO, there have also been important discussions of the Organization's work on labour migration, at the level of both the Conference and the Governing Body, as well as the supervisory bodies, with regard to the application of Conventions and Recommendations. A General Survey by the Committee of Experts, covering the main instruments on labour migration, was prepared for the International Labour Conference in 2016.⁷ The following year, in 2017, the International Labour Conference held a general discussion on labour migration, with particular reference to both effective labour migration governance at national, bilateral, regional and interregional levels, and to fair recruitment. To guide the discussions, a comprehensive survey was prepared by the Office with regard to trends and challenges in the governance of labour migration.⁸ The Conference adopted a resolution on fair and effective labour migration governance, and extensive conclusions on the same subject. On the basis of these discussions, a five-year Plan of Action was adopted by the Governing Body at its 331st Session in October–November 2017.⁹

These various initiatives, carried out both within the ILO's own governance structure and more widely at the global level, help to provide an overall framework for carrying out this HLE. Taken together, they identify the major challenges, priorities and commitments in the area of labour migration, as well as specific areas of activity, and means of cooperation. Key aspects of these documents that are most relevant to the HLE will be reviewed briefly below.

In addition, it is important to reflect on *why* concerns regarding fair migration have figured so prominently on the ILO's and other international policy agendas during the period under review. The protection of

7 ILO, [Promoting Fair Migration](#), 105th Session of the International Labour Conference, 2016.

8 ILO, [Addressing governance challenges in a changing labour migration landscape](#), Report IV, International Labour Conference, 106th Session, 2017.

9 ILO, [Follow-up to the Resolution concerning fair and effective labour migration governance](#), Governing Body, 331st Session, 26 October–9 November 2017.

vulnerable migrant workers has been a priority for the ILO ever since its inception. But the past decade has seen particular challenges, both in terms of the scale and the changing scope of international migration, the severity of the conditions faced by certain vulnerable groups, and also with regard to prevailing attitudes towards labour migration. Around the middle of the last decade, there was increasing talk of a “migration crisis”, as well as a “refugee crisis”. Migration policy became an issue of high political sensitivity, in which improved border control and security were seen as part of the package of improved migration governance. In this context, the key challenges for the ILO have been to promote its own values and standards-based approaches in global debates on migration governance, and to ensure that its constituents – in the form of governments, and employers’ and workers’ organizations – are adequately reflected in these debates and policy mechanisms.

Most recently, the COVID-19 pandemic, which began in early 2020, has added to the urgency of protecting vulnerable workers, including migrant and refugee workers.

The GCM was agreed by the UN General Assembly in July 2018, and formally adopted at a conference in Marrakech in December 2018. It sets out a cooperative framework for achieving its objectives in relation to migration, including 10 overarching guiding principles and 23 objectives with attendant actions, and a process for its implementation, follow-up and review, as well as guidance for support from the UN system.

With an instrument of this kind, which covers all aspects of migration rather than labour migration alone, the objectives are inevitably wide-ranging. They include issues of obvious and direct concern to the ILO – for example, enhancing pathways for regular migration (Objective 5); to facilitate fair recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work (Objective 6); to address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration (Objective 7); to prevent, combat and eradicate the trafficking of persons in the context of international migration (Objective 10); to eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration (Objective 17); to invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences (Objective 18); to promote faster, safer and cheaper transfer of remittances and foster the financial inclusion of migrants (Objective 20); and to establish mechanisms for the portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits (Objective 22).

As part of efforts to address migration as a cross-cutting issue, a UN Network on Migration was established by the UN Secretary-General in late 2018, coordinated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), with eight agencies, including the ILO, forming its Executive Committee. In a report on the Global Compact issued in October 2020,¹⁰ the UN observed that the Network had made considerable progress over the preceding two years, facilitated expanded cooperation among United Nations entities at the regional and country levels, broadened its partnerships with stakeholders, and developed key tools to support implementation. Furthermore, the Network had increased the ability of the United Nations to speak with one voice on migration-related issues. The report also highlighted the role of the social partners and of the private sector as a key partner, citing the ILO’s work with States, the recruitment sector, as well as employers’ and workers’ organizations, to strengthen international recruitment practices through its Fair Recruitment Initiative and guidelines.

The period 2016–20 saw new initiatives and policy frameworks at the global level, both within and outside the United Nations system, in which the ILO and its constituents have had the opportunity to play an important role. A key milestone was the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly, in December 2018, of the GCM. Furthermore, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was adopted by all UN Member States in 2015, of which SDG Targets 8.8 and 10.7 address migration concerns. The ILO has also pioneered new global policy instruments in the area of fair recruitment, and most recently on specific aspects of fair recruitment such as the charging of fees to migrant workers for their employment. At its 328th Session, in November 2016, the Governing Body approved the ILO [General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment and definition of recruitment fees and related costs](#). In March 2019, the Governing Body approved the dissemination of the definition of recruitment fees and related costs, adopted by a Tripartite Meeting of Experts in November 2018.

¹⁰ *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*, Report of the Secretary General, Report A/75/542, UN General Assembly, 75th Session, 26 October 2020.

A General Survey by the Committee of Experts, covering the main instruments on labour migration, was prepared for the International Labour Conference in 2016.¹¹ The following year, in 2017, the International Labour Conference held a general discussion on labour migration, with particular reference to effective labour migration governance at national, bilateral, regional and interregional levels, and to fair recruitment. To guide the discussions, a comprehensive survey of trends and challenges in the governance of labour migration was prepared by the Office.¹² The Conference adopted a resolution on fair and effective labour migration governance, and extensive conclusions on the same subject. On the basis of these discussions, a five-year Plan of Action was adopted by the Governing Body at its 331st Session in October–November 2017.¹³ Additionally, the ILO Governing Body examined the Global Compact alignment with the 2017 International Labour Conference resolution and the ILO Work Plan, and took a decision in March 2019.

2.3. Strategic priorities and objectives of the ILO for 2016–20

The ILO's strategic priorities are enshrined in the Strategic Plans that are drafted for the purposes of preparing the Programme and Budget Proposals on a biennial basis. The two documents that are relevant to this section are the draft transitional strategic plan for 2016–17, and a preview of the P&B proposals for 2016–17 and the ILO's Strategic Plan for 2018–21.

Both of the above documents are grounded in the ILO's Decent Work Agenda, which included employment, rights at work, social protection and social dialogue as strategic priorities of the ILO.

The ILO aims to promote employment by creating a sustainable institutional and economic environment for individuals, enterprises and societies; develop and enhance social and labour protection, which would lead to social security for all, occupational safety and health (OSH) at the workplace, and the protection of all workers; promote tripartism and social dialogue; and promote and realize fundamental principles and rights at work.

Between 2016 and 2020, to achieve its strategic objectives, the ILO focused on several thematic areas, the first one being global advocacy. Several international factors (such as the GCM) have given the ILO a renewed opportunity for advocacy at a global level, and vis-à-vis other international agencies. A key aspect of the ILO's advocacy at global level has been its Fair Recruitment Initiative (see case study). The main thrust of this initiative has been to work together with ILO constituents and the other stakeholders concerned (including representatives of the global recruitment industry) to adopt in 2016, and then widely disseminate, a detailed set of principles and guidelines that are capable of being translated into national laws and policies. The overriding concern has been to eliminate the charging of excessive fees, although other abusive practices in recruitment have also been addressed. The guidance document itself has paved the way for follow-up projects at regional and interregional levels, involving both advice and capacity-building on governance and policy reforms, and support for the stakeholders concerned.

The ILO has also focused on normative work, through the promotion and application of ILO standards. All ILO strategic documents (whether P&B, Conference and Governing Body documents, or action plans over the period) have placed a strong emphasis on the promotion and application of relevant ILO standards. With regard to the two Conventions that are concerned specifically with migrant workers (Nos 97 and 143), only limited progress has been made with new ratifications. At the same time, standards have been set for the protection of particular categories of vulnerable workers, including migrant workers, thus helping to prepare the ground for technical cooperation projects that specifically target these vulnerable migrant workers.

A key feature of the period has been the development of well-funded and multicountry cooperative development projects, often at multiregional level, promoting the “corridor” approach to labour migration and its governance. This approach is linked to work on fair recruitment, with the involvement of other international agencies.

¹¹ ILO, *Promoting Fair Migration*, 105th Session of the International Labour Conference, 2016.

¹² ILO, *Addressing governance challenges in a changing labour migration landscape*, Report IV, International Labour Conference, 106th Session, 2017.

¹³ ILO, *Follow-up to the Resolution concerning fair and effective labour migration governance*, Governing Body, 331st Session, 26 October–9 November 2017.

A further key feature of the ILO's more recent work on fair migration – coinciding strongly with the 2016–20 period under review – has been its increased involvement with the labour market needs of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. As in other areas, there have been synergies between the adoption by the ILO of guiding principles on access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market, and the development of major operational projects. Moreover, an essential feature has been the development of memoranda of understanding (MoUs) and operational agreements between the ILO and the main UN agency with a mandate for the protection of refugees, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The involvement of its social partners has always been a notable feature of all ILO interventions. This actively continued to be the case during the period under review, and can be seen at different levels. At global level (Conference discussions, action plans, tripartite meetings on fair recruitment and refugees), the involvement of the ILO's tripartite partners in preparations and guidance documents ensured that their concerns were taken into account. At the wider, global level, the ILO took pains to ensure that the social partners could participate in such key policy forums as the GCM.

2.4. ILO programming during the period 2016–20

The evaluation covered the period 2016–20 (two full biennia, 2016–17 and 2018–19, plus 2020). Outcome 9 of the P&Bs for 2016–17 and 2018–19 is named “Fair and effective international labour migration and mobility”. Each plan set out the specific changes it aimed to achieve, as well as the means the Organization would adopt to achieve these objectives.

In the 2016–17 P&B, an assessment of the obstacles to, and opportunities for, the ratification and implementation of international labour standards specific to migrant workers was needed to support more targeted advisory services and the strategic advocacy of ILO standards. The global outputs of the P&B were: global strategy at the country level, and regional levels for the ratification and application of international labour standards; global and regional estimates of the labour migrant population and its characteristics; policy briefs, good practices and evidence-based national and regional advisory services for fair recruitment and migration corridors, among other issues; practical guidance on policy coherence between employment, education/training and migration policies, including the role of public services; tools to measure the contribution made by migrant workers to the economic and social development of countries of origin and destination; and cooperation partnerships to advance gender-responsive fair migration frameworks. A similar approach was maintained in the 2018–19 P&B. As means of action and support to constituents, the ILO focused on country-specific integrated policy advice and technical assistance on matters related to (inter alia) international labour standards, and expanded partnerships and advocacy to promote ratification and implementation of the relevant ILO Conventions. The labour migration strategy is guided by the relevant ILO standards, including the findings of the supervisory bodies, the General Survey on labour migration instruments in 2016, and the 2017 International Labour Conference discussions. The 2020–21 P&B retains the earlier focus at national and regional levels, but adds to the list of global outputs the commitment to “develop and disseminate guidance for policymakers, practitioners and the private sector on the scope, purpose and implications of international labour standards relating to migrant workers, in order to dispel misconceptions and promote effective implementation in line with the resolution concerning fair and effective labour migration governance”, and to “undertake joint actions with other agencies and actors at the global and regional levels, including with the UN Network on Migration and Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund, to broaden and strengthen the delivery of ILO approaches, tools and guidance on labour migration, and to develop global and country-level interventions through the Global Skills Partnership on Migration”.

Importantly, the evaluation considered the evolution of the ILO's priorities, which have taken a different approach, switching from labour migration to labour migration and mobility. Also considered was the different positioning of Outcome 9 from 2020 onwards, as part of P&B 2020–21 (under Output 7.5). This mirrors the priority actions set out in the resolution concerning fair and effective labour migration governance from the 106th Session of the International Labour Conference (2017).

Issues concerning migrant workers are also addressed under other policy outcomes – for example, under Outcome 5, Outcome 6 and Outcome 8 (corresponding to the 2020–21 P&B), in which migrant workers are mentioned among the target groups for the outputs. Because labour migration touches upon other labour issues (gender equality and social protection, for example), these outcomes will be described incidentally in this report.

Outcome 5 (Output 5.3) will be given particular consideration when reviewing global products and CPOs. In relation to this, the evaluation team has not conducted a separate, comprehensive evaluation of Output 5.3, but has identified to what extent skills issues have been addressed in the ILO's work on labour migration, and whether these efforts have been relevant, efficient and effective.

Table 2 presents an overview of the evolution of the results framework with regard to the position of labour migration in the framework, as well as the references made to skills of migrants.

► **Table 2. ILO results-based framework**

2016–17	Outcome 9: Promoting fair and effective labour migration policies
	<u>Indicator 9.1:</u> Member States or regional or subregional institutions that have developed or implemented policy, legislation, bilateral or multilateral agreements or other governance frameworks in line with relevant international labour standards, the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration, and through tripartite dialogue.
	<u>Indicator 9.2:</u> Member States or regional or subregional institutions that have established or strengthened institutional mechanisms and inclusive practices or services for the protection of migrant workers or for the promotion of productive employment and decent work for migrant workers.
	<u>Indicator 9.3:</u> Member States or regional or subregional institutions that have developed a knowledge base and statistics on labour migration to better inform policy and enhance synergies between labour migration, employment, training and development policies.
2018–19	Outcome 9: Fair and effective international labour migration and mobility
	<u>Indicator 9.1:</u> Number of Member States that have formulated or adopted fair labour migration policies, legislation, bilateral or multilateral agreements improving the protection of migrant workers and others working abroad, and the functioning of labour markets.
	<u>Indicator 9.2:</u> Number of regional and subregional institutions that adopt or revise (sub)regional governance frameworks or arrangements on labour migration or mobility.
	<u>Indicator 9.3:</u> Number of Member States that have established or strengthened institutional mechanisms to implement and monitor governance frameworks on labour migration.
2020–21	Outcome 7: Adequate and effective protection at work for all
	<u>Output 7.5:</u> Increased capacity of constituents to develop fair and effective labour migration frameworks, institutions and services to protect migrant workers.
	<u>Indicator 7.5.1:</u> Number of Member States with labour migration frameworks or institutional mechanisms to protect the labour rights of migrant workers and promote coherence with employment, skills, social protection and other relevant policies.
	<u>Indicator 7.5.2:</u> Number of countries with new or improved services to protect the labour rights of migrant workers.
	<u>Indicator 7.5.3:</u> Number of bilateral or regional labour migration frameworks, with monitoring and review mechanisms to protect the labour rights of migrant workers.
	Outcome 5: Skills and lifelong learning to facilitate access to and transitions in the labour market
	<u>Output 5.3:</u> Increased capacity of the ILO constituents to design and deliver innovative, flexible and inclusive learning options, encompassing work-based learning and quality apprenticeships.

To implement the biennium P&Bs, the ILO offers to support constituents through the following means:

- normative work through the setting and advancing of global labour standards;
- country-specific policy advice and technical assistance;
- capacity-building and learning activities;
- support for policy reform and regional dialogue;

- expanded partnerships and advocacy with multilateral partners;
- knowledge development through data and policy research;
- ILO global products and tools designed to assist Member States in the implementation of strategies and approaches addressing key policy issues.

A challenge for the ILO has been to meet the main objectives and priorities of its diverse constituents, to find an appropriate balance between its activities at the global and country levels, and to ensure effective synergies between its policy and operational work. The P&B in the period of 2016–20 can provide some idea as to how, in financial and operational terms, the ILO has sought to meet this challenge. In 2016–17, there was a strong emphasis on the strengthened capacity of ILO constituents to engage in evidence-based policymaking, and on well-governed labour mobility in national integration processes and major migration corridors. Indicators included the development or implementation of policy, legislation and bilateral agreements; the strengthening of institutional mechanisms for the protection of workers; and the development of a knowledge base and statistics on labour migration.

The same overall focus was maintained for 2018–19, though significant outputs to be delivered also included the guidance on fair recruitment; guidance and advocacy tools on women migrant workers, with a focus on the care economy; guiding principles on access of refugees and forcibly displaced persons to the labour market; and global guidelines on international statistical standards. A strong emphasis was placed on external partnerships. One risk that was detected was that Member States might adopt security-based rather than rights-based migration policies. In response, the ILO would gather data and increase knowledge on evidence-based policies, and facilitate bilateral and regional dialogue. It would also strengthen collaboration with regional and subregional institutions, and UN partners, to promote a rights-based approach to labour migration.

The P&B for 2020–21 distinguished clearly between the ILO's activities at country and global levels. At the global level, knowledge dissemination and a global guide to the formulation of labour migration policies are important components. The ILO will undertake joint actions with other agencies and actors at global and regional levels. As an overall commitment, the ILO will deepen and scale up its work on international labour migration, and broaden its leadership role to ensure the wider adoption of institutional and policy frameworks, as well as the delivery of improved services based on solid evidence, labour market needs, social dialogue and labour standards.

2.5. Financial portfolio and expenditure overview

This section reviews the financial resource allocation for and expenditure on ILO's labour migration projects from 2016 to 2020. Data on resource allocation and expenditure comes from the ILO's Finance Management (FINANCE) department, the ILO's P&B and Programme Implementation reports, as well as the Development Cooperation, Decent Work Results and Outcome-Based Work Planning dashboards of the ILO.

Overall, the review of resource allocation was limited by the fact that certain interventions lacked information on budget allocations, and the linkages to project status, donor type and strategic outcome were in some instances not identified. For the 2020–21 biennium, the evaluation looked at data from 2020, due to the period of the evaluation spanning from 2016 to 2020.

Results related to labour migration in 2016–17 and 2018–19 were mapped to Outcome 9. In 2020–21, however, no single outcome was dedicated to capturing the ILO's work on labour migration. Rather, Output 7.5 (Increased capacity of constituents to develop fair and effective labour migration frameworks, institutions and services to protect migrant workers) served as the basis for this analysis of 2020–21, even though certain results relating to labour migration may have been mapped to other outputs as well. Despite the fact that the three biennia are not directly comparable, the overview still provides the big picture of resource allocation to labour migration initiatives.

Between 2016 and 2020, overall allocation of resources to labour migration projects has remained relatively stable. Between 2016 and 2019, there was an increase of around US\$4 million in the resources dedicated to

labour migration projects within the ILO (from US\$56.8 million to US\$60.7 million – see table 3). However, the share of total budget allocated to labour migration remained fairly stable from 2016 to 2019, at 5 per cent. In 2020, the budget allocated to Output 7.5 appears to have dipped by 0.8 percentage points compared with previous years. Nonetheless, given that not all the data for 2020 were available,¹⁴ the actual budget might actually be larger, and similar to the figure of 4–5 per cent observed in 2016–17 and 2018–19. However, it is also important to keep in mind that this analysis may not capture the entirety of funding dedicated to labour migration issues. Other outcomes (5, 6, 8 or 4.2) included outputs targeting migrants and refugees. Projects addressing their needs were coordinated by other departments.

► **Table 3. Outcome 9 and Output 7.5 total resource allocation for the period 2016–20 (millions of US\$)**

		RB	XBDC	RBSA	Total
2016–17	Outcome 9	26.9	29.9	Not identified	56.8
	TOTAL ILO	634.8	410	35	1079.8
	% of total ILO budget	4%	7%	0%	5%
2018–19	Outcome 9	28.4	32.3	Not identified	60.7
	TOTAL ILO	625.9	450	36.4	1112.3
	% of total ILO budget	5%	7%	0%	5%
2020	Output 7.5	Not identified	46.9*	1.01*	47.9**
	TOTAL ILO	626.4	470	30	1126.4
	% of total ILO budget	Not identified	10.0%	3.3%	4.2%**

Source: Compiled by PPMI based on data from the ILO's P&B documents (2016–21).

RB – Regular Budget; XBDC – Extrabudgetary Development Cooperation; RBSA – Regular Budget Supplementary Account. * Note: Data on resources dedicated to Output 7.5 comes from the ILO's FINANCE Department. ** Note: Data for 2020–21 is incomplete, as RB figures are not identified. Information is not comparable with previous years.

Expenditure on labour migration appears in line with budget allocations, with the exception of 2018–19. To allow comparison between allocations and expenditures, we limit our analysis to extrabudgetary development cooperation (XBDC) funds, due to data availability. The XBDC budget allocated to Outcome 9 in the 2018–19 P&B constituted US\$32.3 million, compared with US\$57.5 million in total expenditure (see figure 2). This was largely due to the increasing support among ILO constituents and development partners alike for tackling the labour market consequences of labour mobility. For example, voluntary funding (RBSA and XBDC) accounted for around 50 per cent of the ILO's total resources in 2018–19.¹⁵

The expenditure was concentrated in three regions – Asia and the Pacific, Africa, and Europe and Central Asia. As illustrated in figure 3,¹⁶ between 2016 and 2019 the largest share of budget was spent on labour migration projects based in Asia and the Pacific. A project focusing on decent work for migrant workers in Bangladesh¹⁷ received the largest expenditure in 2018–19. During the 2016–17 biennium, Africa was the region receiving the second-largest share of funds for projects on labour migration. The largest share of this expenditure was allocated to projects in Ethiopia, focusing on support for the reintegration of returnees,¹⁸ and the protection of Ethiopian and Somali women domestic migrant workers abroad.¹⁹ However, since

14 Regular Budget information for Output 7.5 was not available at the time the evaluation was conducted.

15 Available at <https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/how-the-ilo-works/results-based-management/funding/lang-en/index.htm>.

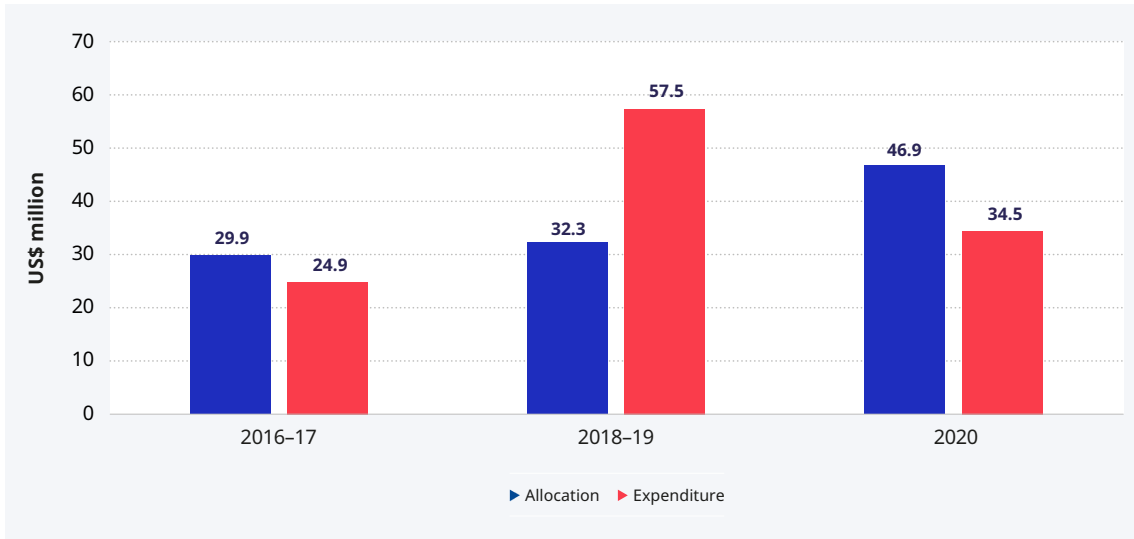
16 Global projects may carry out activities in specific regions.

17 Project title: "Application of Migration Policy for Decent Work of Migrant Workers".

18 Project title: "Support the reintegration of returnees in Ethiopia", ETH/15/01/EEC.

19 Project title: "Development of a tripartite framework for the support and protection of Ethiopian and Somali women domestic migrant workers to the GCC States, Lebanon and Sudan", RAF/12/09/EEC.

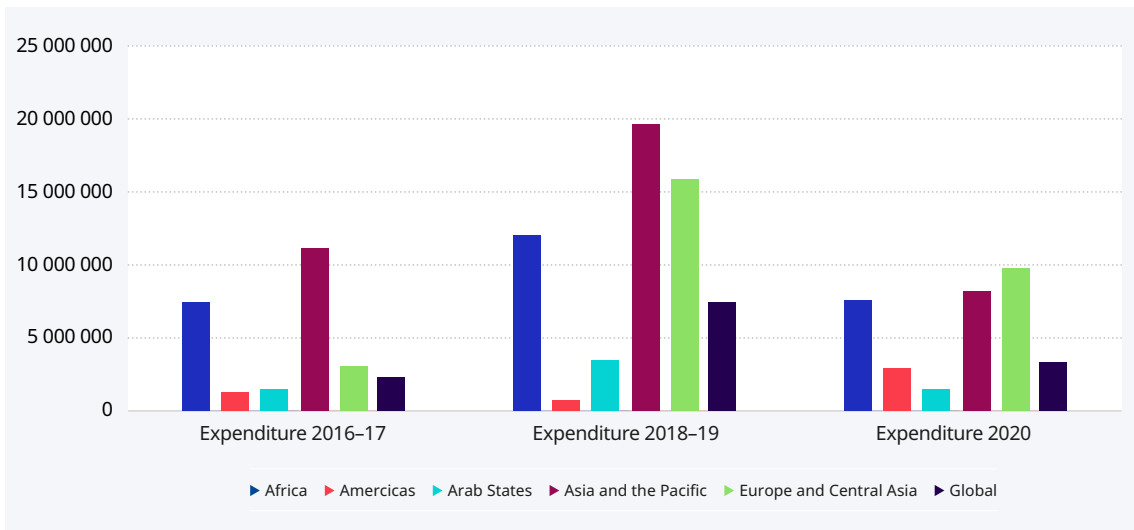
► **Figure 2. XBDC allocations and expenditures on the ILO’s labour migration work**



Note: Information is not comparable between 2016-19 and 2020.

2018, Europe and Central Asia has overtaken Africa to become the region with the second-largest expenditure in 2018-19, subsequently becoming the largest in 2020. In Europe and Central Asia, funds were concentrated in Turkey throughout the five-year period, mostly on projects to support Syrian refugees and host communities. This relates to the ILO’s commitment to the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) and the Global Compact for Refugees.²⁰

► **Figure 3. Expenditure per region, including XBDC, RBSA, RBTC (millions of US\$)**



²⁰ ILO, *The ILO’s Support to Refugees and Host Communities in Turkey*, 2017.

Compared with other regions, the Americas have received less funding from external donors for labour migration projects. Interestingly, projects and programmes in the Americas in 2016–19 mostly received RBSA²¹ and Regular Budget Technical Cooperation (RBTC) funding, with US\$2 million of XBDC being received only in 2020. Between 2016 and 2019, the largest share of funding was dedicated to projects on decent working conditions for migrant workers²² and providing technical support for labour migration in Haiti.²³ However, in 2020, projects in Ecuador and Peru focusing on the economic integration of Venezuelan refugees and migrants received the most funding.²⁴ Overall, it appears that the region receives little attention from external donors, which is why the ILO supports labour migration interventions in the Americas with extrabudgetary resources (RBSA and RBTC).

Over the five-year period, no significant changes have been seen in the funding for Arab States, although in 2018–19, XBDC expenditure more than doubled, from US\$1.5 million to US\$3.5 million. The largest share of expenditure was on the Regional Fair Migration Project in the Middle East (the FAIRWAY project) over the whole period, with over US\$3 million XBDC expenditure. Once again, the budgets and projects mentioned in this section consider only the budget dedicated to Outcome 9 and Output 7.5. Projects and programmes relevant to labour migration issues in the Arab States region were also led by other departments under different Outcomes.

Since 2016, multi-bilateral donors have been the biggest source of funding for labour migration projects and programmes, far surpassing funds received from the UN, other intergovernmental organizations, direct trust funds, private/non-State actors, RBSA or RBTC. Multi-bilateral donors represented 52 per cent of total external budget for labour migration in 2016–17, and between 69 and 70 per cent from 2018 to 2020. Projects on labour migration received little funding from private and non-State actors in particular. Even though this type of funding has increased since 2016–17, when no contributions were made by the private sector, in 2018–19 it amounted to only around US\$300,000, and in 2020 to around US\$400,000.

Indicators aimed at improving frameworks governing labour migration by strengthening institutional capacity received the greatest funding between 2016 and 2019. In 2016–17, the majority of funds were spent on projects focusing on Indicator 9.1, which aims to develop and implement governance frameworks in line with relevant international labour standards, the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration, and through tripartite dialogue. During the 2018–19 biennium, Indicator 9.3 received the largest share of funds. This indicator is dedicated to strengthening institutional mechanisms to implement and monitor governance frameworks on labour migration.

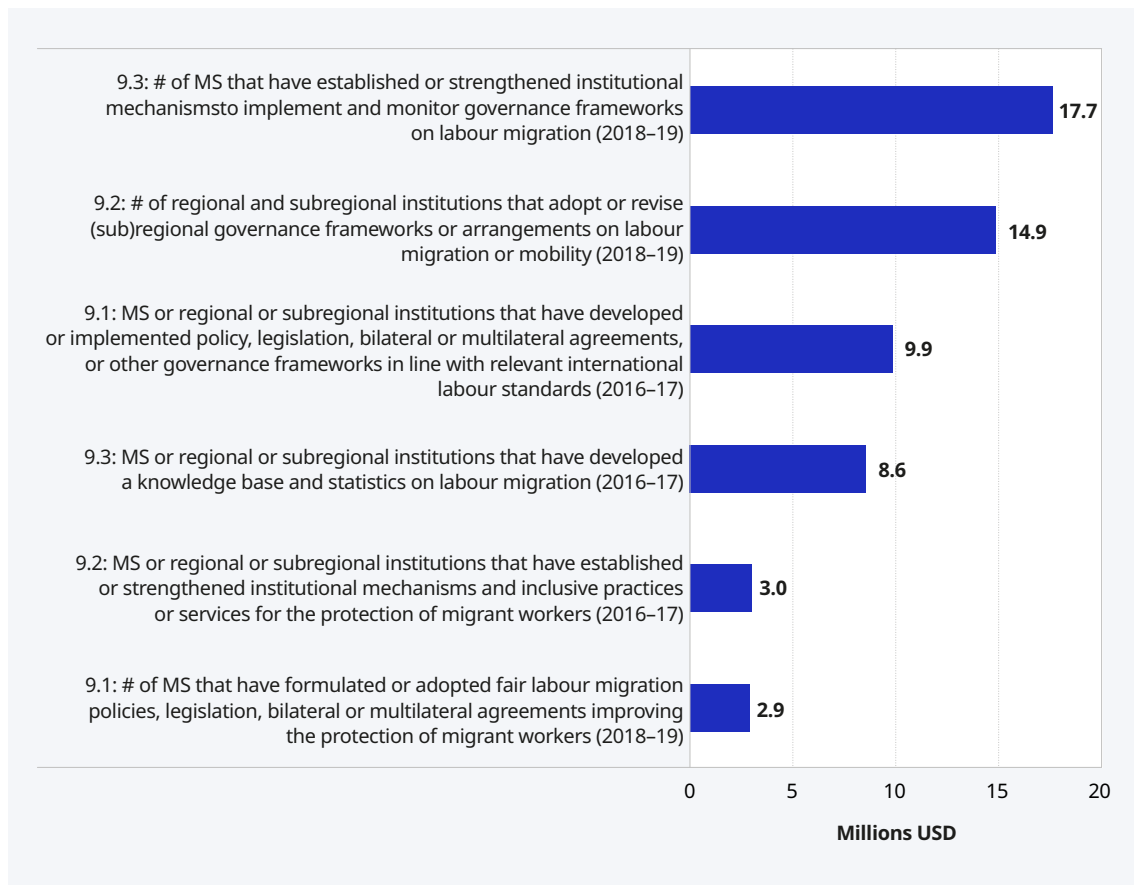
Similar trends can be observed in 2020, when Output indicators 7.5.1 and 7.5.3 received more funds than indicator 7.5.2. Indicator 7.5.1 aims to increase the number of member States with labour migration frameworks or institutional mechanisms to protect the labour rights of migrant workers and promote coherence with employment, skills, social protection and other relevant policies. Indicator 7.5.3 aims to increase the number of bilateral or regional labour migration frameworks. Meanwhile, the indicator with the lowest share of funds allocated (7.5.2) is aimed at increasing the number of countries with new or improved services to protect the labour rights of migrant workers. Budget allocation per indicator generally reflects the views of the stakeholders interviewed and the findings of the survey: technical assistance to Member States has been mentioned as the most useful service provided by the ILO, even compared with direct services to migrant workers. For more information, please see Section 3.1 on Relevance.

21 RBSA could also be a pool of resources from external donors; however, unlike XBDC funding, they were not dedicated to particular projects or programmes in the Americas. This type of funding comes from voluntary contributions, is not earmarked, and is complementary to the other sources of funds available to the ILO.

22 The project entitled "Support promotion of decent conditions of work for migrant workers in the Northern Triangle of Central America (El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras)" spent RBSA resources of around US\$500,000 in 2016–17. Between 2016 and 2019, the project "Strengthened capacity of constituents to promote decent work for migrant workers" spent US\$234,408.

23 The project "Technical support on labour migration in Chile" received US\$189,618 between 2016 and 2019.

24 Project title: "Integración Económica de Migrantes y Refugiados Venezolanos en Perú y Ecuador per Trabajo Decente".

► **Figure 4. Expenditure per indicator, 2016–19 (millions of US\$)**

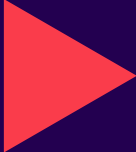
Note: Indicators have been shortened to aid readability. The full indicators are as follows:

- 9.1 (2016–17): Member States or regional or subregional institutions that have developed or implemented policy, legislation, bilateral or multilateral agreements, or other governance frameworks in line with relevant international labour standards, the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration and through tripartite dialogue.
- 9.2 (2016–17): Member States or regional or subregional institutions that have established or strengthened institutional mechanisms and inclusive practices or services for the protection of migrant workers or for the promotion of productive employment and decent work for migrant workers.
- 9.3 (2016–17): Member States or regional or subregional institutions that have developed a knowledge base and statistics on labour migration to better inform policy and enhance synergies between labour migration, employment, training and development policies.
- 9.1 (2018–19): Number of Member States that have formulated or adopted fair labour migration policies, legislation, bilateral or multilateral agreements improving the protection of migrant workers and others working abroad, and the functioning of labour markets.
- 9.2 (2018–19): Number of regional and subregional institutions that adopt or revise (sub)regional governance frameworks or arrangements on labour migration or mobility.
- 9.3 (2018–19): Number of Member States that have established or strengthened institutional mechanisms to implement and monitor governance frameworks on labour migration.

2.6. Special focus: Fair recruitment

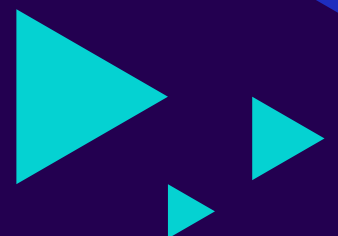
Constituents requested EVAL and the evaluation team to focus in particular on the element of fair recruitment within the current evaluation. One comprehensive case study was dedicated to this topic.

Annex 2 of this document provides more detailed information on the evolution of the ILO's approach to fair recruitment.



3

Evaluation findings



► 3. Evaluation findings

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

The relevance criterion serves to assess the extent to which the ILO’s interventions and strategies on labour migration served the needs of its constituents and partners, and addressed the main trends and concerns with regard to labour migration at country, regional and global levels.

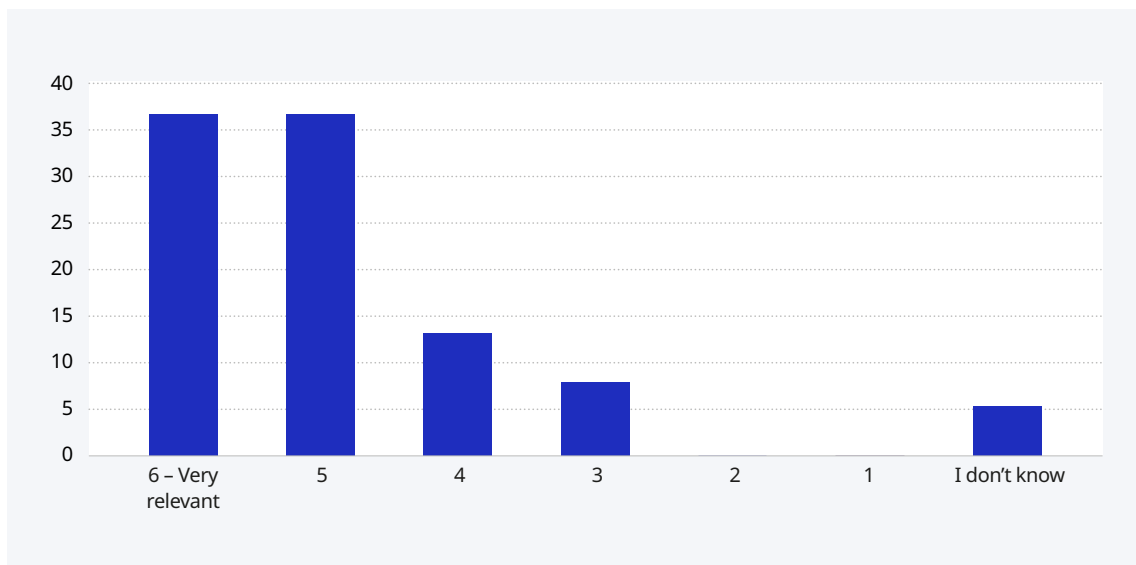
3.1.1. Relevance for constituents and towards national and regional priorities

The tripartite nature of the ILO requires the Organization’s staff to engage with governments, as well as representatives of both workers and employers, in designing the ILO’s approach to labour migration. This section assesses whether the ILO’s work has corresponded to the needs and priorities of constituents. Most information was retrieved from interviews with ILO staff, as well as with constituents at global and national levels. The interview findings are supported by the Synthesis Report of project evaluations and by the survey.

The work of the ILO on labour migration during the period 2016–20 was generally perceived as relevant and in line with the needs and priorities of constituents. Interventions addressed the needs of Member States, and were mostly aligned with national and/or regional strategic plans, priorities and targets related to labour migration. However, constituents’ priorities differ, and it may be conflicting that labour migration is not always one of their priorities, and may be considered a (politically) sensitive field of work. Therefore, some constituents still see areas in which the ILO’s work could be adjusted to better address their needs and priorities.

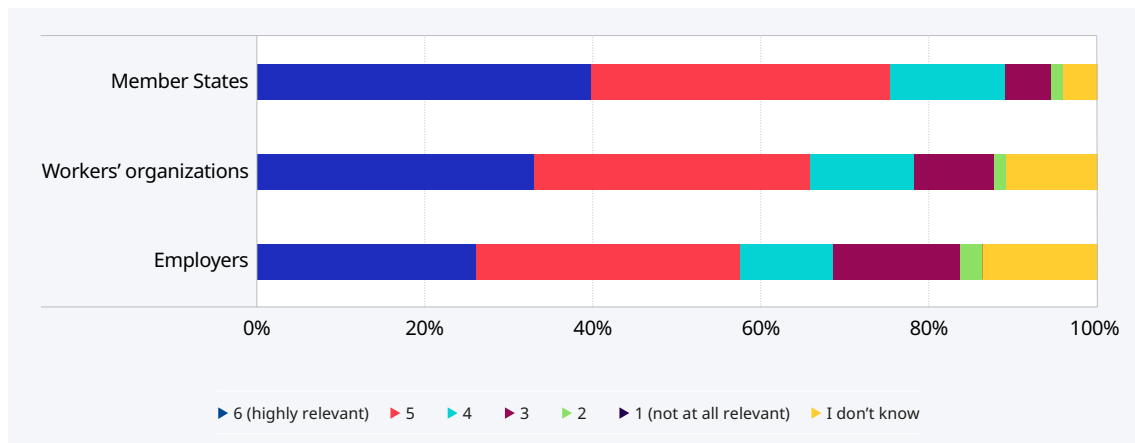
The survey results support the finding that the work of the ILO is relevant for its constituents. The majority of non-ILO survey respondents (74 per cent) assigned the ILO 5 or 6 (out of 6) for its relevance to the context and needs of constituents’ countries.

► **Figure 5. To what extent do you think the ILO’s work on labour migration since 2016 has been relevant for your needs and the context of your country (percentage, n=38, scale from 1 to 6)?**



The survey also measured the perceived relevance of the ILO’s work to each of the three groups of constituents. The work of the ILO was perceived as most relevant (score 5 or 6) for Member States’ governments (75 per cent), followed by workers’ organizations (66 per cent) and employers’ organizations (58 per cent).

► **Figure 6. To what extent do you think the ILO’s work on labour migration since 2016 has been relevant for the ILO’s constituents and stakeholders (percentage, n=73, scale from 1 to 6)?**



National and regional priorities

The Synthesis Report noted that the majority of labour migration interventions responded to the needs of Member States, and were mostly aligned with national and/or regional strategic plans, priorities and targets relating to labour migration. Many were incorporated into CPOs and DWCP frameworks. In several projects, the interventions built on prior projects or interventions, or were preceded by a needs assessment.²⁵ The analysis of labour migration interventions in Latin America found, for example, that labour migration was a formal priority in public policy instruments, and the needs and priorities of constituents (especially those of governments and workers) coincided with the ILO’s technical cooperation agenda.²⁶

Peru introduced its National Migration Policy 2017–2025 in 2017, which aims to ensure respect and protection for the rights of migrant workers, promote equality and inclusion, and ensure better integration through efficient and comprehensive migration management process. In 2017, Ecuador introduced the Human Mobility Law, the National Human Mobility Plan and the Foreign Policy Agenda 2017–2021, which focus on promoting mobility and strengthening the rights of migrants.²⁷

The importance of labour migration management for countries of origin cannot be overstated. The Asian region, for example, is affected by huge flows of labour emigration both within and out of the region. As a result, many countries are, to varying extents, dependent on remittances for their economic stability.²⁸ The Fair Recruitment Initiative is of particular importance in ensuring migrant workers are not charged recruitment fees, and are not subject to exploitation in the recruitment process.

The importance of labour migration in South Asia is huge. For example, the ILO estimates that there were 169 million migrant workers in 2019, of whom 24 million came from Asia–Pacific.²⁹ India alone contributed 18 million migrant workers. As a result, India made US\$82 billion in remittances – making it the biggest recipient in the world of foreign exchange in the form of remittances. Similarly, Nepal received around US\$7

25 Magali Bonne-Moreau, *Synthesis Review of ILO project evaluations: Promoting fair labour migration (2016–2020)* (2021).

26 Bonne-Moreau.

27 Evaluation report, Final Independent Evaluation Labour Migration - Project RLA/18/01/ RBS; Mid-term evaluation of Internal Labour Migration - Project RLA/19/03/USA

28 Interview with ILO staff.

29 ILO, *ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers: Results and Methodology*, 2021.

billion–8 billion in remittances, which contributed roughly 27 per cent of gross domestic product. If labour migrants' contributions declined, Nepal's economy would collapse.³⁰

The area of statistics is a good example of the adaptation of the ILO's work to local and regional contexts, as the support given to countries is designed together with the country itself. The ILO is the only organization with a global database that collates migrant worker statistics from over 100 countries. Statistical support on labour migration comprises a set of tools that can be adapted to align with the country's existing statistics collection, and are aligned with standards and practice. For example, the Indian Ocean Observatory and the Southern Africa Observatory include regional data collection approaches aligned with the ILO's international standards.³¹

Governments

Overall, government respondents valued the work of the ILO, as demonstrated by the survey results. The evaluation found that the ILO's work was regarded as relevant for governments and for their work on labour migration. However, due to the perceived political nature of labour migration, these governmental structures did not always align with the ILO's approach.

One challenge to the relevance of the ILO's work for governments is that the topic of labour migration is considered sensitive, as it often overlaps with concerns regarding security and immigration. In some regions – for example, Africa – ILO staff noted government resistance to the ILO's work on labour migration on certain occasions, due to a lack of awareness of the benefits labour migration can bring to the country, and consequent prejudice.³²

In some countries, labour ministries were often not involved in policy dialogue on migration, even on labour migration.³³ An important consideration here is that, in many cases, ministries of labour are not the government departments traditionally tasked with working on migration. The ILO's sole focus on working with ministries of labour means that in countries where migration does not fall under the remit of the ministry of labour, the ILO does not enjoy as strong a position from which to protect migrants as it does in countries in which migration is managed by the ministry of labour.³⁴

A similar situation applies with regard to education ministries, when the ILO is working on migrants and skills. "Skills and education ministries do not look at migrants as their priorities; their strategy is to send people out and what they count are remittances".³⁵ Similarly, social protection for migrant workers has not been a priority for countries of destination, although the governments in countries of origin are more interested in the protection of their nationals abroad.³⁶

The increasing presence of refugees around the world, however, requires countries to consider the integration of such displaced persons into local economies and communities, whether short-term or not. This is linked to the fact that recent waves of displacement have lasted for increased periods of time, sometimes decades. The ILO therefore received sufficient support in the Governing Body and tripartite meetings (2016) to adopt the Guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market.

Workers' organizations

The ILO has a unique opportunity to engage with workers' organizations and trade unions directly. Other international organizations integrate trade unions into a wider pool of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), causing the voices of trade unions to be lost among the myriad of NGO actors campaigning on

30 Interview with ILO staff.

31 Interview with ILO staff.

32 Interview with ILO staff.

33 Interview with ILO staff.

34 Interview with ILO staff.

35 Statement by interviewed ILO staff.

36 Interview with ILO staff.

many issues and with competing priorities. For this reason, it has been a priority for the ITUC to promote the ILO as the leading global organization on labour migration. In addition, the ITUC stated that the ILO addresses its main priority, namely the use of a rights-based approach to topics involving labour migration. In this regard, the ILO's work on the promotion of labour standards and international Conventions is of great importance to workers' representatives. At country level, trade union constituents are generally aware of the issues faced by migrant workers, and are ready to put these issues on the agenda.³⁷

The adoption of the fair recruitment guidelines was mentioned as a particular element of extreme importance for workers' organizations. The fair recruitment guidelines are perceived as useful for trade unions to understand their role in fair recruitment, and to structure their engagement with the government. However, international workers' representatives noted that current regulatory frameworks at national levels are either non-existent, insufficiently implemented, or governed by non-transparent bilateral agreements.³⁸

In addition, several ILO staff noted that, at a country level, workers' organizations in general are often weak, not always well-organized, or even non-existent. The focus of the ILO on capacity-building and the strengthening of social dialogue is therefore a crucial first or parallel step in many countries, before considering the position of labour migrants within trade unions. A key challenge is that labour migrants are often not represented by existing national trade unions, due to national legislation on trade union membership requirements. For example, those who work in domestic employment are not organized by means of the ILO's traditional constituents. They often exist outside the national trade union framework and fall outside of the scope for formulating rules. National trade union confederations try to help with the organization of these domestic workers, but this can be difficult, as their interests are not necessarily aligned, and adding the dimension of migration makes things more complicated.³⁹

Another important topic for workers' organizations is skills. While skills are of importance to these constituents, they point out that the interest of governments and employers in skills should not replace the focus on protection. They note that, while skills enhancement is important, it should be implemented in a manner that does not lead to "brain drain" due to labour migration. Workers' organizations fear that a focus on skills in labour migration may stimulate recruitment abroad rather than investment by employers in upskilling their staffs of country nationals. ILO staff highlight the need to balance the interest of workers' organizations in protection, and the interest of employers in skills initiatives.⁴⁰ The ILO's rights-based approach is therefore crucial in recognizing the interests of both constituents.

Interviews revealed a tension between the interest of trade unions in incorporating and supporting the needs of migrant workers, and persisting attitudes in many countries that the needs of national workers should be put first.⁴¹ Workers' organizations confirmed that indeed, trade union leaders cater to the majority who voted them into power, and are therefore more reluctant to support migrant workers (as a minority). In theory, workers' organizations are willing to support the rights of migrant workers; in practice, however, this is often not a priority compared with other issues. The work of both the ITUC and the ILO focuses on raising awareness among national trade unions of common ground, and the benefits of engaging migrant workers.⁴² In the Guatemala–Mexico corridor, interview respondents note that trade unions were initially concerned that "foreigners are going to take jobs away from us", but have come to understand that, by defending the rights of the migrant workers, they are also defending national workers.⁴³ A similar sentiment was found in Peru and Ecuador, with regard to growing xenophobia and negative perceptions of the social and economic insertion of Venezuelans. The ILO prepared a communication strategy aimed at creating more positive perceptions among union leaders and other stakeholders.⁴⁴

37 Interview with ITUC.

38 Interview with ITUC.

39 Interviews with ILO staff.

40 Interviews with ILO staff.

41 Interview with ILO staff.

42 Interview with ITUC.

43 Case study on Guatemala–Mexico.

44 L. Alcazar, N. Valdivia and K. Wanuz, "Final Independent Evaluation Labor Migration – Project RLA/18/01/RBS and Mid-term evaluation of Internal Labor Migration – Project RLA/19/03/USA", 2021. *Evaluation Reports*.

A review of various documents and interview notes demonstrated the diverging interests of workers' organizations at national and regional levels. Where national level workers' organizations are more often concerned with the protection of national workers, workers organizations at regional level (such as in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and SADC regions) are far more interested in the management of labour migration and the protection of migrant workers. Similarly, the interests of workers' organizations differ by country of origin and destination. As mentioned previously, workers' organizations in countries of destination concern themselves more with the protection of national workers, while workers' organizations in countries of origin show a stronger interest in the treatment of their fellow nationals in labour markets abroad.

Nepali workers' organisations are highly interested in the work of the ILO on Fair Recruitment between Nepal and Jordan. They are concerned about the treatment of Nepalis abroad and recognise that unfair recruitment processes are taking place, and that the rights of garment workers in Jordan are not always respected. The workers' organisations therefore advocate to the Jordanian government for equal pay and equal rights. They value the work of the ILO on the implementation of bilateral and G2G agreements and in facilitating dialogue.

Employers' organizations

In labour migration, employers are predominantly affected as recipients of migrant workers, or as potential employers of nationals migrating for work abroad. Employers in the countries of destination have a very strong interest in labour immigration, which helps to address labour and skills shortages in the home country, and keeps wages down.

The relevance of the ILO's work to employers differs strongly by countries of origin and destination. In countries of destination, the work of the ILO on fair and effective labour migration affects the positions and responsibilities of employers much more than in countries of origin. However, ILO staff noted an increasing interest among employers in countries of origin as well, mainly in relation to skills. In Mexico, for example, employers' organizations are advocating for the skills recognition of Mexican migrant workers in the United States of America. In South Asia, employers are becoming more concerned about skilled workers leaving the country.⁴⁵ In countries of origin, employers' engagement increased notably during the COVID-19 pandemic and the influx of returnees. In South Asia, for example, employers' organizations were less concerned with (outward) labour migration, but the return of workers from the Middle East required employers to consider the economic reintegration of these migrants, for example through the recognition of skills.⁴⁶

Employers' organizations see clear benefit and value to the work of the ILO on fair recruitment. National regulatory frameworks can be conducive to fair recruitment, and provide employers with certainty that workers are being recruited properly. A fairly recruited worker is perceived by employers as more productive, less distracted by issues relating to pay, more ready to work, and showing better spirit. A business case therefore exists for employers to support the fair recruitment work of the ILO.⁴⁷ However, gaps exist in the materials and approaches used by the ILO. Employers are mainly concerned about the lack of regulatory frameworks supporting the ILO's work on fair recruitment, as demonstrated in the following paragraph.

Employers perceive that the ILO's Fair Recruitment programmes lack a focus on strengthening regulations and legal frameworks at national level. The ongoing projects affect the rights of workers, but are insufficient to bring about structural change. They would like to see more engagement with employers' representatives at national level, to negotiate legal frameworks with the government and highlight the business case for Fair Recruitment. In addition, employers believe

⁴⁵ Interviews with ILO staff.

⁴⁶ Interview with ILO staff.

⁴⁷ Interview with the IOE.

that regulatory frameworks are also required to hold governments accountable. For example, in various countries, remittances are a key aspect of GDP, and governments send workers out at “whatever cost” to ensure the continuous flow of remittances. The ILO can play a role in encouraging such countries to protect their own workers abroad through bilateral and multilateral agreements. Current efforts do not sufficiently reflect the structural and regulatory elements.

The International Organization of Employers (IOE) indicated that, at a global level, skills are the main priority of employers’ organizations when it comes to labour migration. Migrant labour for employers is often the fastest way to address skills gaps and shortages. Employers are often perceived by workers’ organizations and some ILO staff as being less concerned with workers’ rights compared with the topic of skills. However, the rights-based approach is not completely disregarded (see the example on fair recruitment above). The focus of the ILO on employees’ rights and the rights-based approach to labour migration cause certain ILO staff to perceive the work of the ILO as being more in favour of workers’ concerns compared with those of employers. Certain employers’ representatives also noted that many of the ILO’s Conventions or standards are not relevant for employers, as they are already outdated and do not reflect the current global context.⁴⁸ However, there is growing recognition among companies concerning the potential risk of facing situations of abuse and exploitation in their migrant workforces, in their workplaces and in their supply chains, which can have consequences for their image and business. This was highlighted, for example, by employer representatives from Thailand, as well as by stakeholders from the Regional Conference on Migration.⁴⁹

The analysis found diverging information on the extent to which employers feel that their needs and priorities were sufficiently addressed. For example, the Synthesis Report noted for Latin America that the demands and concerns of employers were only partially addressed or not included in many ILO interventions, with variations from one country to another. The report found a lack of an ILO methodology to ensure consultation and participation of social actors in the formulation and design of interventions.⁵⁰ However, the interview process pointed towards strong involvement of employers’ organizations in the region. The presence of the ACT/EMP specialist played a crucial role in ensuring active involvement of employers. In Colombia, employers are on the forefront of the socio-economic integration of Venezuelan migrants and refugees through the ILO’s interventions.⁵¹ Similarly, the Synthesis Report noted various occasions of imbalance among involved constituents, for example, regarding migrant domestic workers, where ILO engaged more with workers’ organizations and governments than with the employers of domestic workers.⁵²

3.1.2. Relevance for beneficiaries and donors

This section reviews the extent to which ILO interventions have addressed the needs of migrant workers (beneficiaries), and whether the priorities of the ILO align with the priorities of donor organizations. Information was gathered from interviews and project evaluations. In this evaluation, migrant workers are regarded as the ultimate beneficiaries of the ILO, since the work of the ILO aims to ensure that the rights of migrant workers are protected. However, migrant workers are not targeted directly, but are intended to benefit from the ILO’s work through the actions of the constituents.

The work of the ILO is directly relevant to the beneficiary target group, as its interventions focus predominantly on the protection and empowerment of vulnerable migrant workers and refugees, who are most in need of this support. Donors recognize the importance of the ILO’s work, as evidenced by the increase in the funding given over the evaluation period. Skills, in particular, are an area of interest for donor organizations.

48 Interviews with IOE and ILO staff.

49 Case study on the Regional Migration Conference, case study on Thailand.

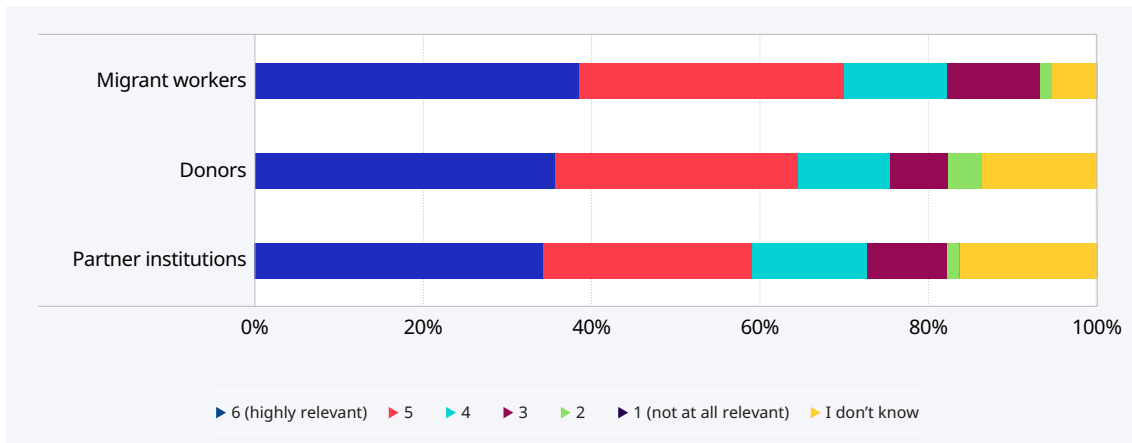
50 Bonne-Moreau.

51 Interviews with ILO staff.

52 Bonne-Moreau.

The survey found that the work of the ILO is also considered highly relevant for its various stakeholders. Its work was seen as highly relevant (score 5 or 6) for migrant workers by 70 per cent of respondents, highly relevant for donors by 64 per cent of respondents, and for partner organizations by 59 per cent.

► **Figure 7. To what extent do you think the ILO’s work on labour migration since 2016 has been relevant for its constituents and stakeholders (percentage, n=73, scale from 1 to 6)?**



Beneficiaries

ILO staff members consider that the interventions of the ILO target the most vulnerable groups of migrant workers, namely those who are medium- or low-skilled. These groups also form the largest share of migrant workers. Evaluation reports and interviews indicate that the ILO is aware of the main needs and challenges faced by migrant workers in different areas across the world, and designs projects that are tailored towards these needs. Migrant workers often have limited information about safe migration and rights at work, and where to access support. In countries of destination, migrants face language barriers and discrimination when attempting to access services to which they are entitled.⁵³

A key priority in this regard is the provision of information and support to migrant workers before their departure. Various initiatives by the ILO, such as the Joint Labour Migration Programme as well as support to local Migrant Resource Centres, address the knowledge gaps.⁵⁴

Upon arrival, migrant workers are not always able to join trade unions or other workers’ organizations. In some countries, migrant workers have a choice either to join a general trade union, which has a stronger voice but pays less attention to the specific needs of migrants, or to establish specific trade unions for migrant workers, which have their interests at heart, but may lack the power to achieve change, due to their smaller scale. While the ILO will support migrant workers in either case, there are benefits for the ILO in cooperating with larger unions, particularly since countries can only send one union representative to the tripartite meetings in Geneva.⁵⁵

In some cases, female workers can be identified as a particularly vulnerable group of labour migrants, as they are more likely to face sexual and physical abuse. In many regions, female workers are predominantly employed in the domestic work sector. In regions such as the Middle East and Asia, ILO staff said that domestic workers are not covered by labour protection. This presents another challenge: namely, if domestic work is not recognized in Asia, it is hard to convince countries of destination in the Middle East to extend labour migration protections to these workers.⁵⁶ Therefore, labour migration projects that focus on

53 Case studies – Asia and Pacific.

54 Case studies – Asia and Pacific.

55 Interviews with ILO staff.

56 Interviews with ILO staff.

domestic work, with a clear gender angle, are of great importance in these regions. More information on the ILO's work towards gender equality can be found in Section 3.2.2 on coherence with cross-cutting issues.

Several of the ILO's projects on labour migration include another important stakeholder group, namely journalists and the media. Engagement with this group of stakeholders helps to spread information on fair recruitment and migration policies, but also supports the combating of negative attitudes among the public towards labour migration.

The REFRAME project in Guatemala-Mexico worked on the development of a set of tools and a glossary enabling journalists to inform audiences about the workforce and issues relating to Fair Recruitment. According to people interviewed in Guatemala and Mexico, this responds to a need for real change in the way in which the communications media treat the recruitment and the conditions of migrant workers. A person interviewed in Mexico explained: "This is important, because the Ministry of Labour cannot control public attitudes, the discourse in the media is also important, which is usually little addressed." One of the people interviewed in Mexico stated that the context in which these activities were carried out was that of the Migrant Caravans, which led to the publication of negative articles towards the migrant population by some media. The involvement of the media is part of the global Fair Recruitment Initiative, and examples of such cooperation can be found worldwide.

Donor support

During the period 2016–20, there has been a clear recognition by donor organizations of labour migration as an area of interest. The interest of donors in migration has shifted from border management to include addressing the labour aspect of migration. In particular, ILO staff noted that projects with a skills component are of great interest in this regard.⁵⁷ The increased interest of donors is particularly visible in the enhanced number of projects on labour migration financed over the 2016–20 period.

Different donor organizations have different priorities with regard to labour migration. ILO staff indicate that they attempt to develop project proposals that align both with donor priorities and the ILO's standards and framework. Generally, ILO staff perceive that they have achieved greater visibility for the ILO mandate, and gained more support for the ILO mandate from donors. However, discrepancies can be seen between donors' priorities and the types of work undertaken by the ILO. For example, the ILO HLE on the response to the refugee crisis in Lebanon and Jordan found that, in 2018, donors tended to fund "fast-paced humanitarian projects", while the ILO's work with regard to refugees focuses more on long-term development.⁵⁸

The relevance of the ILO for donors is supported by the recognition by donors of the ILO's strengths and added value in the field of labour migration. One bilateral donor explained, for example, that "choosing the ILO was a no-brainer for the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), because of the superior technical expertise and experience of the ILO in labour migration. The ILO has been active and seen in the region, also implementing the first phase of Triangle project".

When asked why the EU decided to fund the ILO's activities for projects such as Ship to Shore, interviewees argued that the ILO is a leading UN agency on labour. Its tripartite nature is an advantage, as is its cooperation with policy makers. The ILO's main added value is its expertise on labour standards. EU interviewees agreed that Ship to Shore was a very successful project because it touched on the interests of many EU bodies. The EU's DG EMPL and DG MARE were involved, as were EU Member States.

⁵⁷ Interviews with ILO staff.

⁵⁸ ILO Evaluation Office, *Independent Evaluation. ILO's Programme of Work in Lebanon and Jordan in Terms of Decent Work and the Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis 2014-2018*, 2018.

There is growing interest among donor organizations in multipartner frameworks based on the “One UN” concept. For example, the large number of projects in one area (fair recruitment) causes donors to require the recipients of funding to coordinate their efforts. Some ILO staff noted occasional resistance within the ILO to engaging in multipartner efforts, due to both political and technical differences between the ILO and other UN agencies.⁵⁹ However, the Partnership for Improving Prospects for Forcibly Displaced Persons and Host Communities (PROSPECTS) project has demonstrated good practice by the ILO in responding to a donor priority.

In 2017, the Netherlands initiated a programme to establish multi-partner cooperation to address forced displacement, based on the “one UN” concept and implementation of the Global Compact for Refugees. The ILO became involved, along with UNICEF, the World Bank, the UNHCR and the IFC, and the consortium was tasked by the Dutch to come up with a vision for what a partnership approach would look like for refugees in work. This turned into the programme called “PROSPECTS”. Coordination takes place at all levels to drive the partnership. This includes regular global meetings, as well as meetings of country teams. This project embodies the way partnerships can take shape within the Compact, and demonstrates the benefits of partnerships to donors.

3.1.3. Relevance in the context of COVID-19

This section describes whether the work of the ILO remained relevant during the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, and whether the ILO was able to adjust its work to address emerging priorities. The section is based predominantly on interviews with the ILO and its constituents, as well as a review of the documentary evidence and COVID strategies.

Thematic relevance of the ILO’s work during COVID-19

In general, the work of the ILO during COVID-19 has been highly relevant, both in terms of addressing existing needs and priorities that increased in importance (social protection, payment of salaries), as well as in terms of adjusting its intervention to the growing importance of returnee migrant issues.

The context of COVID-19 has significantly affected the work of the ILO in labour migration, due to the unprecedented closure of borders on a global scale. During 2020, the ILO conducted several assessments on the impact of COVID-19 on the work of the ILO in general, and on labour migration in particular. Overall, the ILO has reoriented and adjusted many of its deliverables, and has implemented teleworking and virtual meetings.

From May 2020 onwards, the ILO Regional Office for Africa took the decision to reorient part of the activities of its labour migration projects to support returnee migrant workers as well as those migrant workers still abroad who were affected by measures taken in their countries of destination. At the same time, the ILO began conducting on the African continent an Impact Assessment Survey of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrant workers’ protection, labour migration governance and recruitment-related practices in different African sub-regions (e.g. IGAD, SADC), as well as at country level (e.g. in Nigeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya). In addition, the ILO is producing material related to improving the protection of migrant workers.”

Interviewees noted that COVID-19 affected all aspects of labour migration, from the provision of information upon departure until return. COVID-19 highlighted the main gaps in existing provisions regarding labour migration and the implementation of laws and standards for migrants’ protection. In countries where

⁵⁹ Interviews with ILO staff.

insufficient (enforcement of) labour migration standards were implemented, ILO staff perceived more challenges in protecting migrant workers: “If policies are in place already, you just need to upscale them instead of inventing them from scratch.”⁶⁰

Two main challenges can be distinguished, namely: (a) a huge increase in returnee migrants, and (b) the situation of labour migrants being stranded (often jobless and without social protect) in the country of destination.

The topic of returnee migrants has increased in importance for the ILO during the pandemic. In India alone, an estimated 5 million labour migrants returned to the country during the COVID-19 pandemic crisis. In response, the ILO tried to design approaches for integrating returnees back into their home countries’ labour markets. A key challenge here is that not all countries perceive returnees as a specific target group for support measures. “Reintegration is seen as a refugee issue. Local officials do not see ‘nationals’ returning as being in need support.”⁶¹ In Africa, strategies were developed to address the issue of returnee migrant workers.⁶²

The issue of returnee workers also affected employers in the countries of origin, and their involvement in the work of the ILO. While employers in countries of origin were generally less interested in labour migration (as described above), the issue of returnees and their integration into the job market meant that the role of employers increased. In Nepal, for example, employers’ federations had been involved in labour migration in the past only to a limited extent. During the COVID-19 pandemic, they realized the importance of labour migration governance. In Sri Lanka, skills passports were introduced to support the recruitment of returnees.⁶³ However, one respondent from Bangladesh indicated being unaware of ILO projects addressing the needs of returnees, while there is an urgent need to support such people.⁶⁴

For stranded migrants, the main issue identified was the lack of access to social protection. Many ILO staff indicated that in various regions, migrant workers were often not eligible for social protection in the country of destination. While this had been an area of work for the ILO before the pandemic, the pandemic has revealed more clearly the lack of social protection measures for migrant workers, who lost their jobs and were left with no protection: “If support measures had been in place before, we could have built on them during the pandemic”.⁶⁵ ILO interviewees indicated that around 75 per cent of domestic workers were informal and therefore lacked any safety net in the event of job loss. The emergency measures in many countries excluded domestic workers, who thus received no support during the COVID-19 crisis. One key priority for the ILO was to ensure that migrant workers were granted access to emergency social protection.⁶⁶

In Ethiopia, whose social protection institutions have low capacity, the ILO created a parallel system using digital platforms. After its establishment, it was handed over to the social protection institutions for further development and integration. According to ILO staff, “This experience of COVID helped us to understand how we can use humanitarian assistance to develop long-term solutions and collaborate with UNHCR and similar emergency institutions”.

Even in countries of origin, the issue of social protection for returnee migrants proved to be a complicated matter. For this reason, one of the main pillars in the ILO’s overall COVID-19 response strategy includes “supporting enterprises, jobs and incomes, with an emphasis on extending social protection (including to migrant workers)”.

60 Interviews with ILO staff.

61 Interviews with ILO staff.

62 “ILO Labour Migration Projects in Africa in need of re-orienting activities mainly to support returnee migrant workers due to COVID-19: Ideas on short-term activities that could be implemented from May to December 2020”.

63 Interviews with ILO staff.

64 HLE Asia Decent Work – Zero Draft Evaluation.

65 Interviews with ILO staff.

66 Interviews with ILO staff.

For those migrant workers who did not lose their jobs during COVID, other challenges arose: “For migrant workers living at employers’ houses (e.g. domestic workers), working conditions deteriorated. Overwork increased (as children were permanently at home), social isolation increased, they were given higher requirements in cleaning (using bleach without protections) and faced problems due to lack of access to healthcare. Everything made them more vulnerable.”⁶⁷

In Peru and Ecuador, the project ‘Promotion of integration in the market of Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Latin American and Caribbean countries through decent work and inclusive economic growth with equity’ originally addressed Venezuelan migrants in other countries of the region, with a focus on integration. However, in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, a rethink of the project’s goals was proposed. Instead of looking for employment, the project focused instead more on entrepreneurship as a way of integrating into society that could support them during the period of business closures and unemployment. This shows the ability of the ILO to reconsider the needs of its beneficiaries and the circumstances they have to work under, and to react effectively to the changing situation to ensure the relevance of its activities.

Interviewees from the ILO also noted an increase in hostility against migrant workers during the pandemic. The narrative of labour migrants as “job stealers” increased, for example in Latin America, where native workers lost their jobs, but migrant workers kept coming.⁶⁸ In response, a study was published on the contribution of Venezuelans to the health sector and platform work. Throughout the pandemic, these migrants worked in the front line, ensuring the safety of others.⁶⁹ The ILO’s work on awareness-raising and combating stereotypes about migrant workers (as discussed above) has therefore increased in importance during the pandemic.

Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic required the ILO to adjust some of its activities in line with national COVID-19 mitigation measures, but has mainly increased the relevance of the ILO’s work. The importance of the ILO’s work on social protection has increased significantly, as well as its work on awareness-raising and the mitigation of prejudice. The topic of returnees was not prioritized as strongly by the ILO in the past, but its activities and priorities have shifted to address the changing needs of countries of origin in this regard.

Adjustment of project activities and modalities

While no aggregated data is yet available on the ILO’s approach to mitigating the effects of COVID19, in most countries the pandemic did significantly affect the way in which progress was achieved towards ILO outputs.

The interviews revealed that significant delays were experienced. However, the ILO and the key stakeholders working towards the various products and services managed to reroute their activities to achieve the outputs via other means. The ILO enabled the rerouting of certain activities by taking a flexible approach towards project implementation, as well as through extensive networks on the ground.

Before COVID-19, within the framework of the work carried out by FAIR II in the Philippines-Hong Kong corridor, Justice Without Borders (JWB), a key stakeholder in the project, intended to undertake six-month training programmes with at least two cohorts of mentees who would learn the process involved in making claims, and would try to work on actual cross-border cases [in which unionised domestic workers claim abuse or other breaches of labour migrant rights].

The Philippines is very much a person-to-person focused culture, and COVID-19 meant that JWB mentors could not travel to the country. The consultants for JWB on the ground found coordination extremely difficult. The front-line partners of JWB in the Philippines were dealing with the

⁶⁷ Interviews with ILO staff.

⁶⁸ Interviews with ILO staff.

⁶⁹ Interviews with ILO staff.

immediate fall-out from COVID-19. Many were supporting the disaster-response in their community. Thus, the determination was made that remote training was not possible.

Part of JWB's goal in working with the ILO on this project was to obtain actionable cases and to trial cross-border actions. As an alternative to the training of frontline organisations, the ILO suggested that JWB should build the capacity of a different frontline entities. This resulted in the Labour Department in the Autonomous Region of Mindanao in the Philippines being chosen. ILO has people on the ground there, which enabled such cooperation. Thus, the project switched to longer-term capacity building in the processing of cases, and shorter-term capacity building with the training of front-line labour department officers.

The ILO's progress towards achieving outputs was also enabled by providing blended learning and digital solutions as an alternative to in-person skills training for outbound workers, ensuring that their recruitment and licensing can run smoothly. The simplified solutions provided by the ILO have proven to be as effective as the original ones.

Before COVID-19, the Technical Education and Skills Authority (TESDA) in the Philippines provided a 28-day in-person training programme to achieve NC II. The onset of COVID-19 stopped the training of outbound Filipino workers, as in-person training was no longer possible. At the suggestion of the ILO, TESDA launched a shortened pilot, Blended Training Program for Domestic Workers NC II, via Zoom. This allowed helped outbound Filipino domestic workers to acquire the necessary competences in the shortest time possible. The training programme lasts just 12 days and contains all the basic, common and core competencies needed to acquire NC II.

To assess how effective a pilot is, one indicator is the certification rate. As of now, the first batch has certification rate of 100%. Therefore, TESDA is continuing with this practice and is now working to support a batch of training for six months, serving a maximum of 60 participants.

The ILO has also supported national constituents in carrying out research and organizing workshops and conferences to adapt to the new conditions brought about by COVID-19. These research activities address both the conditions of the labour market and labour migrants, and the effect of COVID-19 on fair recruitment, as well as providing recommendations to stimulate an effective global response to COVID-19. Through these activities, the ILO has largely supported the tripartite approach to tackling the fallout of COVID-19, following international labour standards, and supporting groups that are in particular situations of vulnerability.

During the first wave of COVID-19, in the context of **FAIR II in Tunisia**, the ILO carried out a survey on Tunisian labour migrants abroad. In particular, the research was carried out with the support of the General Union of Workers of Tunisia (UGTT). Through the work of UGTT regional coordinators, the survey reached 607 migrants. In addition, the ILO supported information centres for migrant workers as well as a network of UGTT focal points, and developed awareness posters, 2D video locations, and a guide to good practices in matters of occupational safety and health (OSH), for employers and migrant workers.

3.1.4. Relevance towards the priorities of the Governing Body and International Labour Conference

When evaluating the relevance of the priorities and standards adopted by the ILO's Governing Body and International Labour Conference, it is worth examining how these are reflected in the organization's wider

strategic objectives and their responsiveness to the needs of beneficiary populations. In order to account for the relevance of these standards, it is worth comparing International Labour Conference session resolutions with the P&Bs, to understand how the resolutions adopted during sessions are manifested in the design of interventions. Overall, with some minor exceptions, the concerns raised in the International Labour Conference discussions were integrated into the ILO's projects and interventions.

Throughout the 104th to 108th Sessions of the International Labour Conference, the ILO adopted various resolutions that addressed the needs of migrant workers. These resolutions ranged from recognizing the precarious nature of migrant workers to outlining steps for the ILO in the area of labour migration, by developing on the need to address labour governance, promote international labour standards and improve skills development, data collection, access to freedom of association, and fair recruitment in the area of labour migration. Most of these resolutions were later translated into concrete objectives through the P&Bs.

The 2016–17 P&B transposes labour protection resolutions adopted at the 104th Session. Outcome 8 focuses on protecting migrant workers, with an indicator designed to ensure that labour protection policies, strategies and revised laws would include vulnerable groups such as migrant workers. To extend minimum wage coverage to migrant workers, it asks that wage design policies reference Convention No. 131.⁷⁰

Outcome 10 mentions plans to address the discriminatory impact of wage policies and other working conditions through interventions in constituent countries. Similarly, the P&B for 2020–21 elaborates on plans to improve minimum wage protections, as in the resolution per Output 7.3; however, it does not do so in the context of migration, since Output 7.5 on labour migration does not mention minimum wage policies. Furthermore, this outcome addresses the topic of migrants in global supply chains, even placing a specific focus on women, thus responding to resolutions adopted at the 105th Session of the International Labour Conference. The P&B for 2018–19 also covers this issue in Outcome 4, with indicator 4.3 stating how new programmes and initiatives should ensure decent work in global supply chains.

The 2018–19 and 2020–21 P&Bs effectively transpose the fair and effective labour migration governance resolution adopted at the 106th Session. Both strategies commit to promoting the ratification of relevant ILO Conventions to protect migrant workers' labour rights. Both programmes developed plans to elaborate data collection methods, applying international statistical guidelines with constituents and exchanging good practices. Moreover, the ILO's strategy presents a clear action plan for monitoring the governance of labour migration, developing migration policies for labour market integration, and promoting fair recruitment practices.

The 2020–21 P&B responds to the relevant resolution on labour migration governance through a commitment to revisit the action plan on labour migration and develop guidelines on the scope, purpose and implications of international labour standards relating to migrant workers. Discussions at the 108th Session acknowledged the need to deepen and scale up the ILO's work on international labour migration, to which the programme responds by expanding on the ways in which the ILO will take a lead to ensure decent work for migrants and refugees.

Nevertheless, the P&Bs left out some issues raised in resolutions. One such example is the resolution concerning fair and effective labour migration governance adopted at the 106th Session, which states that the ILO should prioritize actions towards temporary labour migration, by likening temporary and circular labour migration schemes and examining employer sponsorship programmes, whose impacts should be put before the Governing Body for its consideration. The strategy plans for 2018–19 and 2020–21 do not address the comparison of labour migration schemes and do not explicitly elaborate on ways to examine the specified impacts. Furthermore, the resolution aims to reduce and investigate further irregular labour migration, and to improve the protection of migrants, irrespective of their migration status. The 2018–19 P&B only mentions irregular migration as a challenge in Outcome 9, without expanding on ways to address it. The P&B 2020–21 briefly touches upon the topic of irregular migration in Policy Outcome 7, Output 7.5, which outlines that the ILO will generate and disseminate knowledge on good measures to address irregular

⁷⁰ The Minimum Wage Fixing Convention, 1970 (No. 131).

migration. Neither programme elaborated on how migrants with irregular status could access justice, or how to resolve such status. On the other hand, despite the lack of explicit mentions of these issues in the P&Bs, the ILO is carrying out research on temporary and irregular labour migration.⁷¹

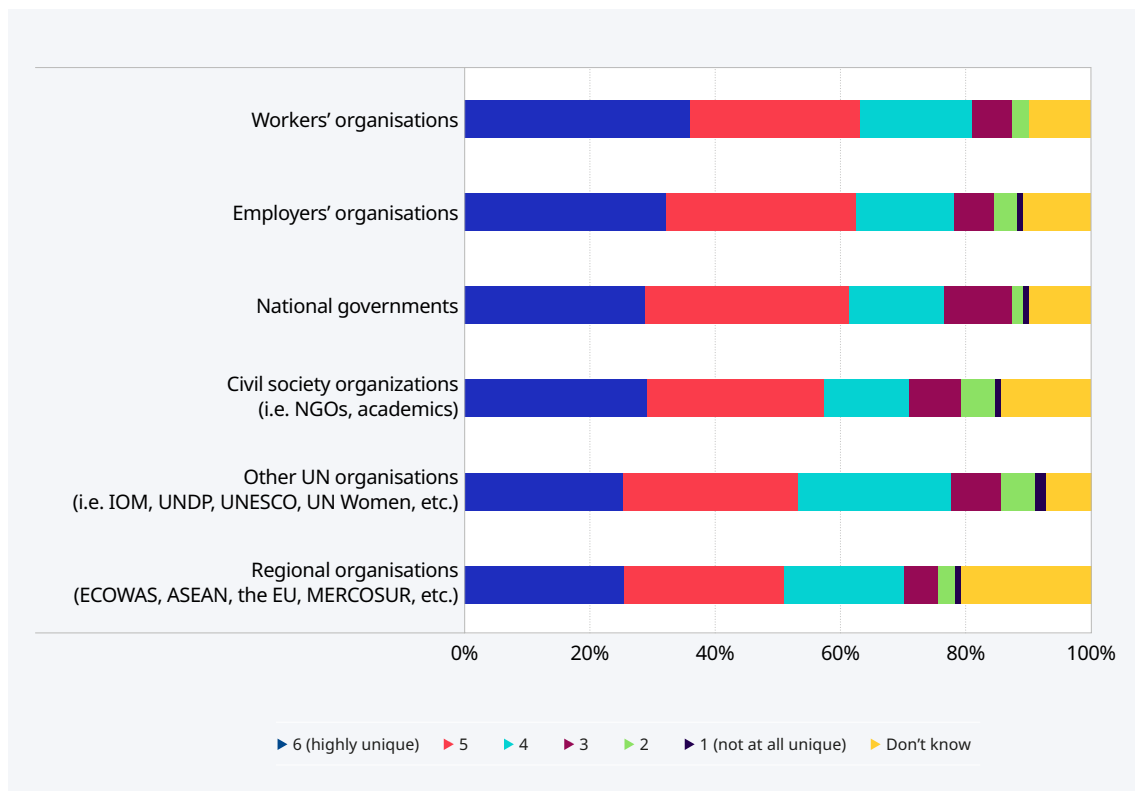
3.1.5. ILO added value in the field of labour migration

This section indicates whether the ILO provides added value and unique services in the field of labour migration. Whether or not the ILO provides such added value is a crucial factor in determining whether its work and products are relevant, or whether it duplicates existing efforts.

From various data sources – such as interviews, surveys and desk research – it is clear that the ILO possesses characteristics that allow it to provide products and services that are unique in the global environment of labour migration. The added value of the ILO is generally recognized by constituents and stakeholders, who rely on the ILO for its particular expertise.

Overall, the survey found that the work of the ILO is unique in the world, compared with a variety of other organizations. More than 60 per cent of respondents noted the unique added value provided by the ILO compared with the work of its constituents. Slightly less added value was noted in relation to regional organizations and other UN agencies, although more than 50 per cent still awarded the ILO a 5 or 6 for the uniqueness of its products and services.

► **Figure 8. To what extent are ILO products and services in the field of labour migration unique compared with those of other actors, listed below (percentage, n=110, scale from 1 to 6)?**



71 For example, please see ILO, [Temporary labour migration: Two studies on workers' perspectives and actions](#), 2021; and ILO, [Temporary labour migration: The business community experience](#), 2021. In addition, there is a forthcoming study on irregular migration during COVID-19.

Constituents and ILO staff perceive the ILO to have unique strengths in this regard. One of its most important strengths, which was mentioned by several of the ILO staff members interviewed, as well as several respondents to the survey conducted for this evaluation, is its unique tripartite structure. Tripartite activities, including workshops, training programmes and consultations, were found to be effective in creating an enabling environment for fair labour migration practices. The tripartite approach of the ILO helps to create a space in which relevant stakeholders can meet and discuss their most pressing issues and concerns. In this way, it is easier to build consensus on the most important areas, and the work of the ILO can take into account the needs of the relevant stakeholders in a more effective and timely manner.⁷² The tripartism of the ILO grants it great potential to play a central role in the formulation of policies for decent work and fair labour migration at national, regional and global levels.⁷³

The ILO's commitment to social dialogue through this tripartite system also contributes to building the capacity of civil society organizations and workers' organizations, raising awareness and developing the component of advocacy in society that helps to change public opinion about migrant workers.⁷⁴ Several respondents to the survey conducted for this evaluation also highlighted the ILO's ability to facilitate social dialogue as being one of its most useful traits.

"[An example of the ILO's work in the field of labour migration that is most useful is] facilitation of inter-ministerial and tripartite discussions on migration that are necessary to ensure coordination around policies and programmes which usually require the participation of different ministries and social partners."

The ILO's strength, which stems from its tripartite structure, may be limited in those regions where tripartite discussions and mechanisms are limited by weaker tripartite national steering committees, a lack of interest from the governments, or lack of freedom for workers' associations.⁷⁵ Hence, for tripartism to be a strength, it depends on interest from governments, the existence of strong independent organizations representing diverse workers, and the willingness of the government and employers' and workers' organizations to interact with each other in a respectful way. Moreover, a supportive institutional framework is required to facilitate such interaction.⁷⁶ If this is ensured, and the tripartite system functions smoothly, the ILO's work can be more coherent with and relevant to the national needs and agendas with regard to labour migration.⁷⁷

In the Philippines, the ILO brings together various partners to discuss diverse issues such as the high fees that migrant domestic workers need to pay for training. The ILO has also helped to implement a Migrant Recruitment Advisor, to whom migrant workers can submit their reviews and rate recruitment agencies. This has facilitated work with social partners.

Second, a clear strength and a unique value of the ILO is its normative mandate, which includes Conventions and Recommendations, as well as Protocols and their supervision. The ILO is thus able to connect its projects and technical assistance with workers' rights and the guiding fundamental rights Conventions.⁷⁸ The rights-based and normative approach is recognized both by constituents and other actors, for example the IOM.⁷⁹ The vast majority of survey respondents (76 per cent) awarded the ILO a 5 or 6 for its attention to international norms and standards.

72 Bonne-Moreau.

73 ILO, *Governing Body 328th Session, Geneva 27 October – 10 November 2016, The ILO's Strategic Plan for 2018–21*, October 2016.

74 Bonne-Moreau.

75 Bonne-Moreau.

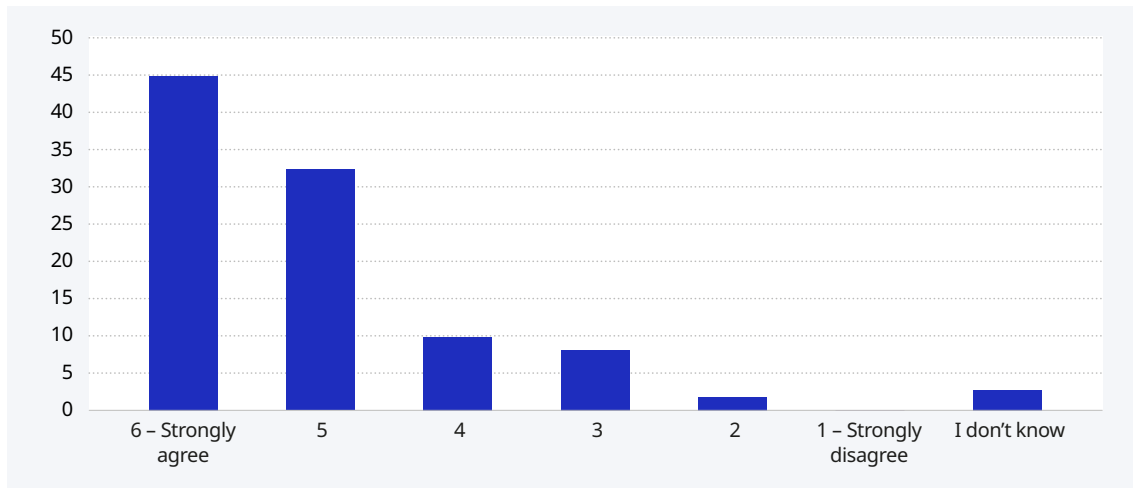
76 ILO, *Governing Body 328th Session, Geneva 27 October – 10 November 2016, The ILO's Strategic Plan for 2018–21*, October 2016.

77 ILO's 2020–30 Labour Migration Strategy in Africa.

78 Interviews with ILO staff.

79 Interview with IOM.

► **Figure 9. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: The ILO's work on labour migration gives sufficient attention to promoting international standards and norms (percentage, n=111, scale from 1 to 6)?**



Another important strength of the ILO, given its work on labour migration, is its broader focus on labour market-related issues and ability to connect its work with the rights-based approach. While the majority of organizations and institutions working on migration focus on this topic exclusively, the ILO also works on other issues relating to decent work and respect for human rights in the labour market. The concepts of decent work and respect for workers' rights are important not only for migrant workers, but also for domestic workers. The ILO tends to view labour migration through the lens of the labour market, which ensures that labour migrants are not excluded from national initiatives targeting non-migrant workers. At the same time, workers in a domestic environment are not excluded from projects that aim to ensure better conditions for migrant workers.⁸⁰ The broad range of expertise available also allows the ILO to easily involve experts from other areas, such as social protection or skills, into labour migration-focused projects and activities whenever the need arises.⁸¹ The ILO's broad focus may actually help to tackle the distinction of workers depending on their migration status, and in this way highlight the most pressing problems faced by all workers. This broader focus, and the availability of expertise, not only on labour migration, but also in other areas relating to decent work and workers' rights, also provides some flexibility for the ILO to better adapt its activities to ensure greater relevance to its constituents and beneficiaries.

The ILO often takes a corridor approach in its work and capacity-building activities. In this way, the ILO's interventions can target the different stages of migration – including pre-departure, arrival and return – and hence promote regular and safe migration among various constituent groups.⁸² The ILO's interventions can thus target different stages of migration and different constituents, ensuring a unified approach through different interventions, thus increasing the relevance and importance of its work. Several respondents to the survey conducted for this evaluation also highlighted the importance and relevance of the ILO's work, due to the fact that its corridor approach allows them to relate work in countries of origin to work in countries of destination: "The ILO has been playing a crucial role in connecting stakeholders in countries of origin and destination, and this should receive more focus in the future."⁸³

One last important strength of the ILO, which stems from its broad expertise, is its technical knowledge in various areas. This makes the ILO's work crucial not only for national governments, which benefit from

⁸⁰ Interview with ILO staff.

⁸¹ Interview with ILO staff.

⁸² Bonne-Moreau.

⁸³ Interview with ILO staff.

the technical support the ILO makes available, but also for academics, who benefit from the thorough and informative publications it creates.⁸⁴

3.2. Coherence

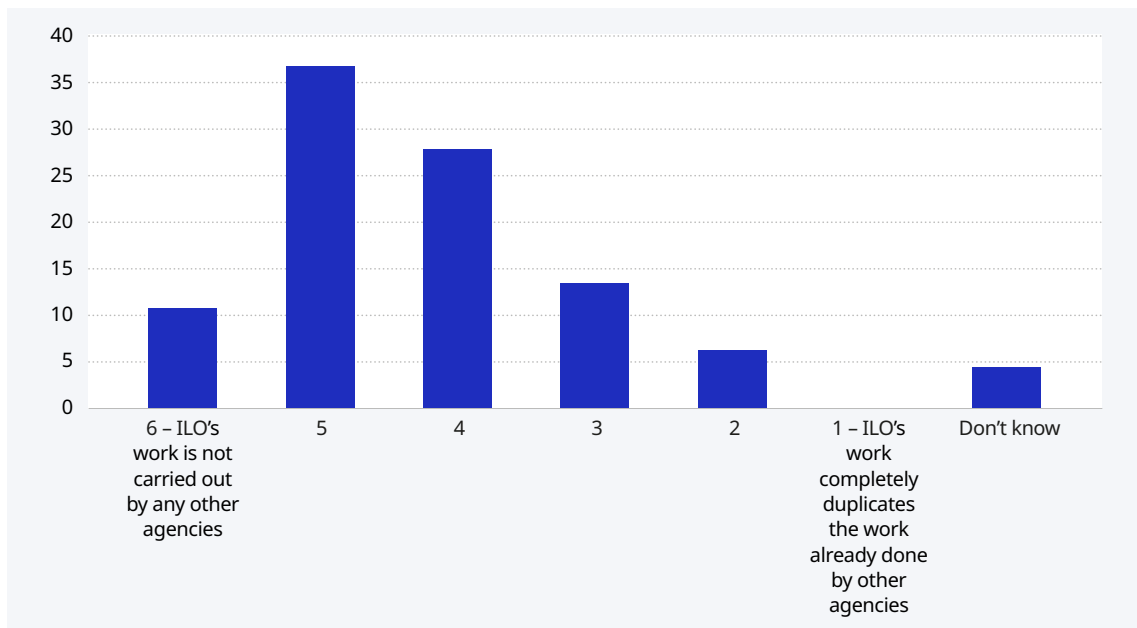
The goal of evaluating coherence is measuring how well an intervention builds on synergies and established coordination links at various levels, and whether it is in line with international norms and standards, while avoiding duplication and overlaps. Coherence can be examined on two levels: (a) internal coherence accounts for the synergies between the intervention under evaluation and other interventions carried out by same institution; and (b) 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, harmonization and complementarity.

3.2.1. Coherence with the actions of other international actors

Analysis of coherence with other international actors shows that the ILO manages to plan its interventions on labour migration well, all the while maintaining a high standard in this area of its work. This is because the ILO actively works and collaborates with many international organizations such as the World Bank, the OECD and the various organizations of the UN, such as the IOM, UNHCR, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and UNICEF. This allows for the creation of synergies and complementarity with various other initiatives.⁸⁵ Moreover, by cooperating with other actors, the ILO itself becomes a beneficiary, gaining the opportunity to take advantage of its partners’ expertise, with the most important forum for this being Technical Working Groups.⁸⁶

The survey indicates that most ILO staff and constituents perceive that the ILO’s work is unique in comparison to that of other agencies. Moreover, none of the survey respondents stated that the ILO’s work completely duplicates the work of other agencies, and only a small minority somewhat agree with that statement.

► **Figure 10. How would you rate the ILO’s overall coherence with the work of other international and national agencies working on labour migration (percentage, n=111, scale from 1 to 6)?**



84 Interview with ILO staff.

85 Bonne-Moreau.

86 Bonne-Moreau.

When accounting for the best examples of the ILO's external coherence, it is worth considering the collaborations that take place within the network of the UN on issues relating to labour migration and worker protection. One of the reasons for the ILO's coherency in this respect is due to the niche it has carved out for itself, especially in terms of labour migration. While agencies such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) focus primarily on those individuals in the world of work who are highly qualified, the ILO works with a broader segment of the population that has a medium to low level of skills, whether they are nationals or migrants. The reason for this specialization is the particular vulnerability of these groups in terms of protection from various forms of abuse, and lack of access to jobs or skills recognition. Another aspect of the ILO's work that allows it to maintain its unique niche is its tripartite structure. It allows partners to come together and discuss issues relating to skills and social inclusion, while promoting a sector-based approach and emphasis on vocational training, which partners find helpful.⁸⁷

One area in which the ILO has specific experience is that of labour market assessments, which allows it to establish complementarity with the UNHCR, part of whose work hinges on facilitating the long-term integration of refugees. An essential feature has been the development of MoUs and operational agreements between the ILO and the main UN agency with a mandate for the protection of refugees. Based on mutual understandings of certain values, such as integration in the wider sense, the ILO frequently carries out advocacy work together with the UNHCR, which focuses on the protection of refugees' basic rights, while the ILO aims to uphold refugee workers' rights in their workplace.⁸⁸ When it comes to statistics, the ILO is a trusted partner due to its social engagement and having the necessary tools and experience, owing to its tripartite structure.⁸⁹ This further contributes to collaborations between the two organizations, which have signed an MoU that incorporates a statistics component. This effectively means that surveys of refugees are based on ILO methodology and guidance.⁹⁰

When talking about the coherence of ILO projects, the organization has a demonstrated ability to carry out projects that are not only designed to create or reaffirm existing goals with its partners, but also to react to situations requiring urgent attention and posing a threat to regional or international stability. A case in point is the Middle East during the so-called migration crisis. Here, the ILO played a key role in shifting the focus from traditional responses with regard to humanitarian emergencies, towards creating sustainable solutions for refugees. Among these, its decent work programme was especially important.⁹¹ While it is true that the ILO previously worked with refugee populations, it has solidified this experience by collaborating with other agencies, such as the UNHCR. Within this domain, the two sides renewed an MoU in 2016 and outlined a Joint Action Plan for 2017–19, followed by another one for 2020–21. The impact of this shift was also observed in the ILO expanding its portfolio across the Middle East and Africa, with projects such as PROSPECTS, which combined the work of multiple organizations, providing improved presence on the ground.⁹²

Against the background of the refugee crises, it is worth considering the work the ILO has carried out in Lebanon. The ILO, in collaboration with the UNDP, began implementing projects here in 2017. In general, project coordination within the country has been ensured by the ILO becoming involved within working groups, such as the Livelihood Working Group. It has also founded an advocacy group for Syrian refugees to defend their access rights, and has worked on advocacy by crafting common messages to support other UN agencies, with the aim of addressing tensions relating to the competition over access to work caused by the migration crisis. Another example of synergy is the collaboration between the ILO and the UNDP in the Livelihoods Coordination Sector, and its work on providing assistance to the National Steering Committee to Combat Child Labour.⁹³ Another important aspect of the joint work of the ILO and the UNDP involves

87 Interview with ILO staff.

88 Interview with ILO staff.

89 Interview with ILO staff.

90 Interview with ILO staff.

91 Interview with ILO staff.

92 Interview with ILO staff.

93 ILO Evaluation Office, *Independent Evaluation. ILO's Programme of Work in Lebanon and Jordan in Terms of Decent Work and the Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis 2014–2018*, 2018.

infrastructure projects that educate contractors on employment-intensive methods and capacity-building for public institutions. Currently, four of the ten projects proposed are being implemented.⁹⁴

At a continental level, the ILO has undertaken projects in cooperation with international and regional organizations that are not necessarily within the UN structure. One such ongoing project, which began in 2014, is the Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration (JLMP). This project combines the efforts of the African Union Commission (AUC), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), and the IOM.⁹⁵ The ILO also collaborates closely with the AUC, which actively seeks to develop a report on labour data and statistics in Africa, using tools and guidelines that are consistent with the ILO's standards.⁹⁶ However, one issue arose due to ILO not being able to participate when the AU developed its common position before the Global Compact for Migration (GCM). This has led to the ILO lacking an understanding about the state of affairs when regional consultations take place, despite its best efforts to keep track of developments. While at headquarters level, efforts have been made to create links between global and country-level initiatives, the limitations of the ILO's field presence in this case are very clear.⁹⁷

Another interesting case of collaboration is that between the ILO and the IOM. A system is in place for regular cooperation through work plan meetings with MIGRANT, SKILLS and IOM, with a joint work plan in preparation to avoid duplication. It is worth noting that the two organizations have also signed an MoU to further a cohesive partnership.⁹⁸ Moreover, both organizations are able to come together and implement projects that address the needs of beneficiary populations, as in the case of projects in Bangladesh, China and South-East Asia. As an example, they are currently partnering to carry out projects in support of the JLMP⁹⁹ and in the United Arab Emirates, where an ongoing project aims to improve skills recognition and reduce the precarity of Sri Lankan workers in select Cooperation Council for the Arab States (Gulf Cooperation Council) (GCC) nations, by enhancing their skills.¹⁰⁰

Nevertheless, some existing issues should be pointed out. Following the Syrian refugee crisis, the ILO saw its portfolio grow to include an increasing number of issues concerning migration. This is an area that the IOM also considers to be its domain. Meanwhile, the IOM has expanded its programme on labour migration, thus crossing into traditional ILO mandate areas, such as labour inspection, and working with some of the ILO's traditional constituents, such as labour ministries (for example, in the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Thailand and Libya).¹⁰¹ Therefore, the growing portfolios of both organizations generate some competition in an already crowded and competitive space.¹⁰² Funding is another source of competition indicated by multiple interviewees, especially given that more organizations and NGOs have become involved within the domain of labour migration.¹⁰³ The presence of labour migration mandates within both organizations contributes to some duplication of efforts. The ILO focuses on labour aspects of migration, while the IOM covers social and legal aspects – thus, in theory, providing complementarity.¹⁰⁴ However, two reports did note the existence of overlap in the area of labour migration.¹⁰⁵ Issues also exist in relation to a common, shared vision of migrants, since the IOM looks at the matters from a migrant perspective rather than regarding its beneficiary populations as workers. This not only undermines the ILO's work by shifting the focus away

94 ILO Evaluation Office, *Independent Evaluation. ILO's Programme of Work in Lebanon and Jordan in Terms of Decent Work and the Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis 2014–2018*, 2018.

95 ILO, *Labour Migration in Africa*.

96 Interview with ILO staff.

97 Interview with ILO staff.

98 Interview with ILO staff.

99 Strategic Framework 2020-2030 for the AU/ILO/Iom/UNECA Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance For Development and Integration in Africa (JLMP).

100 Addressing governance challenges in a changing migration landscape – ILC 2017.

101 IOM, *IOM and the Lao Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare Commemorate International Labour Day 2021*, 23 April 2021.

102 Interview with ILO staff.

103 Interview with ILO staff.

104 Bonne-Moreau.

105 Tripartite action to protect migrants from labour exploitation (ASEAN TRIANGLE) – Final evaluation, and support for the reintegration of returnees in Ethiopia – Final independent evaluation.

from the “labour” aspect of its work, but also negatively affects perceptions of the people themselves, who become viewed as migrants, and are consequently labelled as “other”.¹⁰⁶

Desk research and interviews in Tunisia demonstrate differences in the evaluation of the ILO’s cooperation with IOM, compared with other organisations. On the one hand, respondents regarded the lack of coordination between the two organizations as “deadly” for national constituents, who are short-staffed and suffer from a general lack of resources. Interviewees noted that the money spent on overlapping efforts is destined for Tunisia, and should be spent more effectively to better the conditions in the country. The National Observatory of Migration even mentioned the example of a meeting it had to organise in order to coordinate the activities of both organizations: “With the ILO, in the contest of AMEM, a campaign to fight against irregular migration will be organised. We [the National Observatory of Migration] are doing exactly the same with the IOM. So last week, we had a meeting between the ONM, the ILO and the IOM –it was a first meeting of this sort – and we asked how the work of the ILO can complete the work of the IOM, and we devised a good strategy not to have overlaps.”

At the same time, interviews confirm that the project THAMM has a component in which the ILO and the IOM share responsibility, and that an official common strategy has been designed to ensure that cooperation between both organisations is successful. This confirms the overall sentiments expressed by several interviewees that cooperation and coordination between both organisations is becoming more successful.

Lastly, it is important to mention that when the ILO works on migration, partners as a whole recognize the organization’s experience, valuing its contributions and standards.¹⁰⁷ However, according to interviewees, due to the number of organizations working on issues relating to migration, there is a perception that the ILO’s voice is occasionally drowned out.¹⁰⁸ At other times, partners fail to understand the tripartite system of the ILO, even after long stints of working within the ILO’s structure. While this is not necessarily the fault of the ILO, it still exists as an issue, and has been growing over recent years.¹⁰⁹

3.2.2. Coherence with cross-cutting issues of the ILO

Coherence with cross-cutting concerns accounts for how well the ILO is able to integrate other issues – particularly those relating to inclusivity on the basis of gender and people living with a disability, among others – into its interventions. Overall, there are many positive aspects to the ILO’s work on coherence with cross-cutting issues. These are especially visible in its work on gender equality and protection, and its recognition for the growing need for environmental sustainability. Nevertheless, to achieve a more comprehensive and holistic approach to cross-cutting issues, the ILO needs to focus more on the domain of including individuals living with disabilities.

The survey respondents mostly agreed (about 74 per cent) that the ILO’s work on labour migration paid specific attention to the needs and circumstances of women and migrant women. With regard to whether its work on labour migration took into account environmental concerns, the numbers were more conservative: around 44 per cent of respondents agreed that the concern was given attention. With regard to whether the ILO’s work focused on the needs and circumstances of people with disabilities, around 34 per cent of respondents were unsure if the ILO gave special attention to this area, and around 20 per cent of respondents tended to disagree with the statement.

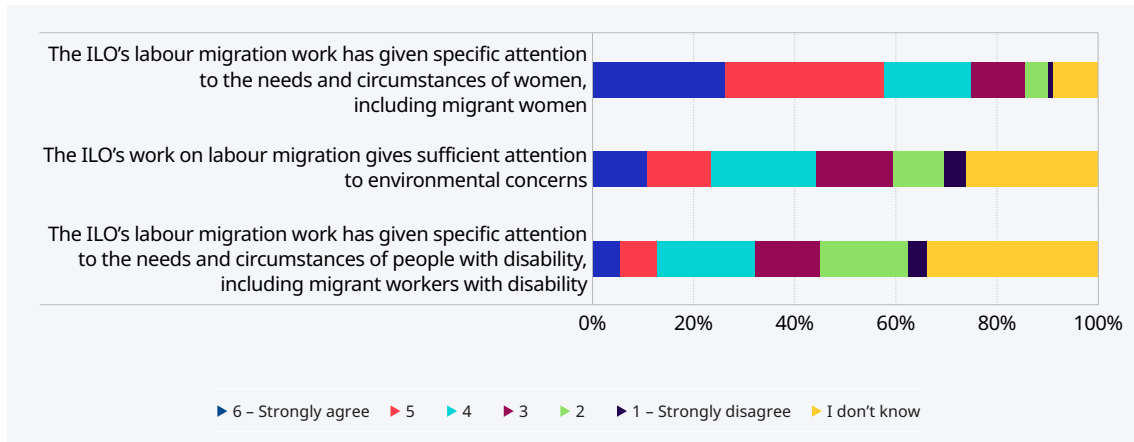
106 Interview with ILO staff.

107 Interview with ILO staff.

108 Interview with ILO staff.

109 Interview with ITUC.

► **Figure 11. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements (percentage, n=111, scale from 1 to 6)?**



The P&B for 2016–17 specifically focuses on applying international labour standards regarding equality of opportunity and treatment, especially in the area of gender equality. To achieve this goal, the ILO established that it would incorporate a gender perspective into national needs assessments, legal gap analyses and actions focusing on capacity-building.¹¹⁰ Furthermore, during the 328th Governing Body session in 2016, the ILO stated that international labour standards, social dialogue, adherence to the ILO's tripartite system and gender equality would retain their importance during the implementation of the Strategic Plan for 2018–21.¹¹¹

A great majority of interventions managed to integrate gender-sensitive indicators into their strategies and evaluation frameworks.¹¹² During budget allocation, projects mindful of this aspect could take advantage of extra funding; at other times, strategies involved partners such as the United National Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). Moreover, in 2020–21 the ILO introduced the Gender Equality and Non-Discrimination Marker, and created a handbook allowing self-assessment of the gender dimension in the development of cooperation and products. The handbook goes beyond the UN gender marker tool by including a non-discrimination marker with regard to gender.

In Africa, the ILO supports its constituents in creating evidenced-based and gender-sensitive labour migration policies. This work takes place through collaborations with regional economic commissions and at country level, with relevant ministries, as well as workers' and employers' organizations. When working on issues such as labour migration governance, the ILO ensures labour migration policies are included that focus on the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of migrant workers by ensuring labour protection during the different stages of the migration process. One practical reflection of this work is the collection of labour market analyses, which include gender-sensitive issues.¹¹³

At a regional level, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) TRIANGLE programme incorporates a strategy for women's empowerment and gender equality, with the aim of promoting the protection of women workers and migrants.¹¹⁴ Safe and Fair is another programme that aims specifically to improve the situation of women migrant workers within the ASEAN region, by ending gender-based violence.

It is important to take account of the fact that the ILO recognizes the importance of continuing its work on this issue, and hence it has taken concrete steps to maintain its efforts in this area. For example, the

110 ILO, *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 2016–17*, 2015. International Labour Office – Geneva.
 111 ILO, *Governing Body 328th Session, Geneva 27 October – 10 November 2016, The ILO's Strategic Plan for 2018–21*, October 2016.
 112 Bonne-Moreau.
 113 ILO's 2020–2030 Strategy on Labour Migration in Africa. Seven Thematic Priorities and Three Cross-Cutting Thematic Areas (Info Gloria on Africa).
 114 Bonne-Moreau.

upcoming P&B emphasizes the importance of ensuring gender non-discrimination, equal opportunities and treatment.¹¹⁵

Nevertheless, within the scope of a few interventions, the inclusion of gender aspects ranged from non-existent to insufficient in terms of the mainstreaming of gender strategies into project design (E1, E18, E19, E21)¹¹⁶ or forgoing opportunities to coherently elaborate the gender aspect (E6, E7, E10, E13, E22, E23).¹¹⁷ Moreover, the discussions of the Governing Body on UN reform, such as paragraph 7, should be kept in mind. These outline how the ILO can eliminate gender-based discrimination and bring about disability inclusion in UN development systems and programmes. Therefore, interviewees were worried about “how the ILO will have a place and a space in this reform”, and that some recommendations would be useful as to how the ILO should position itself within this reform, with regard to gender and migration.¹¹⁸

Another important cross-cutting consideration taken up by the ILO is environmental sustainability. Here, ILO is an expert agency on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts Task Force on Displacement, influencing the decisions adopted by the Conference of the Parties (COP) of the United Nations Convention on Climate Change (UNCCC), Katowice, in 2018, that reflect labour migration governance and ILO approaches as key issues.¹¹⁹ Moreover, in the 2018–19 P&B, environmental sustainability is the fourth cross-cutting driver, thus demonstrating the ILO’s awareness of the role it can play in addressing environmental issues.¹²⁰ Echoing this recognition, the ILO’s Labour Migration Strategy in Africa for 2020–30 plans to dive deeper into work that links labour migration with climate change. To this end, the ILO has signed an MoU with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, and has begun work relating to climate, displacement and labour migration in the IGAD region, which it plans to expand throughout the decade.¹²¹ Another region in which the ILO provides support is the Pacific Island countries, which have begun to establish plans to address the needs of their populations impacted by climate change. In support of this, the ILO is providing training on finding decent work opportunities abroad.¹²²

A cross-cutting issue for which the ILO has failed to design an overarching strategy is that of disabilities in the context of labour migration. Various interviewees asserted that questions regarding disability are “something to be explored”, and that the ILO would be interested to know more about the subject, since there is currently no particular focus on the issue.¹²³ The Synthesis Review echoes this issue by stating that the majority of ILO interventions failed to address the topic of disability inclusion.¹²⁴ Nevertheless, the review still points to four individual projects that worked on tackling the needs of workers with a disability;¹²⁵ providing workplace adaptations;¹²⁶ assessing services for groups in Bangladesh;¹²⁷ and providing technical support to vocational schools.¹²⁸ Some ILO interventions, while not addressing disability as a primary focus, nevertheless took this cross-cutting factor into consideration, either by combining it with other cross-cutting issues or promoting inclusiveness in an indirect manner. In the case of the former, this can be seen in the PROSPECTS project, under which multiple gender equality and disability awareness workshops were organized.¹²⁹ An example of the latter can be found in the ASEAN TRIANGLE programme, which focused on

115 Interview with ILO staff.

116 Bonne-Moreau.

117 Bonne-Moreau.

118 Interview with ILO staff.

119 Report of the Task Force on Displacement 2018 [SB 49 REG template \(unfccc.int\)](#).

120 ILO, [Programme and Budget for the Biennium 2018–19](#), 2017. International Labour Office – Geneva.

121 ILO’s 2020-2030 Labour Migration Strategy in Africa (Info Gloria on Africa).

122 The role of fair and effective labour migration governance in regional climate adaptation.

123 Interview with ILO staff.

124 Bonne-Moreau.

125 Bonne-Moreau.

126 Bonne-Moreau.

127 Bonne-Moreau.

128 Bonne-Moreau.

129 ILO, [Gender Equality and Disability Awareness Workshops](#).

providing social security for migrant workers who experienced on-the-job accidents.¹³⁰ However, there is still room for improvement, since the ASEAN TRIANGLE and FAIRWAY project activities showed that workers with disabilities require mental health support.¹³¹

3.2.3. Coherence among ILO projects

Synergies among projects play a critical role in ensuring that projects implemented by the Organization achieve their goals in an effective and efficient manner. In this case, many reports and reviews point out the ILO's successful efforts to ensure that projects maintain a degree of complementarity.

The Fair Labour Migration Synthesis Review emphasized that there were synergies and considerable levels of collaboration at national, regional and global levels, including within the ILO itself. These aspects were observed through the effective coordination of teams, the implementing of complementary work plans, and joint implementation of outputs.

The ILO also goes to great lengths to ensure that, during implementation, projects remain coherent with the wider goals of the ILO. For example, the P&B for 2018–19 underlines that, in pursuit of Outcome 6, the promotion of synergies will take place across all outcomes. These range from ensuring decent work opportunities to promoting the formalization of migrant workers, among the many outcomes outlined in the strategy. In the same P&B, the ILO recognizes that, in order to meet Output 9, collaboration needs to take place across all outcomes. This sentiment of mutually reinforcing outcomes is echoed by the 2020–21 P&B, which emphasizes “outcomes mutually reinforce each other”.¹³²

On the ground in Jordan, the ILO aligned its work to support host communities and refugees with its Programme of Support to the Jordan Compact, notably with Objectives 1, 2 and 3.¹³³ In Asia, noting that two of the ILO's projects, ASEAN TRIANGLE Phase II and TRIANGLE II, shared a regional theory of change and had complementary aims, the two projects were merged into one large TRIANGLE programme.

In Africa, coherence was found between the projects AMEM and THAMM. Both of these projects operated in North Africa, and while both had their own chief technical advisors, they nevertheless took up cost-sharing, and collaborated closely in co-designing and implementing activities.¹³⁴ In the SADC region, interviewees pointed out that, in pursuit of promoting project coherence, the ILO carries out coordination meetings and, at lower levels, undertakes active efforts to keep managers updated through regular communication. Similarly, staff participate in weekly and biweekly meetings. In terms of tools, International Conference of Labour Statisticians recommendations exist on statistics and specific conventions on the topic of labour migration, together with multilateral frameworks. Because of this, different projects can build on each other's strengths, by pooling the tools and frameworks that each has experience working with.¹³⁵

Lastly, evidence in the Synthesis Report points to interventions building on past initiatives supported by the ILO, and complementing the portfolio of current projects relating to labour migration governance.¹³⁶

3.3. Effectiveness

The following section focuses on assessing the various dimensions of the effectiveness of the ILO's work. It includes a review of targets achieved and progress towards CPOs, as well as examples of achievements at the level of outputs, outcomes and cross-cutting concerns.

130 Bonne-Moreau.

131 Bonne-Moreau.

132 ILO, *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 2020–21*, 2020. International Labour Office – Geneva.

133 ILO Evaluation Office, *Independent Evaluation. ILO's Programme of Work in Lebanon and Jordan in Terms of Decent Work and the Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis 2014–2018*, 2018.

134 Interview with ILO staff.

135 Interview with ILO staff.

136 Bonne-Moreau.

3.3.1. Overall effectiveness

Breaking down ILO achievements by biennium, at the end of each programme and budget under review, the ILO managed to achieve the majority of the targets set in the relevant P&B. In almost all instances, the ILO achieved its P&B targets. It also exceeded some of the expected results under Indicator 9.1 (2016–17), by supporting Member States or regional and subregional institutions in developing and implementing policy, legislation, and bilateral and multilateral agreements; and those under Indicator 9.3 (2018–19), by supporting Member States in the process of establishing or strengthening their institutional mechanisms, to implement or monitor governance framework on labour migration. The 2016–17 P&B transposes labour protection resolutions adopted at the 104th Session, by committing to protect migrants and address the discriminatory impact of wage policies. Some aspects of 104th Session are also reflected in the 2018–19 and 2020–21 P&Bs. Table 4 reflects the total count of P&B targets and results achieved for 2016–17 and 2018–19 under Outcome 9.¹³⁷

A full breakdown of the ILO’s targets and results by region for P&B 2016–17 and P&B 2018–19 under Outcome 9 is available in Annex 1 of this report.

► **Table 4. P&B targets that were met for each of the Outcome 9 indicators (biennium 2016–17)**

	Total 2016–17		Total 2018–19	
Indicator 9.1: Member States or regional or subregional institutions that have developed or implemented policy, legislation, bilateral or multilateral agreements, or other governance frameworks in line with relevant international labour standards, the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration, and through tripartite dialogue				
	Target	Result	Target	Result
All (Member States and regional and subregional institutions)	12	19	22	21
Indicator 9.2: Member States or regional or subregional institutions that have established or strengthened institutional mechanisms and inclusive practices or services for the protection of migrant workers or for the promotion of productive employment and decent work for migrant workers				
	Target	Result	Target	Result
All (Member States and regional, subregional institutions)	21	19	5	5
Indicator 9.3: Member States or regional or subregional institutions that have developed a knowledge base and statistics on labour migration to better inform policy and enhance synergies between labour migration, employment, training and development policies				
	Target	Result	Target	Result
All (Member States and regional, subregional institutions)	10	9	19	24

Source: Derived from: ILO, “The ILO at work. ILO programme implementation 2016–2017”; and ILO, “Decent work results: ILO programme implementation 2018–2019”.

There were 122¹³⁸ CPOs relating to Output 7.5 on labour migration in 2020, compared with 78 related to Outcome 9 during the biennium 2018–19, and 104 during the biennium 2016–17.¹³⁹ The evaluation found that most CPOs managed to progress with implementation and achieve their targets. Thus, it was reported that only two CPOs failed to achieve their results in the 2016–17 biennium, and only one in 2018–19.

137 ILO, “The ILO at work. ILO programme implementation 2016–2017”, International Labour Conference, 107th Session, 2018; and ILO, “Decent work results: ILO programme implementation 2018–2019”, Report to the Director-General I (A), International Labour Conference, 109th Session, 2021.

138 In the Development Cooperation (DC) dashboard, 96 CPOs were directly linked to the 7.5 indicators, while 28 CPOs were taken from DEPT and did not have an indicator formally assigned. However, these 28 CPOs involved labour migration interventions (Source: ILO).

139 Derived from: ILO, “The ILO at work. ILO programme implementation 2016–2017”, International Labour Conference, 107th Session, 2018; and ILO, “Decent work results: ILO programme implementation 2018–2019”, Report to the Director-General I (A), International Labour Conference, 109th Session, 2021.

► **Table 5. Number of CPOs involving labour migration over the period 2016–20, by region**

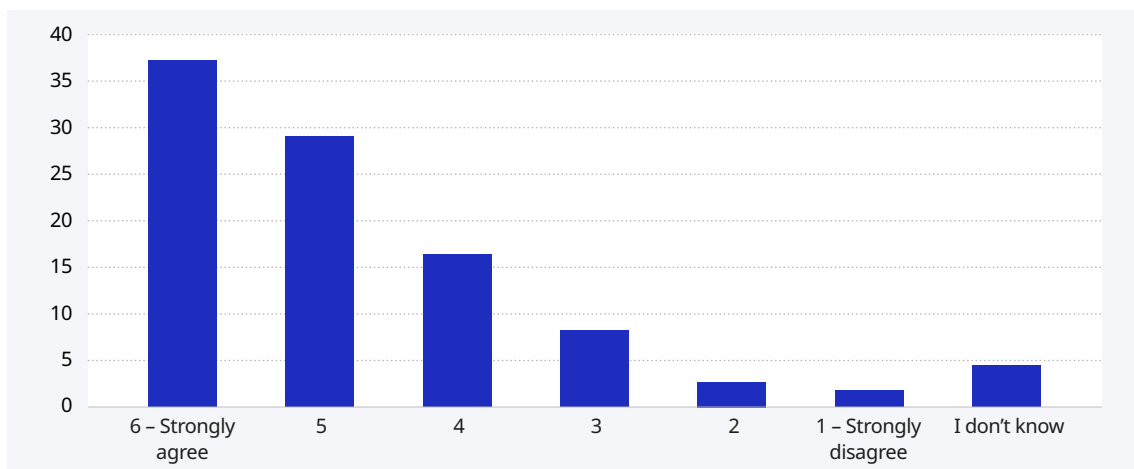
	2016–17	2018–19	2020
Africa	29	28	38
Americas	16	12	16
Arab States	10	9	13
Asia-Pacific	33	21	44
Europe and Central Asia	13	7	6
Global	3	1	5
Total	104	78	122

Source: ILO DC Dashboard.

In 2020, 38 projects (out of 149) began their work, but full achievement of the results of the CPOs was not expected by the end of the biennium.¹⁴⁰ The majority of these 38 pipeline projects (29 projects in total removing duplicates over the years) struggled to achieve the 7.5.3 output indicator, even when the first two indicators were identified as being successful in achieving the expected results in the ongoing biennium. This is interesting, considering that indicator 7.5.3 received significant funding. This could be related to the COVID-19 emergency: many migrants who would have normally stayed to work in countries of destination returned instead to their countries of origin during the pandemic. The movement of workers caused immediate health concerns, which may have made it more difficult and less relevant to reach the bilateral agreements planned before the pandemic. Nevertheless, country-level constituents who were interviewed stressed the need for bilateral cooperation between origin and destination countries to effectively protect migrant workers, both during and after the pandemic.¹⁴¹ It is also important to note that, while the development of bilateral and regional migration frameworks has declined as the migration through regular migration channels has declined, due to COVID-19, other regional processes have transitioned to an online format and are preparing the way for further work on 7.5.3 indicators in the upcoming biennium.

The effectiveness of the ILO is underlined by the results of the survey: 66.4 per cent of survey respondents strongly agree or agree that the ILO’s overall approach to fair and effective labour migration during the period 2016–20 has been highly effective (a rating of 5 or 6).

► **Figure 12. To what extent do you think the ILO overall has a clear approach to fair and effective labour migration since 2016 (percentage)?**



140 When analysing the CPOs, we considered projects as “pipeline” (which means they were not intended to be fully achieved in the biennium), if at least one indicator was marked as such, and others were being implemented.

141 Derived from: ILO, Outcome-Based Work Planning.

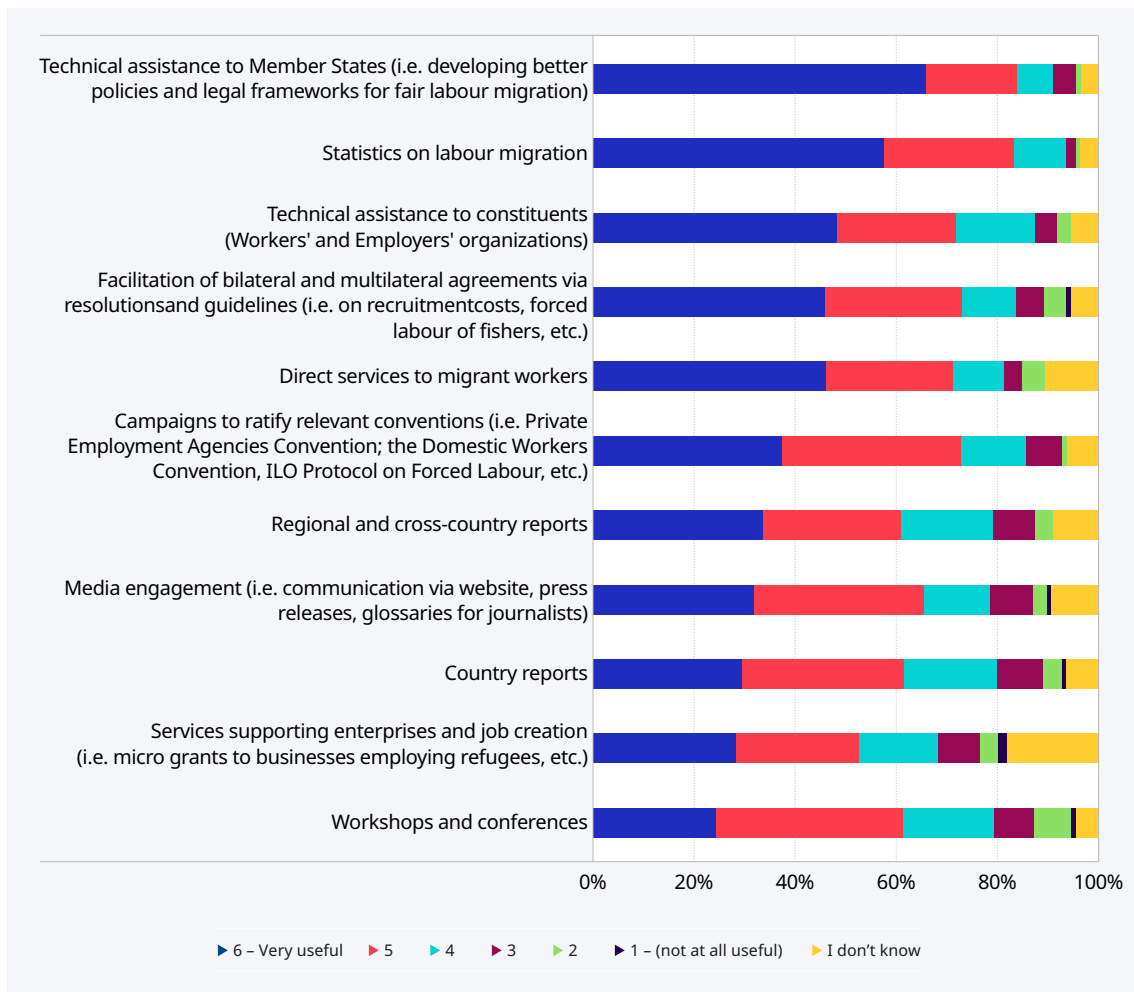
3.3.2. Achievement of outputs under the P&Bs

In the context of the evaluation, outputs are products or services directly delivered by ILO core staff or by the projects managed by the ILO. Examples of a product or service delivered are: the publication of a research paper, a policy briefing, a consultation or guidance document, number of people trained, successful delivery of an event, number of meetings held, number of people who attended events, number of migrants who used the services of migrant resource centres, among other indicators. As revealed by the desk research and interviews, the ILO’s outputs can be summarized as follows.

Overall findings and usage of ILO outputs

The interviews and desk research reveal that the majority of ILO outputs relating to labour migration were achieved to a good level of quality and timing. However, often due to insufficient human or financial resources, the outputs were not carried out according to the schedule. For example, the annual evaluation report 2016–17 states that ILO DWCPs, strategies and actions in the Western Balkans, 2012–15 were delayed. It also states that the number of ILO-managed evaluations for 2017 was high (73), due to project delays.¹⁴² The COVID-19 pandemic brought about additional challenges to the timely implementation of various

► **Figure 13. In your opinion, which ILO services in relation to labour migration are the most useful, and which are the least (percentage, n=111, scale from 1 to 6)?**



142 ILO, Annual Evaluation Report 2016-2017.

outputs. More information and survey results regarding the timeliness of the ILO's work are presented in Section 3.4 and figure 17.

The survey results also confirm the usefulness of the good quality and timely delivery of those ILO activities and products which lead to outputs. The survey asked respondents to assess how useful they regard each of the ILO's outputs as being, and if they are familiar with them. An overwhelming majority of respondents were familiar with all outputs of the ILO, as shown in figure 13. The only output that stands out in comparison to others is the services-supporting enterprises and job creation (such as micro-grants to businesses employing refugees, for example), where 18.2 per cent of respondents reported they were not aware of such ILO outputs. The respondents also found the ILO's work particularly useful when it came to technical assistance to Member States, technical assistance to constituents (workers' and employers' organizations), direct services to migrant workers, regional and cross-country reports, country reports, and workshops and conferences.

Technical assistance to member states

The ILO's technical assistance to Member States is linked to outputs that support the Member States in developing better policies and legal frameworks for fair labour migration. Between 2016 and 2020, the ILO effectively supported Member States' capacity to engage in evidence-based policymaking (see Section 3 on Outcomes, below) through research and training on employment and labour market policies for effective labour market integration and decent work for migrants and other new arrivals of persons working in the State sector, by providing recommendations for improved policy coherence and labour market functioning.

The ILO's efforts also included interregional dialogue and cross-border cooperation. The ILO made significant contributions to the development of specific action plans and recommendations in the context of regional integration processes, including the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, the tripartite Forum on Migrant Labour of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, the African Union and the Alliance of the Pacific. The ILO facilitated an Africa–Asia–Arab States interregional dialogue, bringing together 22 tripartite delegations from three regions for the first time to discuss labour migration issues.

Working with the African Union, the ILO facilitated the data collection and analysis for the Report on Labour Migration Statistics in Africa in October 2019. The ILO supported the organisation of five meetings between January 2018 and July 2019 involving African Union member states, the African Union Commission and the Joint Labour Migration Programme technical committee, to correct and validate data and to analyse and validate the report. The report helped the AU Labour Migration Advisory Committee (LMAC) to prepare recommendations for the fourth Specialised Technical Committee on Social, Development, Labour and Employment meeting held in December 2019, with a view to improving policy frameworks and legal instruments at all levels.

In Cambodia, the ILO provided technical support to the running of the Migrant Worker Resource Centres (MRCs), including providing financial training for MRC staff, as well as a 'training-of-trainers' for MRC staff in order to cascade financial literacy training. For instance, in 2018, over 9,000 migrant workers received services from the network of MRCs in Cambodia, including those run by the National Employment Agency. Similar work was also carried out in Myanmar, where the ILO provided training for MRC staff, as well as equipment and materials for the MRCs. The MRCs in Cambodia reached a total of 36,168 beneficiaries in 2018–2019.

Being concerned with cross-cutting concerns, gender-specific activities included the training of persons working in the State sector, through gender-sensitive training sessions, the development of informational toolkits and available studies on the relevant topics, among other activities. The Synthesis Report found that this sectoral focus in gender-specific activities helped to effectively address the needs of migrants in the sectors that are often seen as having vulnerable characteristics, putting women migrants at risk of exploitation.¹⁴³

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The ILO's outputs target all migrants alike, including refugees. In particular, the ILO has worked on the integration of refugees into the social protection system and labour markets. The ILO's work has been effective in bringing about regulatory reforms and improving public employment services, which has led to the provision of support to businesses, as well as job creation. Technical support from the ILO also contributes to skills enhancement among refugees. The ILO provided technical support to develop non-discriminatory services to promote decent work for migrant workers and refugees.

In Brazil, the ILO provided advice to define the courses most appropriate to the reality of the labour market, and to elaborate the criteria for selecting participants for the courses. As a result, in October and November 2018 the National Commercial Apprenticeship System (SENAC) in Roraima offered professional apprenticeship courses for 80 migrants or refugees, with a duration of one month and a scholarship of 500.00 Brazilian reais to support the construction of a professional life plan.

Since the 2016-2017 period, in Turkey, the ILO's technical support to regulatory reforms led to concrete outputs, enabling labour market access for 20,000 Syrian refugees. The Turkish Employment Organisation (İŞKUR) created 2,300 jobs for Syrian refugees and more than 500 host community members. In Jordan since August 2017, the ILO has supported the Jordanian Ministry of Labour in issuing work permits to 30,000 Syrian refugees through agricultural cooperatives.

Between 2016 and 2017, the ILO provided skills and language training to 1,350 Syrians who were under temporary protection in Turkey. In Jordan, 3,600 Syrian refugees received certification for work in the Jordanian construction sector.

Between 2018 and 2019, in Ethiopia, 13,000 potential migrant workers received training from technical and vocation education institutions using a new curriculum on domestic work.

Technical assistance to constituents (workers' and employers' organizations)

The ILO has provided technical support to national constituents through studies on various topics linked to the fields of their activities and training on key labour market and social policy issues. As noted by the Synthesis Report, the ILO often provided support to these organizations on the pre-departure, arrival and return stages of migration, to promote safe and regular migration. Technical support included providing reliable information on employment opportunities and conditions for job seekers, and increasing their protection to reduce migration costs and recruitment abuses.¹⁴⁴

Between 2018 and 2019 in the Philippines, through the support of the ILO, the Federation of Asian Domestic Workers Union (FADWU), and the Philippines Progressive Labour Union (PLU), 181 migrant domestic workers were provided with post-arrival orientation training. The PLU supported the resolution of eight cases filed by migrant domestic worker against three recruitment agencies that had charged excessive recruitment fees. An additional 142 migrant domestic workers were provided with case counselling to support the resolution of their grievances. Furthermore, the FADWU supported the submission of 16 cases to the labour department, one case being on behalf of five workers (bringing the total number of workers supported to 21).

ILO's work under FAIR I and FAIR II in Tunisia since 2016 has also led to the establishment of 'Migrant spaces' (title in French: "Espaces-Migrants") in the capital city, Tunis, and the cities of Soussa and Sfax. Currently, four such spaces have been opened, and two more are planned before the finalisation of FAIR II. In the 'Migrant spaces', migrant workers can receive information regarding their status, their access to legal protection, and access to certain training and services. In their

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interview carried out for this evaluation, a representative of the Tunisian General Workers' Union (UGTT) confirmed the successful operation of these 'Migrant spaces', which are particularly crucial for the country as they provide an answer to a relatively new phenomenon being experienced in Tunisia, which is becoming a migration country of destination.

The ILO has also worked to support the establishment of unions in Member States. One noteworthy example is in Kuwait, where in 2018–19, the technical support provided by the ILO to the International Domestic Workers' Union enabled the creation of the country's first membership-based organization of domestic workers (Sandigan Kuwait Domestic Workers' Association).¹⁴⁵ Similarly, Indonesian migrant domestic workers formed their first organization, Persatuan Pekerja Rumah Tangga Indonesia Migrant (PERTIMIG).¹⁴⁶ In Madagascar, with the support of the ILO under the framework of the REFRAME project and in cooperation with the International Domestic Workers' Federation, the country's first domestic workers' union, *Senamama*, was formed. The union was formed by domestic workers who were returnees from Lebanon and who had been involved with the domestic workers' union in Lebanon. The union is now involved in national discussions on legislative reform regarding migration and domestic work in Madagascar.¹⁴⁷

Campaigns to ratify relevant Conventions

The ILO has promoted the ratification and effective implementation of relevant international labour standards, including the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97); and the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143); as well as the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189); and the ILO strategy on decent work for domestic workers. The ILO's advocacy campaign has been carried out through studies to analyse national legislation and countries' alignment with the provisions of various ILO Conventions. The ILO has also conducted surveys and evaluations to assess the perceived usefulness of these instruments, such as the ILO's General Survey concerning migrant workers, which notes that the potential of instruments provided by the ILO is not always fully appreciated, and that some misunderstandings and misconceptions regarding the provision of the instruments still exist. However, the Survey found that the instruments still remain valid.

In Mauritania, the ILO supported the government by carrying out the country report 'National legislation on the ratification of C143 of 1975 on Mauritania (full title in French : Etat des lieux de la législation nationale et les implications législatives de la ratification de la C143 sur les travailleurs migrants (dispositions complémentaires) de 1975 par la Mauritanie). The study is intended to evaluate the enhancements of the national legal system necessary for the implementation of this Convention.

Facilitation of bilateral and multilateral agreements via resolutions and guidelines

As noted in the Synthesis Report, the ILO has also advocated strongly for bilateral and interregional dialogues on labour migration issues between countries of origin and destination, and to address the shortcomings of tripartism.¹⁴⁸ Venues for regional dialogues are created through projects that aim to promote the harmonization of standards for monitoring and documenting labour migration and labour migration-related practices, as well as improving labour migration governance at bilateral and regional levels.

¹⁴⁵ ILO, *Decent work results. ILO programme implementation 2018–2019*.

¹⁴⁶ International Domestic Workers Federation, Malaysia, "The Indonesia migrant domestic workers finally formed their own organization", 26 December 2020.

¹⁴⁷ ILO (n.d.). *Action Mondiale pour Améliorer le Cadre du Recrutement de la Migration du Travail*. Available at: https://www.ilo.org/africa/countries-covered/madagascar/WCMS_727998/lang-fr/index.htm.

¹⁴⁸ Bonne-Moreau.

In the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region, the ILO indirectly strengthened the capacity of approximately 200 institutions with regard to governance frameworks across the ECOWAS states, and 1,000 officials within these institutions. This effort was carried out through the ILO's advocacy work to promote the adoption of the Directive on the Minimum Standards for Harmonising Labour Legislation in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) on 18 July 2019.

Statistics on labour migration

The ILO has promoted the harmonization of labour statistics by promoting common methodology and use of terms and definitions, thereby harmonizing labour inspection statistics. In particular, the ILO provides training on the correct collection and compilation of labour inspection data. The ILO has also implemented several projects with a strong labour statistics component, with the goal of ensuring regional consistency and labour migration tracking. Together with the World Bank, the ILO is a co-custodian of the SDG 10.7.1 Indicator on reducing recruitment costs, and the ILO has developed a statistical methodology for data collection for this indicator.¹⁴⁹ The ILO has also organized various workshops and conferences to promote its approach to collecting labour migration statistics, and a common understanding of key procedures and norms. Interviewees from the ILO indicate that data is now being collected about labour migration in 121 countries, through the established labour migration database.

In 2018, the ILO also published the second edition of its Global Estimates of International Migrant Workers, which provided information broken down according to demographic variables. The report has become an asset in harmonizing understandings of the dynamics of labour migration globally.¹⁵⁰

In Ethiopia in 2019, ILO supported the decentralisation of the Migrant Data Management System. The ILO supported the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in standardising six internal guidelines to create a common understanding, and establishing acceptable procedures at all levels of the migration process. During the first quarter of the year, 591 participants from federal, regional and local levels of government, as well as from private employment agencies, were trained in the use of the Data Management System.

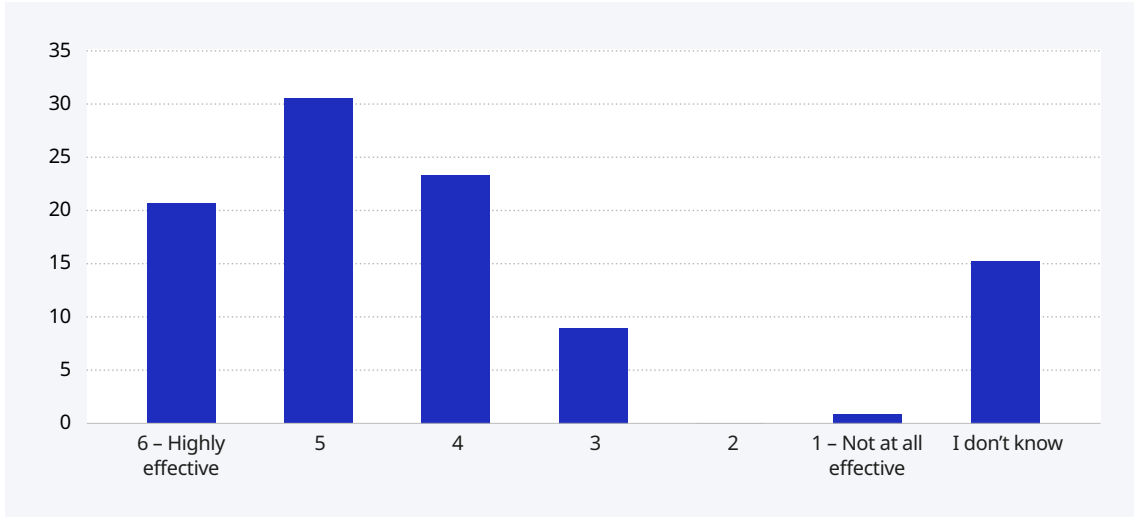
In Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Morocco, the ILO implements the project AMEM, which has a strong labour migration statistics component. AMEM supports the governments of all four countries through studies and surveys, as well as technical support to their national institutes of statistics, to ensure the successful creation of an integrated migration tracking system. To provide a more concrete example, the interviewee from the National Institute of Statistics (NIS) in Tunisia confirmed that technical support from the ILO for diagnostics regarding the labour migration statistics systems and its sources has been crucial a resource in redirecting the efforts of the NIS to address various deviations from international standards, definition and gaps, such as the definitions put forward by the 2018 International Conference of Labour Statisticians. Furthermore, the ILO has managed to bring together the institutions responsible for administrative data on labour statistics together with the NIS, which carried out the National Labour Force Survey, and to the support the mapping of different sources.

It should also be noted that the survey carried out for this evaluation shows that respondents are satisfied overall with the effectiveness of the ILO's work on labour migration statistics. More than half of respondents (54.9 per cent) awarded a score of 5 (effective) or 6 (highly effective) to the ILO's work in the field. This also means that the majority of respondents are able to benefit in their own work from the ILO's work in this field.

149 ILO, [Statistics for SDG indicator 10.7.1: Measuring recruitment costs](#), n.d.

150 ILO, "[Decent work results: ILO programme implementation 2018–2019](#)", Report to the Director-General I (A), International Labour Conference, 109th Session, 2021.

► **Figure 14. To what extent do you think the following ILO actions to promote fair and effective labour migration have been effective since 2016: “Assessment of effectiveness in establishing uniform statistical standards for measuring various concepts about labour” (percentage, n=111, scale from 1 to 6)?**



Media engagement

The ILO has also put in place outputs for journalists reporting on labour migration. These outputs are put in place to improve fair communication on labour migration. The Synthesis Report notes that two interventions achieved sensitization towards various groups by sponsoring journalists and the production of films, articles and podcasts dedicated to fair communication on the issue of migration.¹⁵¹

3.3.3. Achievement of outcomes

The achievement of outcomes refers to the next level of effectiveness – namely, the developments that have taken place as a result of interventions by the ILO and their direct outputs. In the case of the ILO, the intended outcomes include the enhanced knowledge and capacity of constituents, increased awareness on important topics and priorities relating to labour migration, as well as improved social dialogue to continue discussion on topics of labour migration. This section is based on the findings from the project evaluation Synthesis Report, complemented by interviews and the survey.

Ample evidence has been found of successes in the field of capacity-building. Various outputs resulted in enhanced capacity: namely, various workshops, trainings, and seminars on labour migration, as well as the improvement of social dialogue and political participation by social partners, and the enhancing of awareness and knowledge on the topic.

The capacities of trade unions to reach specific migrant groups such as domestic workers, and the training of labour inspectors on OSH in various sectors with high proportions of migrant labour, were also enhanced.¹⁵² Capacity-building approaches in the context of migrant workers often focus on the migration corridors, thereby addressing the pre-departure, arrival and return stages of migration, to promote safe and regular migration. Different constituent groups, institutions and beneficiaries have been involved to strengthen oversight and monitoring of the migration process. For example, the capacities of trade unions to reach specific migrant groups such as domestic workers, and the training of labour inspectors in OSH in sectors

151 Fair Labour Migration – Synthesis Review E5 and E12, p. 31.

152 Bonne-Moreau.

with high proportions of migrant labour, were enhanced through ILO interventions.¹⁵³ A Nigerian employers' representative indicated that, due to training and support from the ILO, he feels he developed the capacity to take part in policy reviews and to provide policy recommendations.¹⁵⁴

In the Guatemala-Mexico corridor, government institutions (mainly the MTPS in Guatemala, the STPS and the INM in Mexico) have requested and received technical assistance from the REFRAME Project for the review and adjustments of regulations, policies, programmes and guides relating to labour migration and fair recruitment. In all of these cases, government institutions have not played a passive role, limited merely to receiving assistance, but have enjoyed permanent spaces for dialogue, discussion and feedback to the ILO during the provision of this assistance. Employers' and workers' organisations have participated actively in those products of the REFRAME Project whose realisation benefits them directly. Example include the integration of the principles of fair recruitment in the Policies of respect for human rights (in the case of employers' organisations in Guatemala); the preparation of the Toolbox on policies, measures and actions in fair recruitment (employers' organizations in Mexico); and the guide on labour rights and obligations (workers' organizations in Guatemala); as well as the setting up and operation of migrant resources centres/trade unions service provision for migrant workers in Mexico and Guatemala).

The ILO's capacity-building activities have often addressed the thematic areas of its work, including the social protection of migrants. Examples such as the recommendations made by the ASEAN Forum on Migrant Labour to extend social protection for migrant workers, prove the effectiveness of the ILO's work. In Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay, multilateral agreements to protect migrant workers have also been developed.¹⁵⁵

Due to the ILO's tripartite nature, strengthening social dialogue at various levels is considered an important element of all of its interventions. The Synthesis Review mentions that interventions by the ILO have contributed to facilitating bilateral and interregional dialogues on labour migration issues, as well as social dialogues in countries of origin and destination. The Synthesis Review also indicated that social dialogue contributed to increasing the capacity of workers' and civil society organizations to support policymaking on labour migration in their countries.¹⁵⁶

The ILO's engagement in Tunisia has been crucial to ensuring that social partners such as the Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT), together with the Union Tunisienne de l'Industrie, du Commerce et de l'Artisanat (UTICA) could engage with the Tunisian government on the basis of a tripartite approach to governance. This has led them to concrete outcomes such as the drafting of major pieces of legislation such as the National Employment Strategy of 2017. As confirmed by the interviews, the ILO's work has been crucial in establishing a framework for the engagement of social partners in the elaboration of national strategies with governmental institutions,

The ILO has focused on effectively aiding constituents who are engaged in regional and subregional social dialogue processes regarding labour migration and mobility. For example, the ILO's support led to cooperation between the ASEAN Trade Union Council, the South Asian Regional Trade Union Council, and the Arab Trade Union Confederation. ILO support also enabled workers' organizations to participate in UN formats that led to the adoption of United Nations General Assembly resolution 71/280, relevant to the

153 Bonne-Moreau .

154 Interview with constituent.

155 ILO, "The ILO at work. ILO programme implementation 2016–2017", International Labour Conference, 107th Session, 2018.

156 Bonne-Moreau, p. 13.

Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular migration.¹⁵⁷ However, some gaps were found in the ECOWAS region, where an interviewee considered the ILO's support for ECOWAS to be less effective compared with direct support to their country:

“There are gaps and challenges to have a project implemented through ECOWAS. We benefit more from working closely with the ILO directly than through ECOWAS. In principle, ECOWAS should work to support bilateral agreements. ECOWAS has a mandate from governments, so theoretically they might be in the right position to create them. In practice, this is not the case. The effectiveness of labour migration governance through ECOWAS is hindered by the politics and economic climates of individual countries. Cooperation through ECOWAS could have great potential for creating free movement protocols, but the institution of ECOWAS would need to be strengthened first”.

Another example of enhanced social dialogue in the context of refugees was found in Turkey. ILO projects facilitated continued policy dialogue and implementation with tripartite and other partners, concerning the access of Syrian and non-Syrian refugees and host community members to sustainable, decent work opportunities. A key element of ILO support under this component was to provide assistance in establishing and/or strengthening coordination mechanisms among and between national and international actors.¹⁵⁸

The ILO's response to the global refugee crisis is another noteworthy example of its effectiveness. The ILO developed a framework for action based on its 2016 Guiding principles on the access of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons to the labour market. The UN Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan integrated these strategies, as did the UNHCR in its work on the Global Compact for Refugees, which was affirmed by the United Nations General Assembly on 17 December 2018.¹⁵⁹

The ILO has also achieved some successes on social dialogue at regional level. In the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) region, constituents created their own regional workers' and employers' associations, and networks of social partners. ILO projects in IGAD provided the space to begin dialogue in this format.¹⁶⁰ Similarly, employers and employees are represented in regional-level organizations of SADC.¹⁶¹ Following the work of the JLMP project, the African Union improved its capacity to lead and coordinate labour migration governance and develop instruments for the better implementation of labour migration frameworks. It established the Labour Migration Advisory Committee to facilitate tripartite dialogue, cooperation and the coordination of labour migration laws, policies and practice across the continent.¹⁶²

Many interventions also contained an important component of awareness-raising and advocacy, with the aim of enhancing the knowledge of stakeholders on labour migration (and subsequently changing social norms and attitudes concerning the rights of migrants and other vulnerable workers).¹⁶³ A Nigerian employers' representative indicated that their cooperation with the ILO not only benefited employers' representatives, but the effects trickled down to employers themselves. “We learned that labour migrants come to develop the country. They come with their skills and transfer those skills to us!”

In Ethiopia, the Independent Final evaluation of “Support the reintegration of returnees in Ethiopia” found that the project had managed to break some of the negative stereotypes that Ethiopian society had about returnees. With regard to this group, the evaluation found that despite controversies and outstanding challenges in matching expectations with real possibilities, the project

157 ILO, “[The ILO at work. ILO programme implementation 2016–2017](#)”, International Labour Conference, 107th Session, 2018.

158 “Promoting Decent Work Opportunities for Non-Syrian Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Turkey – Final cluster evaluation”; and “Job Creation and Entrepreneurship Opportunities for Syrians under Temporary Protection and Host Communities in Turkey – Midterm evaluation”.

159 ILO, “The ILO at work. ILO programme implementation 2016–2017”, International Labour Conference, 107th Session, 2018.

160 Interviews with ILO staff.

161 Interviews with ILO staff.

162 Strategic Framework 2020–2030 for the AU/ILO/IOM/UNECA Joint Programme on Labour Migration Governance for Development and Integration in Africa.

163 Bonne-Moreau.

has represented an opportunity for this community to voice their views, and in that sense, it had been a process of empowerment. Interviewees in Ethiopia confirmed that “the Ethiopian government used to turn a blind eye to the issue of migration. Now we have reached the point that they realise this is a topic that requires attention. The government has taken the lead and established committees. It is a clear area where policy direction has shifted.

In addition, efforts by the ILO to develop and disseminate new studies and reports have contributed to strengthening constituents’ knowledge base on migrants. The Synthesis Report found this knowledge was used to support policy change and improve institutional mechanisms by addressing technical and legislative gaps, and increasing capacity to protect migrant workers. Certain projects thus focused on specific policy outcomes, providing technical assistance at national and regional levels to promote the adoption of key legislation and policies on international labour migration, in line with the international labour standards, and to effectively implement these policies.¹⁶⁴ For example, the ILO has collected and mapped many bilateral agreements on labour migration. An ILO knowledge-sharing platform in Asia and the Pacific, AP Migration, has made such agreements in that region publicly available. This serves as a starting point for developing deeper knowledge concerning the actual implementation of labour migration agreements.¹⁶⁵

Some clear examples were found on the use of the ILO’s research and knowledge. In Bangladesh, the ILO assisted the Ministry of Expatriates’ Welfare and Overseas Employment in conducting a vulnerability assessment of returned migrant workers. This assessment was used to define priorities and develop immediate, medium- and long-term responses. The resulting document has been the subject of interministerial discussions and resource mobilization within the Government.¹⁶⁶

Another important outcome was the use of the ILO-developed International Labour Migration Statistics database and local databases. This data was published on the ILOSTAT statistical database portal, and has been useful for further research and policy design in the area of labour migration.¹⁶⁷ The data collected has already been used and referenced in academia and by other international organizations.¹⁶⁸ For example, the Nepali Central Bureau of Statistics’ third National Labour Force Survey 2018/19 was conducted according to International Conference of Labour Statisticians’ 19 standards, and produced statistics used in research and policy formulation on labour migration.¹⁶⁹

It is also important to mention that some ILO projects tend to have unexpected positive outcomes, which occur due to the tools and specific format used, or the beneficiaries participating in the projects. For example, during the Valle del Cauca Government – Valle Inn Programme training in Ecuador and Peru, the beneficiaries gained and improved their digital skills and became familiar with the use of different virtual tools for training as well as for the marketing and commercialization of their products. The project also resulted in the creation of new professional relationships and networks among the participants of the programme.¹⁷⁰

At the 20th International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 2018, the ILO also endorsed the Guidelines concerning statistics on international labour migrants. These acknowledge that internationally, there is a lack of standards regarding definitions, concepts and methodologies to measure labour migration. The United Nations consequently revised the definition of “international migrant”.¹⁷¹

In addition, the ILO and the World Bank (as co-custodians of SDG Indicator 10.7.1 on reducing recruitment costs) have developed a global statistical methodology for the collection of data to measure labour migra-

164 Bonne-Moreau.

165 ILO, [Addressing governance challenges in a changing migration landscape – International Labour Conference 2017](#).

166 HLE Asia Decent Work.

167 Synthesis Report E3.

168 Interviews with ILO staff.

169 HLE Asia Decent Work.

170 ILO EVAL, Project Title: “Improved Migration Governance in Colombia to promote jobs and decent work”.

171 ILO, [“Decent work results: ILO programme implementation 2018–2019”](#), Report to the Director-General I (A), International Labour Conference, 109th Session, 2021.

tion recruitment costs. The ILO supported the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics in gathering data on the recruitment fees and costs paid by workers. Pakistan plans to carry out the survey in June 2021 with ILO support.¹⁷² The survey was applied during the second half of 2019 to migrants from Guatemala to Mexico. According to one of the people interviewed in Mexico, the most relevant aspect of the application of the survey was that it helped to prove that the methodology only worked in certain specific scenarios, and that it is necessary to refine the questions and be more specific in defining the criteria for selecting the people to be surveyed.¹⁷³

An important development during the evaluation period is the “corridor” approach that the ILO employed during this. One of the global projects implemented, the FAIRWAY programme, has received a positive evaluation. Some of its outcomes include: supporting policy change through evidence-based knowledge creation and dissemination; the improvement of institutional mechanisms and operational modalities of government institutions; core service delivery to vulnerable migrant workers through government institutions, trade unions and migrant workers’ associations; and addressing negative attitudes among employers towards mainly female migrant domestic workers in countries of destination.

The ILO faced various challenges in relation the achievement of its objectives. Despite the implementation of concrete project activities, a lack of political will, weak capacity on the part of social partners and changing circumstances in the country and externally, can hinder constituents and other partners from using the knowledge and capacity in their work. For example, the Agency for Refugee and Returnee Affairs in Ethiopia controls work on refugees and migrants. The capacity of the Ministry of Labour can be built, but the use of this capacity is strongly influenced by the Agency. Smugglers of people and irregular recruitment channels in Ethiopia also undermine the Government’s efforts to ensure regular migration, as they are usually more efficient, despite ongoing efforts to combat irregular migration.¹⁷⁴

3.3.4. Progress on cross-cutting concerns

While the ILO’s work focuses on several specific topics, some concerns are seen as cross-cutting and should be taken into account in all of the ILO’s activities. The ILO’s Strategic Plan for 2018–21¹⁷⁵ included several cross-cutting policy drivers. These are:

- gender equality and non-discrimination (disability inclusion);
- international labour standards;
- tripartism and social dialogue;
- environmental sustainability.

These cross-cutting issues have been included in the ILO’s Programme and Budget 2020–21 as policy outcomes of the Programme of Work for 2020–21.¹⁷⁶ While international labour standards and tripartism and social dialogue appear to be included effectively in the ILO’s work, the situation is somewhat different as regards other cross-cutting concerns, namely gender equality, nondiscrimination, disability (which is not included as a cross-cutting policy driver in the ILO’s Strategic Plan for 2018–21, but is still an important cross-cutting concern for the ILO), and environmental sustainability. The inclusion of these cross-cutting issues tends to differ from project to project, and depends largely on the regional or local context in which the ILO operates. Gender equality and tripartism and social dialogue tend to be important aspects in the majority of the ILO’s activities, while disability and environmental sustainability are rarely considered.

172 HLE Asia Decent Work.

173 Guatemala–Mexico case study.

174 Ethiopia case study.

175 ILO, *Governing Body 328th Session, Geneva 27 October – 10 November 2016, The ILO’s Strategic Plan for 2018–21*, October 2016.

176 ILO, *Programme and Budget for the Biennium 2020–21*, 2020. International Labour Office – Geneva.

International labour standards, and tripartism and social dialogue

International labour standards, and tripartism and the facilitation of social dialogue, are at the core of the ILO's work. Hence, they are addressed effectively in the ILO's activities. International labour standards, which set out basic principles and rights at work, are inherent to all ILO projects and programmes, and have grown into a comprehensive system of instruments that can be used in promoting workers' rights and improving working conditions and standards. Facilitating social dialogue through the ILO's tripartite system is another inherent quality of the ILO that can be observed in all of its projects, including those on labour migration. The ILO's constituents and social partners tend to be included in all ILO activities, which helps the ILO facilitate social dialogue, ensure the better inclusion of relevant stakeholders and, as a result, potentially increase the impact of its work. The Synthesis Report found several examples of the promotion of international labour standards and the use and consolidation of tripartism and social dialogue. However, in some regions where tripartite national steering committees do not function properly, facilitation of social dialogue and promotion of tripartism is difficult. These challenges to the tripartite system may be caused by a lack of freedom of association, lack of government interest in migrants' rights and similar issues.¹⁷⁷ Still, examples show that focusing on international labour standards and tripartism and social dialogue helps the ILO to raise awareness effectively among its constituents and social partners with regard to decent work and other labour migration issues, and contributes to the facilitation of multistakeholder dialogue on these issues. The integration of international labour standards and tripartism and social dialogue into the ILO's work are discussed in further detail throughout this evaluation.

In Tunisia, the ILO contributes significantly to facilitating social dialogue. In January 2013, with support from the ILO, the Government, the UGTT and the UTICA signed a "Social contract", which foresaw the establishment of the National Council for Social Dialogue (CNDS). While the establishment process was lengthy, due to political and economic crises, in July 2017 the law establishing the CNDS was approved. The CNDS is responsible for continuous and regular tripartite social dialogue on national, regional and sectoral issues. The composition of the CNDS is well representative of the tripartite partners. It includes 35 government representatives, 35 representatives of the most representative unions, 30 representatives of the main employers' organizations outside the agriculture sector, and 5 within the agriculture sector. The Council has an effective mandate, as it must be consulted on laws and decrees relating to work, vocational training, industrial relations and social protection. The Council may also be consulted on economic and social development plans and budgets, and other socio-economic matters, if the need arises.¹⁷⁸ As confirmed by the interviews, the establishment of the Council is the most visible example of the ILO's engagement in the domain of social dialogue. The engagement of the trade unions legitimizes the processes taking place, due to the strength of the country's trade union traditions.¹⁷⁹

Gender equality and non-discrimination

Gender equality tends to be an important aspect in the majority of the ILO's activities. According to the ILO's Strategic Plan for 2018–21,¹⁸⁰ gender equality and non-discrimination should be seen as essential components of the ILO's work. According to the Strategic Plan, the ILO should take into account gender-related issues when planning its activities, and should contribute to improving the understanding of contextually specific and complex structural obstacles to gender equality. The Synthesis Report found that the majority of the reports addressed women's empowerment and included the promotion and mainstreaming of gender equality.¹⁸¹ The integration of gender mainstreaming and the protection of women migrant workers by the ILO is seen as effective and useful by ILO staff and by other institutions and organizations. A majority of respondents (52.1 per cent) who participated in the survey conducted for this evaluation award the ILO a score of 5 or 6 for the effectiveness of its work in protecting women migrant workers, with 6 indicating it was highly effective.

177 Bonne-Moreau.

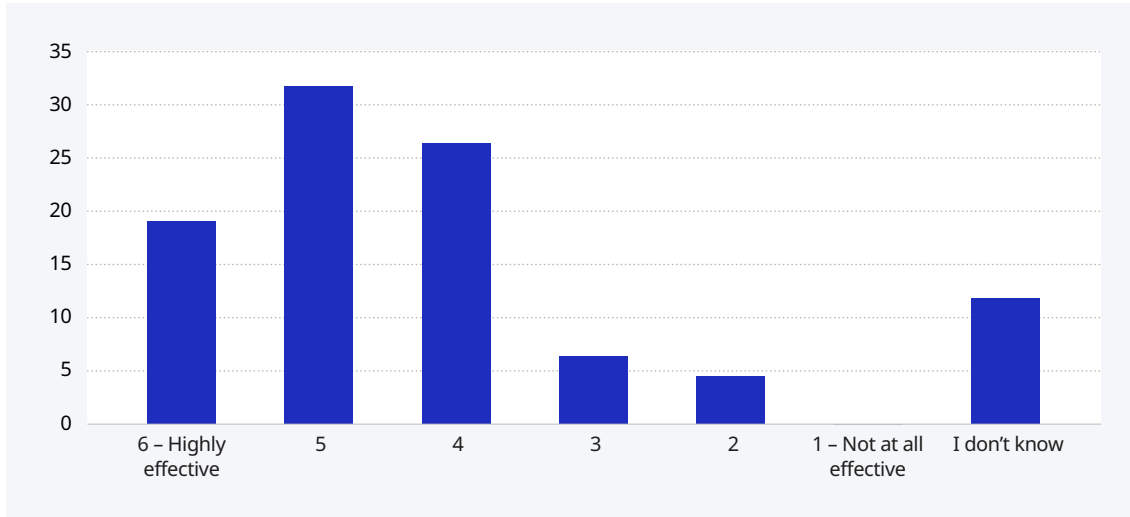
178 ILO, [The effectiveness of National Social Dialogue: From theory to evidence](#).

179 Interview with Abderaouf Jermal.

180 ILO, [Governing Body 328th Session, Geneva 27 October – 10 November 2016, The ILO's Strategic Plan for 2018–21](#), October 2016.

181 Bonne-Moreau.

► **Figure 15. To what extent do you think the ILO's work on protecting women migrant workers, especially care workers, has been effective since 2016 (percentage, n=111, scale from 1 to 6)?**



The lens of gender is often integrated into projects through activities that are designed to respond to the different needs of men and women. Projects aim to ensure gender balance in their activities and the balanced representation of women in project teams.¹⁸² In this way, the projects raise awareness about gender-specific issues and concerns. This is also achieved by involving gender specialists in projects. For example, UN Women is involved in some of the ILO's projects to ensure that the perspective of women's rights and needs is properly taken into account.¹⁸³ One such project is Safe and Fair, which hopes to ensure that labour migration is safe and fair for all women in the ASEAN region. The project aims to address the vulnerabilities of women migrant workers to violence and trafficking, to support their access to essential services, and to strengthen gender-responsive and rights-based approaches to violence against women.¹⁸⁴

In Thailand, the ILO cooperates with ASEAN on several of its projects. These projects involve gender mainstreaming. For example, the ASEAN TRIANGLE programme includes in its outcomes the protection of women and men migrant workers and gender-responsive labour mobility systems. A cross-cutting Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Strategy, developed within the framework of the ASEAN TRIANGLE, aims to ensure that its objectives are aligned with national and regional gender-related aims and objectives. The Strategy aims to ensure that migrant workers have decent work options regardless of their gender, and that women, who are denied work opportunities due to exploitation, abuse and vulnerability, are protected. In total, 25% of the TRIANGLE programme's budget is spent on activities explicitly benefiting women, and a large part of the remaining budget is spent on promoting gender equality, as 41% of the beneficiaries of MRC services are women. Within the framework of the programme, meeting organisers are always encouraged to invite women participants, and 70% of photos in TRIANGLE's publications include women. This helps to raise awareness about the role of gender in migration process.

In several regions around the globe, gender equality is inherently a central issue for the ILO's work on labour migration, due to a high number of migrant women.¹⁸⁵ This is particularly the case in relation to

¹⁸² Bonne-Moreau.

¹⁸³ Interview with ILO staff.

¹⁸⁴ ILO, *Safe and Fair: Realizing women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region*, n.d.

¹⁸⁵ Interview with ILO staff.

migrant workers in the domestic work and care sectors.¹⁸⁶ The Synthesis Review found that the inclusion of migrant domestic workers into the broader gender agenda was seen as an emerging good practice by the ILO.¹⁸⁷ This allows the vulnerability of women to be associated not with their gender but instead to the situation of all domestic workers. In this way, the perspective of gender can be addressed more effectively, by acknowledging that men are also represented in these sectors, and not portraying women solely as victims or at heightened risk of vulnerability only because of their gender.¹⁸⁸

In the Philippines-Hong Kong migration corridor, a large number of migrants are women migrants in the domestic and care sectors. Hence, several of the ILO projects and programmes that operate along this migration corridor focus specifically on domestic workers and workers in the care sector, who are mainly women. For example, under the framework of the FAIR programme, the Philippines Labour Union in Hong Kong improved its services to migrant domestic workers in the post-arrival stage. The first phase of FAIR project also focused on close collaboration with social partners, TESDA and the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA), to abolish recruitment fees for domestic workers. Furthermore, in 2019 members of the Association of Hong-Kong Manpower Agencies and the Society of Kong-Kong Accredited Recruiters in the Philippines signed a Code of Conduct ensuring fair recruitment practices for domestic workers. The Code of Conduct aims to ensure that the services provided are in line with the ILO's General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment. This should improve the capacities of recruiters to apply fair labour standards and improve conditions for migrant workers.

While some projects focused on the vulnerability of women migrants and practices that create vulnerable conditions for women, other projects aim to focus on women's empowerment and enabling them to realize their potential.¹⁸⁹ However, some examples show that projects that aim to focus on the empowerment of women, self-sufficiency and resilience run a risk of being very gender-specific in a way that reinforces traditional gender roles. This might be necessary in some local or regional contexts, but is harmful in others, and limits the effectiveness of some actions and interventions.¹⁹⁰ Moreover, it can be argued that different strategies, some of which view migrant women as being in need of help and protection, and others that see migrant women as possessing great potential, result in a lack of consistency in cooperation, and in unmet targets.¹⁹¹ Lack of consistency in cooperation may hinder the effectiveness of the ILO's work, as different discourses taken may result in a poorer understanding among constituents of the role of gender in migration.

The Synthesis Report points to one interesting finding regarding the ILO's gender mainstreaming efforts. It shows that gender mainstreaming, aside from raising awareness of gender-related issues among relevant stakeholders, also had some unexpected outcomes, such as an increased focus among ILO partners on non-typical migrant workers.¹⁹²

In Peru and Ecuador, the project 'Emprende Seguro' focused on empowering its beneficiaries through various workshops. The majority of participants in these workshops were women. For example, in Peru, 78% of the participants in the soft skills workshops were women. Besides helping the women to become more confident about their skills, this project also had some unexpected outcomes. One unforeseen achievement of the project was that the activities also provided much-needed psychological support to the beneficiaries, especially among women and other vulnerable groups. Women who experienced domestic violence felt empowered by the sessions, and sought help to escape these situations.

186 Bonne-Moreau.

187 Synthesis Review.

188 Global action programme on migrant domestic workers and their families (GAP-MDW) - Final evaluation.

189 EU-UNW-ILO, Strengthening the resilience of Syrian women and girls in host communities in Iraq, Jordan and Turkey - Midterm Evaluation.

190 Promoting Decent Work Opportunities for Non-Syrian Refugees and Asylum Seekers in Turkey - Final cluster evaluation.

191 Interview with ILO staff.

192 Outcome 5: Thematic Funding for 2014-2015 - Final Independent Evaluation.

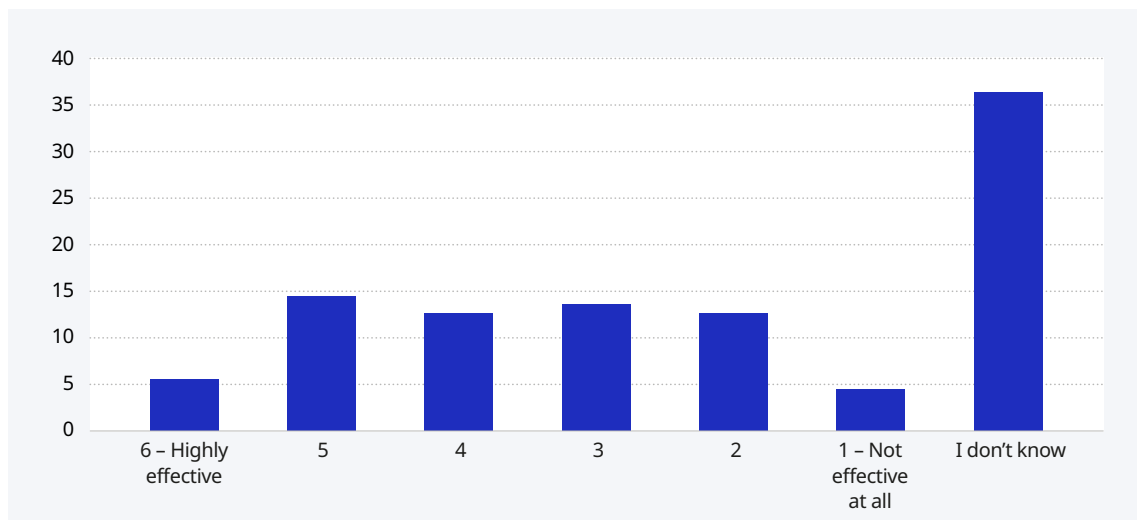
Finally, it is important to note that, while gender equality and gender mainstreaming have been an important part of a number of programmes and projects, there are instances of projects and programmes in which the perspective of gender equality is not included effectively. The Synthesis Report found that a few interventions paid insufficient or no attention to gender mainstreaming strategies during the development and implementation of projects. Several interventions also missed opportunities to strengthen their gender mainstreaming perspective and increase awareness about gender-related issues to do with labour migration.¹⁹³

In Colombia, during the planning and design of the project ‘Improved Migration Governance in Colombia to promote jobs and decent work’, which focused on Venezuelan migrants, the perspective of gender was not taken into account. Consequently, the specific needs, capacities and priorities of some of the most vulnerable groups of migrants, such as migrant women, were not taken into account. Even though some specific activities of the project addressed the needs of vulnerable groups including migrant women, this failure to consider the perspective of gender when planning the project limited the ILO’s ability to effectively address certain issues that are especially relevant to women, such as discrimination and workplace violence or sexual gender-based violence.

Disability inclusion

Focus on non-discrimination in terms of promoting the rights of workers with disabilities and disability inclusion at different stages of ILO’s projects is often insufficient or non-existent. The Fair Labour Migration Synthesis Report finds some evidence that people with disabilities were the target groups of a few projects. However, the effectiveness of including people with disabilities as a target group varied widely.¹⁹⁴ Moreover, when asked about the effectiveness of ILO’s work on enhancing access to the labour market for migrant workers with disabilities, 36.4 per cent of those surveyed chose the “I don’t know” option, which may indicate insufficient visibility for the ILO’s activities targeting people with disabilities, and a lack of focus on these cross-cutting concerns. Consequently, the evaluation was unable to trace any clear outcomes regarding the ILO’s work on labour migration targeting people with disabilities (see figure 16).

► **Figure 16. Perceptions of the effectiveness of the ILO’s work on enhancing access to the labour market for migrant workers with disabilities (percentage, n=111, scale from 1 to 6)**



193 Bonne-Moreau.

194 Bonne-Moreau.

Environmental sustainability and climate change

While environmental sustainability is seen as an important concern in the ILO's strategic documents, effective inclusion of this concern into project activities largely depends on regional or national contexts. In those regions where climate change has a less significant effect on migration patterns, environmental sustainability is rarely explicitly addressed in specific projects and actions. In the regions in which climate change may influence migration patterns, the ILO addresses environmental sustainability. The ILO is well positioned to support States and regional actors in considering labour migration as a climate adaptation strategy, and in the transition towards environmentally sustainable economies.¹⁹⁵ Recently, the ILO has begun to focus more on ensuring safe access to labour migration opportunities for climate-driven migrants, and on implementing more studies relating to labour migration and climate change. The Development and Investment Branch (DEVINVEST) – the ILO department that works on disaster response, as well as its Green Jobs programme – and MIGRANT branch, include climate change and environmental sustainability issues in their work to some extent. Most of these activities focus on green jobs, resilience and fragile economies – for example, in the Pacific Island countries, which are beginning to address the needs of populations impacted by climate change, by providing official training so that individuals can find decent work opportunities abroad.¹⁹⁶ However, most of these actions are fairly recent, and often focus on specific regions or local contexts.¹⁹⁷ For example, the ILO has developed a research project looking at the nexus between labour migration, climate change and COVID-19 across selected South Asian countries. On a global level, the ILO has contributed to the international efforts to address climate change and labour migration through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and its Conferences of the Parties (COP). It also signed an MoU with the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification to combat desertification and the migration challenges that stem from it, and is taking part in the Task Force on Displacement under the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage associated with Climate Change Impacts, and contributing to the Platform on Disaster Displacement through the implementation of integrated and regional plans of action and projects.¹⁹⁸ However, as these efforts are only recent, their outcomes are still difficult to determine, and it is hard to evaluate their effectiveness.

3.4. Efficiency

In the following section, we focus on the extent to which the ILO's work on labour migration was delivered in an economic and timely way during the period 2016–20. The analysis shows that constituents are generally satisfied with the timeliness and availability of ILO's work, but financial and human resources to promote fair and effective labour migration are very limited, which sometimes causes project delays. Furthermore, existing monitoring and evaluation systems do not allow the effective evaluation labour migration projects, but steps have already been taken to improve them, together with other actions to improve organizational efficiency.

The survey asked constituents and other stakeholders to evaluate the timeliness, availability and accessibility of various aspects of the ILO's work on labour migration on a six-point scale (1 = not at all satisfied; 6 = very satisfied). On average, all of the aspects illustrated in figure 17 were rated positively, with average ratings ranging between 4.40 and 4.71. The accessibility of publications and statistics on the ILO's website were rated the highest, together with the availability of tailored publications. These findings are important in terms of assessing efficiency because, if respondents had been unable to find or access information produced by the ILO, its work would have been futile. The time taken by the ILO to respond to various requests received the lowest rating – although it is generally still high.

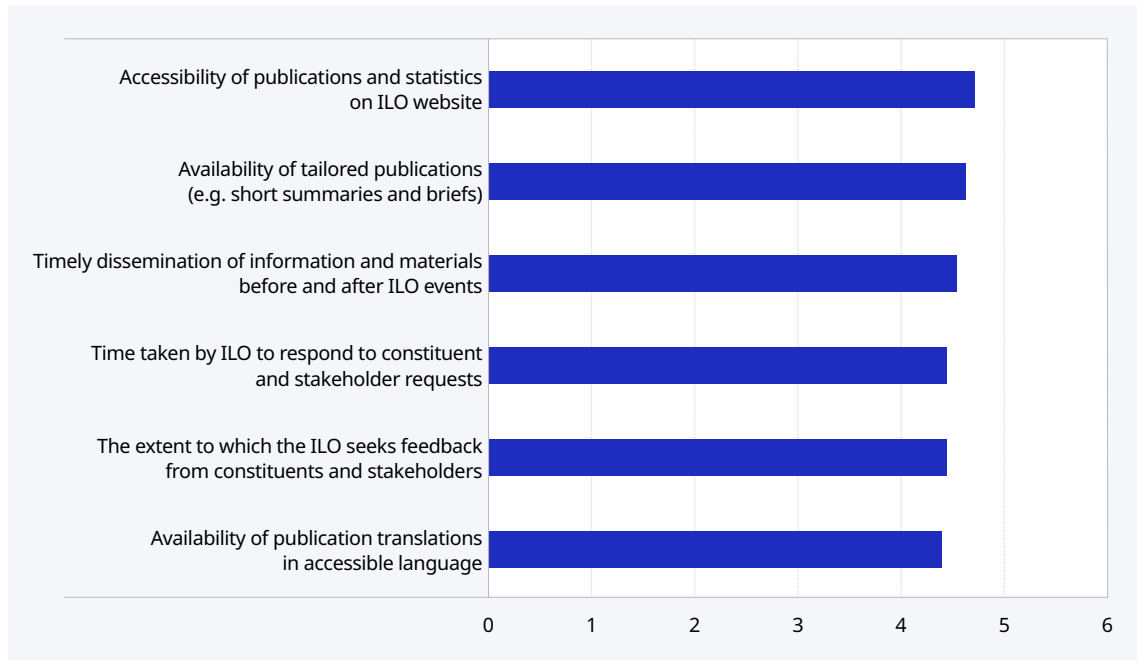
¹⁹⁵ ILO, *Climate change, displacement and labour migration*, n.d.

¹⁹⁶ The role of fair and effective labour migration governance in regional climate adaptation.

¹⁹⁷ Interviews with ILO staff.

¹⁹⁸ ILO, *Climate change, displacement and labour migration*, n.d.

► **Figure 17. Constituent and stakeholder satisfaction with the timeliness, accessibility and availability of the ILO’s work in the field of labour migration (n=38, scale from 1 to 6)**



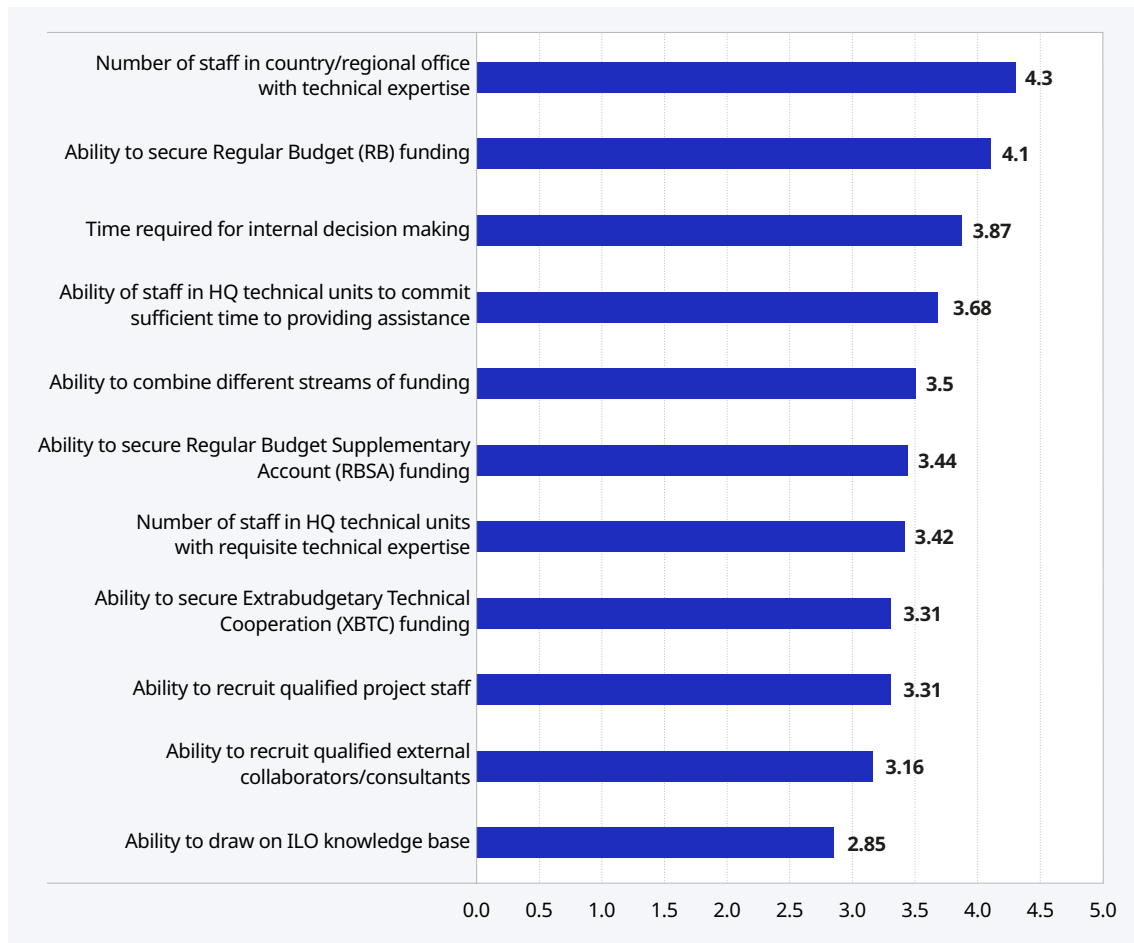
Interviews confirmed that the ILO’s constituents and stakeholders are generally satisfied with the timeliness of the ILO’s work, with the exception that some labour migration projects experienced delays. These were caused by the fact that the ILO’s administrative procedures were difficult to follow for some stakeholders.¹⁹⁹ Other projects were “overambitious” with time and resources,²⁰⁰ which was made worse by staff turnover. Lack of consensus among the constituents, partners and donors involved in labour migration projects also delayed some projects.²⁰¹ In one of the case studies, for example, interviewees mentioned a 12-month delay to the start of a programme, because a government agency was not consulted during programme design, and did not endorse the Global Compact on Refugees.

The majority of ILO staff interviewed who work on labour migration issues argued that the human and financial resources available for them to do their work are insufficient (see below). The survey corroborated these results (see figure 18). The ILO employees surveyed pointed to the number of staff in country/regional offices with technical expertise as the most significant constraint. This received an average rating of 4.3, where 1 indicates that the factor is not at all a constraint and 6 that it is a very substantial constraint. Project evaluations, too, observed that staff are “overworked”, which “could lead to consequences such as burn-out and poorer quality results”.²⁰²

The figures on staff numbers support these results. Figure 19 shows the number of Regular Budget (RB) staff in MIGRANT, broken down by biennium, funding source and position level. The number of RB core staff – which are the most secure positions – has remained stable moving from one biennium to the next, despite the fact that expenditure has increased substantially from 2016–17 to 2018–19. The total expenditure (XBDC, RBSA and RBTC) on Outcome 9 in 2016–17 constituted US\$51.5 million, compared with US\$80.5 million in 2018–19. As shown in figure 19, staff pressures were eased somewhat by hiring more fixed-term temporary

199 Independent final evaluation of “Support the reintegration of returnees in Ethiopia” project; HLE Asia.
 200 E16, Fair Labour Migration – Synthesis Review, p. 20; Independent final evaluation of “Support the reintegration of returnees in Ethiopia” project; van der Loop, T. (2019). Independent Mid-Term Evaluation of TRIANGLE in ASEAN: Safe and Fair Labour Migration.
 201 Bonne-Moreau.
 202 K. Garven, and F. Garabito, *Midterm Evaluation of the ILO-UN Women Safe and Fair Programme: Realizing women migrant workers’ rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region (2018–2022)*, 2021. Draft Report, p. 28. Similar remarks have also been observed in EnCompass LLC, *SEA Fisheries Process Evaluation*, 2019, United States Department of State; and van der Loop, T. (2019). Independent Mid-Term Evaluation of TRIANGLE in ASEAN: Safe and Fair Labour Migration.

► **Figure 18. Constraints to promoting fair and effective labour migration, according to ILO staff (N=73, scale from 1 to 6)**

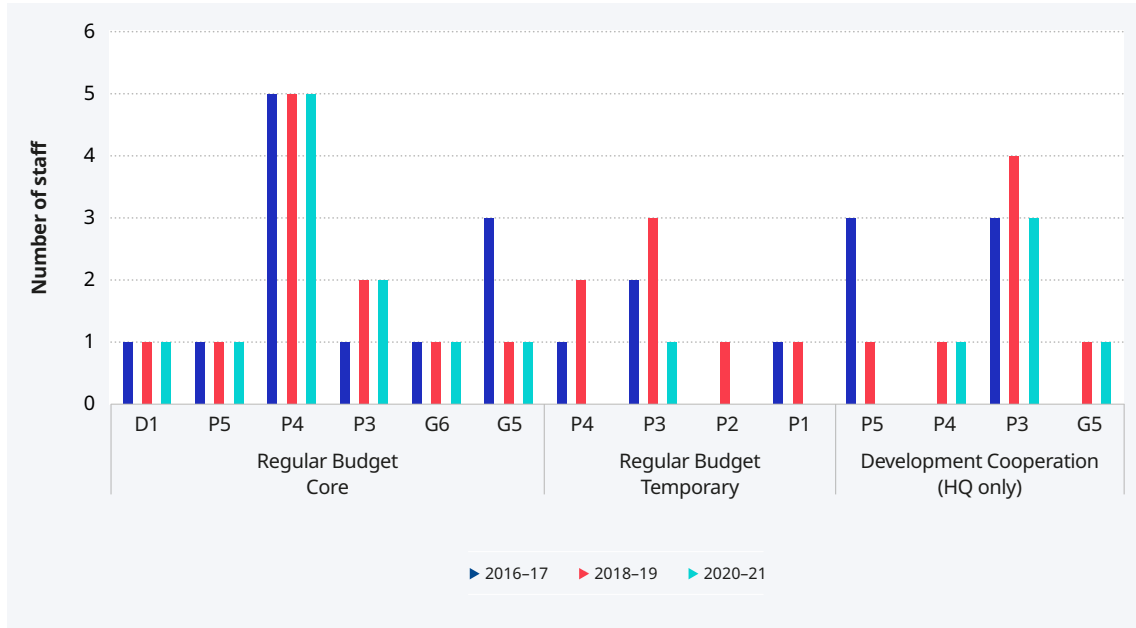


positions in 2018–19 (see the change in the orange bars for RB temporary positions, compared with the blue bars representing 2016–17). Furthermore, five P4 positions were added (one at headquarters and four in the field) during the same period.

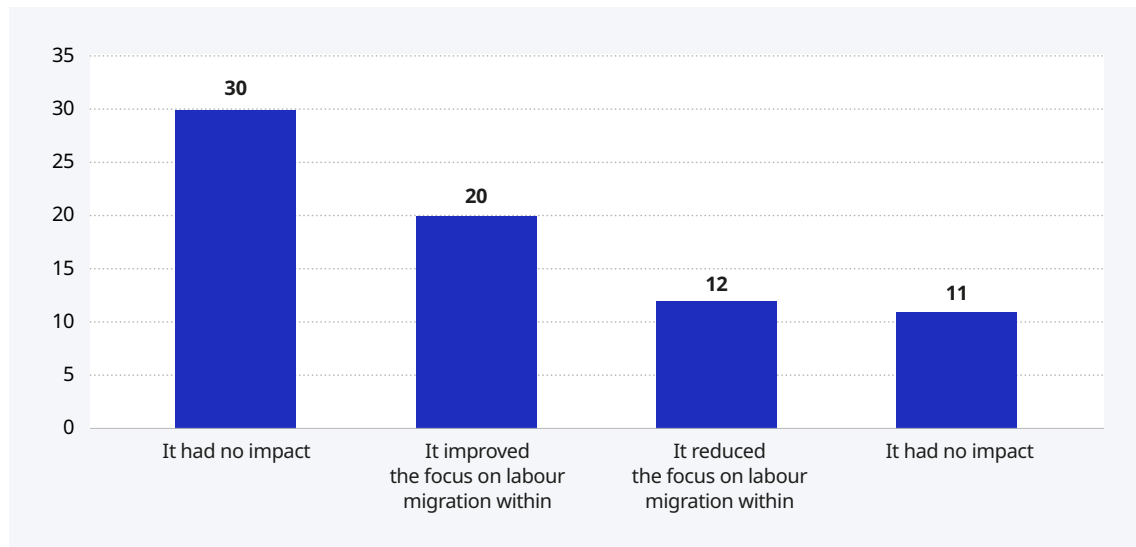
Another important insight from figure 19 is the low number of positions with high technical expertise. Throughout the evaluation period, there was only one P5 (senior specialist on migration) position in MIGRANT funded from the Regular Budget. If Development Cooperation funding for headquarters staff is taken into account, the number of P5-level positions appears higher, although the number nevertheless decreased from three P5-level DC positions in 2016–17 to zero in 2020–21. Interviewees argued that a lack of staff with high technical expertise at headquarters level reduces the quality of the ILO’s knowledge products on labour migration, and hinders resource mobilization.

Interviewees pointed to a few reasons why limited human and financial resources are an increasing constraint on their work. First, some argued that the restructuring of the P&B 2020–21 might result in lower resource mobilization, due to labour migration no longer having an outcome dedicated to it: “We mobilize resources for Outcomes of the ILO. Migration becoming an output makes it harder, since we need to address the Outcome level... We support colleagues in resource mobilization. [Outcome] 7 gets a lot, but it can go to [another] output.” Nevertheless, opinions regarding the switch from Outcome 9 to (mostly) Output 7.5 are mixed overall. As illustrated in figure 20, most of ILO staff surveyed think the switch had no impact on their work. Others argued that it allowed better synergies to be created with other topics the ILO works on, such as fundamental principles, rights at work, informality and wages.

► Figure 19. Positions in MIGRANT headquarters, by funding source



► Figure 20. ILO staff perceptions of the switch from Outcome 9 to Output 7.5 (n=73)



Given the constraint on hiring staff using Regular Budget, some staff are hired on a project-by-project basis. This means that the turnover of staff working on migration might be relatively high. This in turn might prevent technical expertise from accumulating at country or regional level.

Another reason why limited human and financial resources are a constraint on the ILO’s labour migration work is that a limited budget from each project can be spent on staffing costs. Donors put caps on funds that can be used to hire staff, in order to ensure that the majority of funds reach the beneficiaries. The ILO staff interviewed were convinced that, in some cases, the caps reduce rather than enhance project outcomes. This is because project managers who are unable to hire staff instead rely on consultants who take time to become familiar with the context of the country or project, or simply are unable to deliver some of the project activities to the quality required.

Importantly, the donors interviewed were generally open to flexible thresholds in terms of the budget that can be spent on human resources. The Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) – a co-funder of the TRIANGLE project, together with Global Affairs Canada (GAC) – did not set any limits in this project. Meanwhile, the EU – another major donor of ILO projects – does impose limits but, according to the representatives interviewed, these limits are decided on a project-by-project basis, taking into account project activities, and whether or not they are implemented by third parties. Therefore, the ILO could do more to show the benefits of allocating a larger share of total project to staff costs when engaging with the donors in relation to specific projects, in order to avoid human resource pressures.

In addition to project delays, lack of staff with technical expertise, and limited budget, another inefficiency identified during the evaluation concerns the ILO's monitoring systems. Several reports noted that it was impossible to assess impact due to a lack of data, missing baselines, and weak or absent monitoring frameworks.²⁰³ The adequacy of monitoring and evaluation frameworks varied from completely adequate in some countries, including the use of SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, time-based) indicators, to inadequate, when essential information on project activities could not be traced back. In particular, impact evaluation appeared challenging, due to a lack of organizational know-how on how to assess the ILO's impact. Even information on results was not easily captured. According to one interviewee, "When they ask us to quantify how many final beneficiaries we reached, that's easy to quantify for the World Health Organization because they distribute products, but not for us. [It is only possible if] we directly work with [beneficiaries], i.e. [do] training. We try to work with policy or facilitate social dialogue to achieve policy change... In some of our projects, maybe M&E [monitoring and evaluation] was not well structured."²⁰⁴ Indeed, even for this HLE, results data could not be identified.

Nevertheless, the issue regarding inefficient monitoring appears to be acknowledged by ILO staff, and steps have already been taken to improve it. The system set up by the ILO to monitor progress towards P&B indicators has undergone significant change in the period between 2016 and 2020. The Governing Body requested the office to focus only on the key priorities, and to simplify the results framework.²⁰⁵ As a result, the ILO has reduced the number of outcomes from 30 in 2010, to 9 in 2021. In the 2016–17 and 2018–19 P&Bs, the results framework had only one level – the outcome level. Now, the ILO P&B reports both at outcome and output levels. Furthermore, from 2018 to 2020, the way indicators are defined changed to allow the ILO's added benefit to target countries to be measured. The Decent Work Results Dashboard is a part of these efforts, too.²⁰⁶

Finally, it is important to mention a number of good practices regarding efficiency that were observed during the evaluation. For example, organizational efficiency was increased when the ILO staff, noticing the similarities between two different projects in Asia and the Pacific, combined it into one large TRIANGLE project. The merging of GAC and DFAT resources allowed long-term funding to be ensured, which enables lessons from early stages of the project to be incorporated into later stages. The risk of overlap with other ILO country teams working on labour migration issues has also been reduced by restructuring the project.

Successful coordination within the ILO was similarly stressed by both survey respondents and interviewees. Headquarters staff gave an average rating of 4.7 with regard to collaboration among technical units at the headquarters level, where 1 indicates that the collaboration is not at all effective, and 6 very effective. Interviewees emphasized that both SKILLS and MIGRANT communicate actively with each other in areas such as normative work, social protection and the skills recognition of migrant workers.²⁰⁷ Social protection has also been a topic for effective collaboration between MIGRANT and SOCPRO, as these departments jointly implement projects that extend social protection to migrant workers and refugees. Close cooperation and joint projects have also taken place between MIGRANT and FUNDAMENTALS, given that the ILO seeks to eliminate abusive migrant recruitment and employment practices, which can amount to forced labour

203 Bonne-Moreau.

204 Interview with ILO staff.

205 Interview with ILO staff.

206 Interview with ILO staff. The Dashboard is available at: <https://www.ilo.org/IRDashboard/>.

207 Interview with ILO staff.

and human trafficking. The Fair Recruitment Initiative itself was a joint activity of FUNDAMENTALS and MIGRANT, and major field projects have since been jointly designed and implemented. A further example is the inclusion of a migrant worker dimension into the ILO’s overall labour force statistics.

Collaboration between headquarters and field offices was also rated positively, at 4.7. Some field staff noted that retreats organized by MIGRANT helped to share best practices. Headquarters and field staff regularly exchange information about projects, and then identify areas in which projects may overlap. Interaction between headquarters and field staff only intensified during COVID-19, thanks to some of the meetings taking place online.

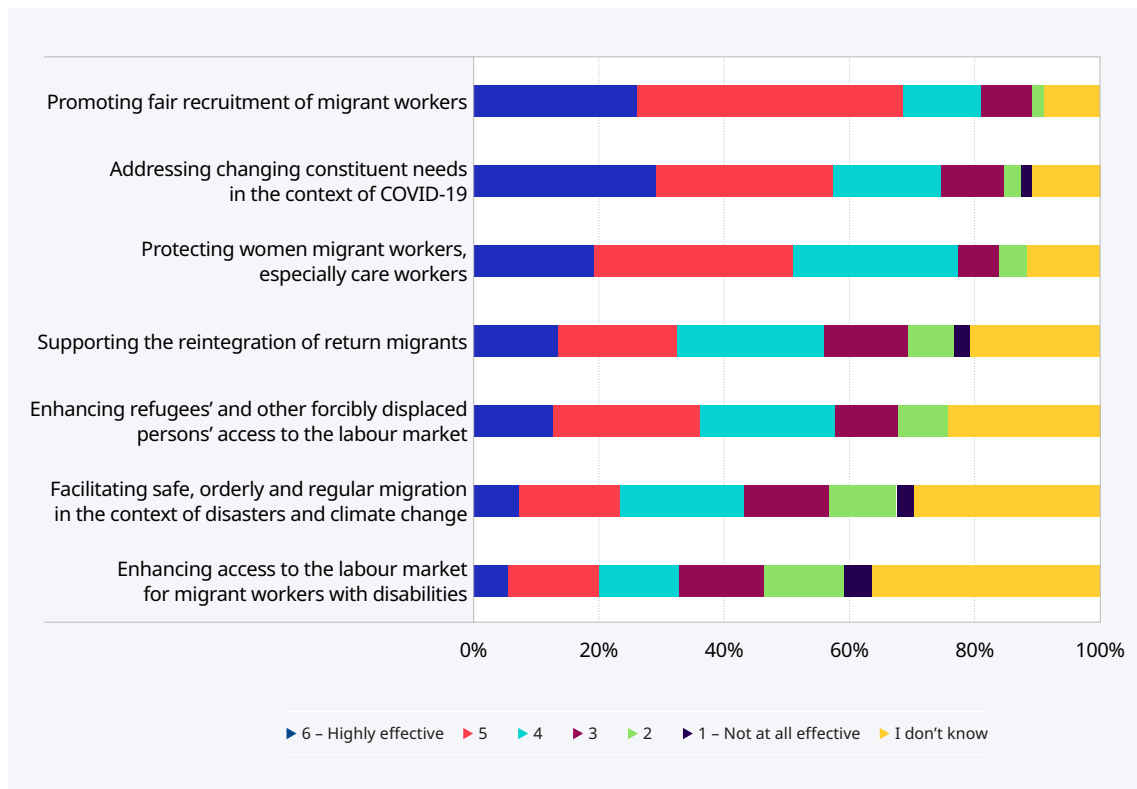
Furthermore, as outlined in Section 2.5, between 2018 and 2020, funding from external donors to labour migration projects grew. Increased external budget in 2018–19 and 2020 could imply that the ILO has been more successful at raising additional funds to undertake specific projects and programmes, possibly at the country or regional level. This is reflected in the fact that more countries split the overall labour migration budget in 2020 compared with previous years (52 countries in 2020, compared with 29 and 27 in 2016–17 and 2018–19, respectively). Furthermore, interviews with country-level teams also showed that they have been proactive in mobilizing resources.

3.5. (Likelihood of) impact and sustainability

3.5.1. Likelihood of impact

Impacts are the longer-term effects of the ILO’s work. The ILO depends on its constituents to make an impact – their willingness to use their newly acquired knowledge, capacity and tools to agree on and implement policy change and invest in implementation mechanisms. Thus, the impact of the ILO’s work

► **Figure 21. To what extent do you think the ILO’s work on the following topics has been effective since 2016 (percentage, n=111, scale from 1 to 6)?**



is affected by various external factors that may either facilitate or hinder it. The measurement of impact involved interviews, analysis of project documentation, and the survey.

The main impact achieved by the ILO during the evaluation period relates to the adoption and implementation of legal and policy frameworks for labour migration. Various sources of evidence have been found that indicate the ILO achieved impact in various regions across the world, with respect to diverse topics of interest (such as fair recruitment and social protection, for example) concerning labour migration. The main barrier to impact is the fragile political context of many countries targeted by the ILO.

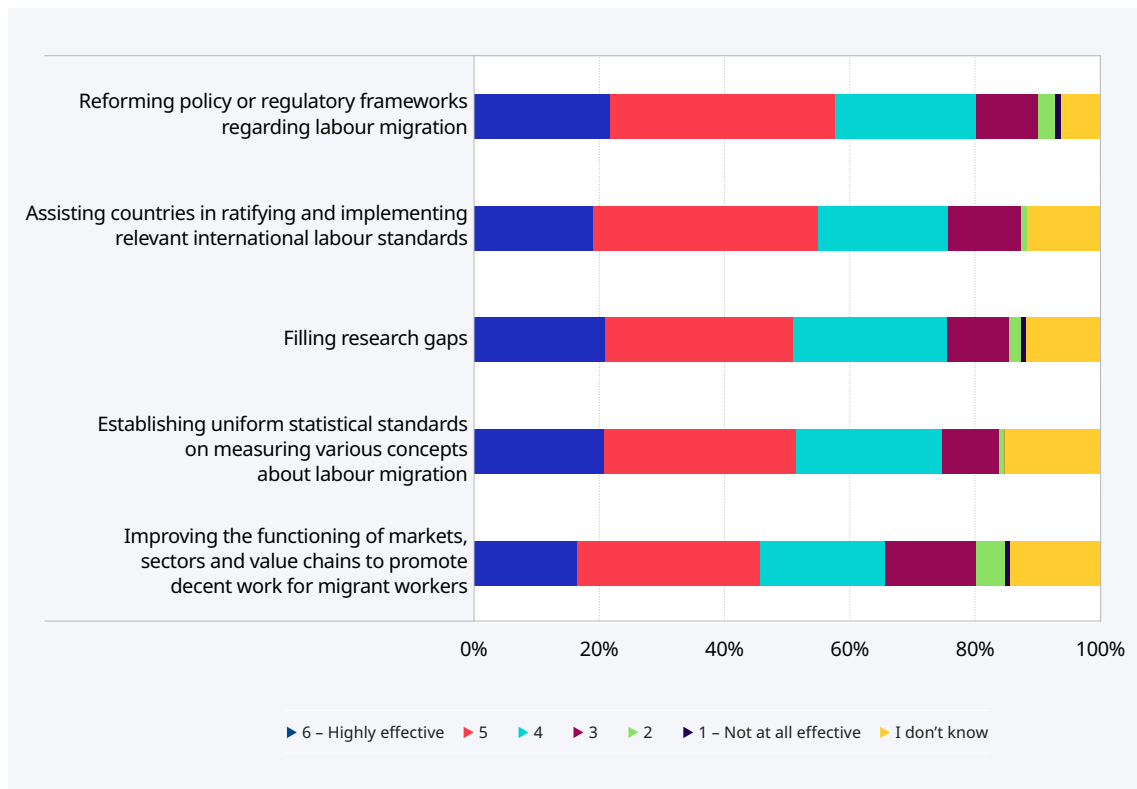
The survey found that the ILO has been effective in achieving its main objectives on labour migration. The promotion of fair recruitment stood out as particularly effective, with 68 per cent of respondents awarding it a 5 or 6 (out of 6). Many respondents also found the ILO's response to COVID-19 highly effective (57 per cent assigned it a 5 or 6). The effectiveness of the ILO's work with regard to refugees and climate change was recognized less often. This is due to a higher share of respondents who did not know whether the ILO had been effective, rather than a higher share of respondents considering the ILO's work to be ineffective.

Direct impact of ILO

The ILO has created impacts on labour migration through various actions. The introduction of policy and regulatory frameworks was perceived as most effective, followed by the establishment of uniform statistical standards and the assistance provided on the ratification of international labour standards. Improvements to the functioning of labour markets to promote decent work for migrant workers was considered slightly less effective.

The survey findings were supported by the interviewees, who highlighted on various occasions the importance of regulatory frameworks, and the ILO's success with regard to them. The ILO's achievements in the

► **Figure 22. To what extent do you think the following ILO actions to promote fair and effective labour migration have been effective since 2016 (percentage, N=111, scale from 1 to 6)?**



field of statistics were also mentioned, both by ILO staff as well as constituents, as examples of the ILO's effectiveness and impact.

As shown by the survey, the impact of the ILO's work on fair and effective labour migration can mainly be perceived through the adoption and implementation of national legal and policy frameworks for labour migration, as well as the adoption and implementation of regional labour migration frameworks and agreements. During the evaluation period 2016–20, various examples were noted in terms of frameworks being adopted, ranging from social protection²⁰⁸ to the enhancement of rights and opportunities for migrant workers. The ILO's interventions also supported law and policy review processes, including gap analyses and the assessment of recruitment practices in different countries. Certain projects focused on specific policy outcomes, providing technical assistance at national and regional levels, to promote the adoption and effective implementation of key legislation and policies on international labour migration, in line with the international labour standards.²⁰⁹

The ILO's focus on normative work has led to the ratification of international Conventions. The Work in Fishing Convention, 2007 (No. 188), was adopted in 2007, extending labour rights and guarantees to all workers in the fishing industry, including migrant fishers. After a slow start, this entered into force in November 2017, received 14 ratifications during the period under review, and by mid-2021 had been ratified by 18 Members. During the period under review, there have been ILO campaigns to promote the ratification of the Domestic Workers' Convention, 2011 (No. 189), and it has inspired new projects that specifically target migrant domestic workers. The Convention entered into force in September 2013, received 8 ratifications during the period covered by this review, and had received a total of 33 ratifications by mid-2019.

In Lesotho, migrant workers now enjoy the same legal protection as national workers, because of an updated National Labour Policy, the development of which was supported by the ILO. The Policy reflects the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111).²¹⁰ In Ethiopia, amendments to national law were prompted by the ratification of ILO Conventions, as promoted by the ILO. These caused new measures to be adopted that are relevant to the protections of labour migrants' rights.²¹¹ ILO interventions made significant contributions to strengthening key institutions and processes relating to overseas migration and the reintegration of returnees in the country through the "Reintegration Directive" and new methods adopted to address work with vulnerable groups.²¹²

In Viet Nam, the ILO put forth recommendations for revisions to the legal framework for labour migration in 2017. In 2020, Law 72 was revised by the National Assembly. Several of the ILO's key recommendations have been incorporated into the final version of the Law, including the need to pay brokerage commissions for migrant workers, the ability to terminate a contract unilaterally with an employer when there is a threat to the worker's well-being (for example, sexual harassment or facing threats) or pre-departure training that includes information about forced labour and trafficking prevention.²¹³ In Thailand, new national legislation forbids the confiscation of migrants' documents and provides for registration requirements for migrants, which subsequently extends social protection to them.²¹⁴

As a result of technical support from the ILO under the Free Movement of Persons and Migration project component of the Demand Driven Facility, the Government of Sierra Leone carried out several consultations with relevant stakeholders, which led to the revision and finalization of the National Labour Migration policy. The country has deposited the requisite instruments of ratification, and the process has been completed.²¹⁵

208 Application of migration policy for Decent Work of migrant workers – Midterm Evaluation, Extending social protection access and portability to migrant workers and their families through selected RECs in Africa (EC through ICMPPD) – Final evaluation.

209 Bonne-Moreau.

210 ILO, "Decent work results: ILO programme implementation 2018–2019", Report to the Director-General I (A), International Labour Conference, 109th Session, 2021.

211 Support for the reintegration of returnees in Ethiopia – Final Independent Evaluation, Improve labour migration governance in Ethiopia to combat irregular migration – Midterm evaluation.

212 Bonne-Moreau.

213 Case studies – Asia and Pacific; TRIANGLE in ASEAN: Safe and Fair Labour Migration – Midterm Cluster Evaluation.

214 Thailand case study.

215 FMM West Africa, [Launching of the National Labour Migration Policy for Sierra Leone](#).

Similarly, technical assistance and research provided by the ILO in Bangladesh led to the development of legal and policy frameworks for labour migration, as well as concrete tools for migrants: an online complaints mechanism, a labour attaché reporting system, an information system for recruitment agents, and a Labour Migration Management Information System. With ILO support, Bangladesh reinforced its legal and regulatory framework on migration, after reportedly starting “almost from scratch”.²¹⁶

During the evaluation period, ILO interventions led to the formulation of laws and public policies on labour migration in several Latin American countries (Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala and Paraguay), to incorporate the perspective of labour migration with a human rights approach, both in the regulatory framework and in the governance mechanisms of these countries.²¹⁷

The ILO also worked towards promoting bilateral and multilateral labour agreements that enabled improvements to the level of protection enjoyed by migrant workers. In various countries around the world, the ratification of ILO Conventions was linked to subsequent legal reforms to promote migrant workers’ rights.²¹⁸ ILO interventions impacted the governance frameworks of various regional and subregional organizations, and strengthened institutional mechanisms to monitor the implementation of labour governance frameworks at a national level.²¹⁹

The development of policies related to labour migration, including the extension of social protection to migrant workers and their families, was an important impact listed in the Project Evaluation Synthesis Report. The TRIANGLE programme listed various policies and legislation adopted in several countries due to ILO support, including the ASEAN Consensus, a regional policy document that is considered a landmark achievement, bringing together countries of origin and destination to enhance the rights of, and opportunities for, migrant workers.²²⁰

The ILO has been involved in the Puebla Process and the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) from 2016 to the present. When ILO first became involved in 2016, labour migration was not mentioned as a priority area in the work plan of the RCM. Instead, it focused predominantly on border management and security issues relating to migration, such as on unaccompanied minors, trafficking, etc. As a result of the ILO’s involvement, labour migration has become one of the key priorities of the Regional Conference, mainly due to technical assistance to the Conference from the ILO and the IOM. Had the ILO not become an observer organisation, participating in and organising meetings on labour migration, this would not have become a priority.

Another great contribution made by the ILO has been to convince member countries of the importance of linking together labour institutions in the RCM – mainly Ministries of Labour, but also employers’ organisations and workers’ organisations, who participate in the events it organises within the framework of the Labour Migration Working Group. One interviewee stated that “the objective of the ILO in the MCA in the first years was to promote that Ministries of Foreign Relations and the Interior cooperate with the Ministries of Labour and sometimes with employers and workers. Now it has become a common practice.”

The final evaluation on fair recruitment and decent work for women migrant workers in South Asia and the Middle East found that the ILO supported law and policy recommendations, as well as facilitating the development of tools such as instruments to assess fair recruitment practices.²²¹ The impact in this case is also noted through the enhanced referencing of fair recruitment guidelines and other materials by governments, the private sector, trade unions and academia. The ILO definition has been taken up by a number of

216 HLE Asia Decent Work.

217 Bonne-Moreau.

218 Bonne-Moreau.

219 ILO, “[The ILO at work. ILO programme implementation 2016–2017](#)”, International Labour Conference, 107th Session, 2018; and ILO, “[Decent work results: ILO programme implementation 2018–2019](#)”, Report to the Director-General I (A), International Labour Conference, 109th Session, 2021.

220 Bonne-Moreau.

221 Fair recruitment and decent work for women migrant workers in South Asia and the Middle East – Regional component – Final evaluation.

other actors already, including in the ITUC's migrant recruitment advisor; the Responsible Business Alliance Definition of Fees; the Responsible Recruitment Toolkit; the H&M Migrant Workers Fair Recruitment and Treatment Guidelines; the Electronics Watch Guidance for Recruitment Fees in Public Procurement; the IOM International Recruitment Integrity System; the Norwegian Council of Ethics' decision to blacklist selected companies, using the ILO fair recruitment definition; the impact tool on the repayment of recruitment fees; and the recent Open Society Foundation study on recruitment under the five corridors project.²²²

Likewise, the REFRAME Project, which employs the ILO's "corridor" approach, has had important effects on the political and legislative environment regarding fair recruitment in the Guatemala–Mexico corridor, specifically through the incorporation of principles of fair recruitment to the Regulations for the Registration, Authorization and Operation of Recruiters, Recruitment Agencies and Placement of Workers inside and outside of Guatemala; in the Temporary Work Programme for Migrants Abroad (Guatemala); in the Policy of Respect for Human Rights in Cámara del Agro (CAMAGRO, Guatemala); in the sugar and palm sectors (Guatemala); and in the Migration Law in Baja California (Mexico).²²³

The Government of Nepal, supported by the ILO, signed bilateral labour agreements on labour migration with the Governments of Malaysia (October 2018), Japan (May 2019), Mauritius (June 2019), Oman (May 2019) and the United Arab Emirates (June 2019). In particular, the bilateral agreement signed with Jordan is based on the ILO's [General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment and definition of recruitment fees and related costs](#). All of these agreements share the commonalities of no fees for workers, and employers paying major recruitment costs, including fees to the recruitment agencies.²²⁴

Impact through legislative change has not only been achieved through the ILO's projects and technical assistance, but also through its complaints procedure. During the evaluation period, various countries, such as the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, made significant adaptations to their legal and policy frameworks in response to complaints regarding non-observance of ILO Conventions.

In Qatar, a complaint concerning non-observance of the Forced Labour Convention, 1930 (No. 29) and the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) was made by delegates to the ILC in 2014. The complainants alleged that generally, that the problem of forced labour affected the migrant population of some 1.5 million. As in the UAE, reference was made to practices such as contract substitution, high recruitment fees, passport confiscation, failure to maintain a legal framework sufficient to protect the rights of migrant workers under international law, failure to enforce existing legal protections, and the restrictions associated with the sponsorship law. In the years following this complaint, Qatar provided extensive information on the measures taken to improve the protection of migrant workers.

In addition, in 2017, the State of Qatar and the ILO entered into a partnership to support Qatar's labour reform agendas, ensuring compliance with international labour Conventions and fundamental principles and rights at work. The ILO website documents extensive law and policy reforms adopted since then in a wide range of different areas. These include: wage protection and minimum wage; labour inspection policy and occupational safety and health systems; kafala recruitment and working conditions; prevention, protection and prosecution against forced labour; and promoting workers' voice and access to justice. At the time of writing of this report, the data collection phase of the evaluation of this project is still ongoing.

However, impact has not been achieved in all cases. In Latin America, the ILO also provided technical assistance to achieve the harmonization of migration and/or labour legislation with international labour standards, with efforts focusing on promoting the ratification of Conventions Nos 97, 143 and 189 in Argentina, Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Panama,

²²² Interview with ILO staff.

²²³ Guatemala–Mexico case study.

²²⁴ HLE Asia Decent Work.

Paraguay, the Dominican Republic and Uruguay. However, these efforts resulted in legislative reforms or the implementation of new legislation in only half of these countries.²²⁵ The ILO provided technical assistance to the Guatemala MTPS on legislation to regulate the registration, authorization and operation of recruiters, but changes of authorities at the MTPS have slowed this process.²²⁶

While progress on the adoption of multilateral frameworks at regional and interregional levels has been recorded across all regions (with ILO support and technical expertise), harmonious implementation remains a major challenge, and further support to strengthen capacity is needed.²²⁷ Further impact can therefore still be prevented by various internal and external factors, or through insufficient capacity of the key actors promoting policy change.

Certain challenges also exist in relation to the achievement of impact by ILO the directly, mainly concerning project duration. For example, the Employment Intensive Investment Programme's midterm review for Lebanon and Jordan (2018) indicated that, in terms of economic impact on beneficiary households, the jobs created through the Programme are short-term, so the impact is limited. Jobs are restricted to the duration of the grant.²²⁸ The ILO interviewees similarly indicated that donors often provide funding for short-term projects, while the ILO's work with governments and social partners requires much more time to achieve impact.²²⁹

Other impacts of the ILO

Most of the ILO's projects on labour migration concern policy development and implementation, and therefore do not always directly involve migrant workers. The wider impact of the ILO describes its contribution to changes in the situation of migrant workers achieved as a consequence of the ILO's work at the policy level.

The Work in Freedom (WIF) programme in Nepal implemented education and social service referral activities targeting potential female migrants to ensure they were well informed about their options, as well as about ways to migrate safely in line with the ILO's Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment. Later, an ILO implementing partner reported forming an informal network for female returnee migrant workers (post COVID-19), whose members received training and participated in self-help discussion groups. Feedback from Nepali participants in the WIF former migrant workers network: the women reported learning about gender, gender-based violence and safe migration. Since joining the network, participants reported being able to defend their rights and negotiate with local government representatives and family members with greater confidence. After participating in WIF livelihood training, another returnee reported that she had partnered with another returnee to form a company that now produces and sells handmade bags.

The evaluation of the *Emprende Seguro* programme in Peru and Ecuador found that the project contributed to income generation by beneficiaries, particularly Venezuelan migrants. The project had positive impact on their income and in the self-generation of their own employment, but also led to important changes in other relevant aspects of beneficiaries' social lives. For example, the programme has served as a channel for greater socialization and integration of people into their environment. The programme has provided beneficiaries with an experience of direct connection (many of them for the first time) with the practices of saving, and of using the services of the financial system. The semi-structured interviews and four life stories account for the impact that the *Emprende Seguro* programme has had on the development of business

225 Bonne-Moreau.

226 Case study Guatemala–Mexico.

227 ILO, [Addressing governance challenges in a changing migration landscape – International Labour Conference 2017](#).

228 ILO Evaluation Office, [Independent Evaluation. ILO's Programme of Work in Lebanon and Jordan in Terms of Decent Work and the Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis 2014–2018](#), 2018.

229 Interviews with ILO staff.

competencies and skills among the beneficiaries. It is important to note that this is an advance not only in personal terms, but also in business skills, and a step forward in the process of business formalization.

In Tunisia, the adoption of a new Recruitment Law has caused several private employment agencies to submit their files to the Ministry to regularize their status.²³⁰ A sign of the impact of fair recruitment initiatives could be the amount of fees repaid to workers by companies and/or the amounts of compensation received by workers who may have faced recruitment-related abuse, as an indication of increased monitoring and more efficient redress mechanisms.²³¹ However, representatives of the ITUC and IOE had not yet seen any clear impact in this regard, due to the short period between these projects and the present evaluation.²³² Other stakeholders interviewed also found it difficult to indicate a concrete impact in this regard.

The Guatemalan Ministry of Employment has updated its Employment Policy, within which the ILO contributed to the inclusion of an Action Plan for Labour Migration and Fair Recruitment. Following this, this Action Plan resulted in a Work Programme for Temporary Migrants Abroad, consistent with the approach of decent work and the Principles of Fair Recruitment. This was approved via Ministerial Agreement, and began to be implemented in 2019. According to interviewees, the Project has supported the systematisation of the Programme's processes, both internally and those involving other institutions, and its content is trickling down to various policy levels.

Despite the short time since project implementation during 2016–20, various evaluations and stakeholders still expect wider impact to take place in the near future. For example, the REFRAME project has supported the establishment of migrant resource centres with its partners in Pakistan. The project provided capacity-building to staff working in these centres, and to community leaders in Pakistan, who are in turn expected to provide relevant information to prospective migrant workers on their rights as migrant workers, as well as on the resources available to them to emigrate.²³³

Internal challenges to impact

However, due to the short period between the implementation of a project and its evaluation, many project evaluations highlighted that, despite good progress, it was too early to see the impact on the well-being of migrant workers and their families.²³⁴ In the Guatemala–Mexico corridor, the case study found that it is still too premature to identify impacts of the intervention at the level of migrant workers. In the case of changes to the political and legislative environment, the formal approval of some regulations (for example, the Regulation on Recruitment Agencies in Guatemala) is still pending – and above all, so is their effective implementation.²³⁵ Similarly, in Pakistan, REFRAME contributed, through technical review, to refining the draft National Emigration and Welfare Policy. While the project has influenced changes at policy level, by providing technical assistance, these changes have not resulted in clearly identifiable behavioural changes among constituents, since the policy changes have not yet been fully implemented, with approval of some laws still pending.²³⁶

As previous sections have highlighted, that landscape of labour migration projects and actors is vast, which can cause the ILO to become lost in the crowd. This hinders the attribution of impact on migrant workers to the ILO directly. In the Peru and Ecuador *Emprende Seguro* Project Evaluation, concerns were shared by ILO interviewees that the project focuses on the implementation of a pilot that is oriented towards economic inclusion through entrepreneurship. In doing so, it shares much in common with several other

230 Promising practices for fair recruitment in Tunisia.

231 Interviews with ILO staff.

232 Interviews with the IOE and ITUC.

233 REFRAME Project Evaluation, 2021.

234 Bonne-Moreau.

235 Guatemala–Mexico case study.

236 REFRAME Project Evaluation, 2021.

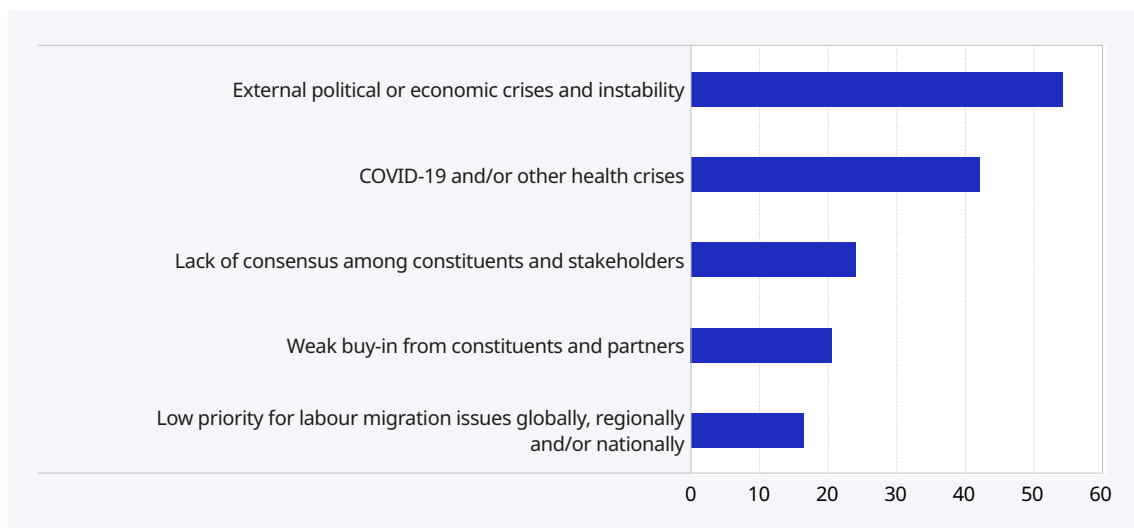
interventions by public NGOs and the private sector in both countries, aimed at small national entrepreneurs and even migrants (in Peru, even promoted and financed by the United States Agency for International Development itself). Therefore, there is a possible risk of the ILO's project failing to achieve sufficient added value or impact.²³⁷

A key output of the ILO is its general and guiding principles (such as those on refugees and fair recruitment), as well as recommendations on how to improve labour migration and ensure decent work and fair recruitment for migrant workers. While this work is very important, the ILO's Recommendations and principles tend to be non-binding, and therefore have less weight than its Conventions.²³⁸ The impact of the adoption of these instruments is completely dependent on the willingness of governments and social partners. This is a particular problem in regions with few or non-existent social partners (such as in the GCC countries).²³⁹ There is no mechanism for holding national governments accountable for not respecting them. Moreover, much of the responsibility for implementing these guiding principles lies with national governments. If they are unwilling to commit to improving conditions for migrant workers, the ILO has little power to influence them.

External factors

The Synthesis Report noted that, while ILO interventions had some policy impact, significant changes were limited, due to external factors, such as a lack of political will to enable safe migration and the prevention of human trafficking, and contradictory policies and laws. For example, several interventions focusing on migration from Ethiopia were affected by the ban on migration and expulsion of workers from Saudi Arabia.²⁴⁰

► **Figure 23. In your view, which of the following factors were the most important for the ILO to effectively promote fair and effective labour migration (percentage, n=111)?**



Only 16 per cent of respondents considered that the low priority of labour migration issues was a barrier, while 61 per cent of respondents indicated the high priority of labour migration as a key enabler of impact. Almost half of the respondents (49 per cent) regarded strong buy-in by constituents as an enabler of impact.

237 Independent final evaluation of "Support the reintegration of returnees in Ethiopia" project.

238 Interview with ILO staff.

239 Interviews with ILO staff.

240 Bonne-Moreau.

The priorities and attitudes of constituents can hinder or enable impact (see Section 3.1 on Relevance). Without sufficient attention and priority being given to the issue of migrant workers, the implementation of new legislation and policies can stagnate. Political will and country readiness were mentioned in various interviews as key factors that can facilitate or hinder the work of the ILO and its impact. One ILO staff member indicated that work with governments is a “balancing act” in which caution and relationship are required to move forward slowly and carefully.²⁴¹

As mentioned in the section on relevance, the ILO occasionally works with the media and journalists to combat negative stereotypes against migrant workers. Sometimes, journalists may be subject to directives from their superiors, or to the editorial line of the media outlet for which they work, that is not always in line with the training they receive from the Project. Therefore, numerous other factors determine the extent to which journalists can act on the training they receive, and the media itself can also represent an external factor countering the positive messages the ILO aims to spread.

The work of the ILO at policy level, which focuses on the tripartite approach, has been shown to be relatively slow in achieving its expected impact. For example, ten years after signing the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189), the 10 Gulf States that voted for it have still not ratified it.²⁴²

External factors can also have a positive impact on the work of the ILO. During the first phase of the Ship to Shore project, ILO expertise and technical assistance were combined with external political pressure from the EU, which threatened trade sanctions against Thailand if labour standards in the fishing sector were not brought in line with the international Convention. According to interviewees, this external pressure motivated the Thai Government to ratify the Convention and transpose its norms into national legislation.

3.5.2. Sustainability

The sustainability of the ILO’s work means that the positive impact made towards fair and effective labour migration is likely to be sustained, even after the particular project or intervention by the ILO has been completed. Sustainability can be achieved through the lasting influence of the newly adopted legal and policy frameworks, as well as the capacity, ownership and willingness of key partners to continue the work. Sustainability has been measured through interviews, the survey and desk research.

This evaluation has found evidence of factors indicating the likely sustainability of its achievements and impact, predominantly through legal and policy changes (systemic change) and through the enhanced capacity of constituents to work on topics concerning labour migration. The introduction of legislation and policy lays a foundation on which constituents can continue building, and the involvement of constituents through social dialogue can provide opportunities for the future continuation of discussions on labour migration. However, the capacity of constituents to continue the positive results created by the ILO differs strongly according to the labour migration topics concerned. In addition, political will and changes in leadership are some of the main challenges to sustainability, as are short time frames for project implementation.

The ILO’s approach to ensuring sustainability

The aspect of sustainability is of importance to the ILO, as demonstrated in the design of projects and the ILO’s approach to policy change and social dialogue. In interviews, ILO staff indicated various elements that contribute to the sustainability of the ILO’s impact, including its political involvement. While it may take longer to achieve political change (compared with on-the-ground activities that address beneficiaries directly), changes in policy and legislation through the involvement of social partners is likely to have a

²⁴¹ Interviews with ILO staff.

²⁴² Interview with ILO staff.

lasting effect. One ILO interviewee explained that “we walk far, because we walk together”.²⁴³ Therefore, social dialogue and the capacity of the tripartite partners to engage in dialogue is considered one of the main factors contributing to sustainability. Establishing effective social dialogue, for example regarding the design of policy and legislative changes, ensures that constituents can continue to discuss and negotiate labour migration policies after the ILO’s interventions.

Ownership of results was enhanced by promoting a common understanding of the programme logic among both the ILO and its partners, and by ensuring that programmes aligned with stakeholder priorities. This was achieved through workshops (including “theory of change” workshops), meetings, bilateral/trilateral dialogues, and the development of complementary work plans. For example, the Programme Advisory Committee meetings at national and regional levels in ASEAN ensured ownership over the TRIANGLE programme, encouraging social and policy dialogue and the development of shared solutions. The FAIRWAY project succeeded in creating ownership over the study findings through dialogues that included multiple stakeholders at regional and national levels.²⁴⁴

Co-funding and buy-in by stakeholders were also perceived as ensuring the sustainability of outputs, and several governments announced they would financially support NGOs working with migrants as a result of ILO awareness-raising and advocacy.²⁴⁵ The TRIANGLE project is an example in which the project initiated the establishment of Migrant Resource Centres, but the Thai Government co-funded them.²⁴⁶ The REFRAME project relies on the commitment and buy-in of its implementation partners, as well as constituents to sustain the project’s results. During its evaluation, the partners who were consulted mentioned that they would continue working on issues relating to fair migration beyond the project’s lifespan.²⁴⁷

The sustainability of the ILO’s work was also ensured through capacity-building of governments and trade unions.²⁴⁸ ILO staff similarly indicated that capacity-building activities are a crucial element of all labour migration projects, to ensure that longer-term impact is achieved.²⁴⁹ Focusing on building the capacity of key institutions and processes in countries of origin and destination facilitated the sustainability of results, with some activities directly managed by, and embedded in, government structures and private sector institutions. High levels of participation in seminars, workshops and other meetings also demonstrated both increased capacity as well as ownership by stakeholders with regard to ILO-supported outputs, as did engagement through project steering committees or technical working groups.²⁵⁰

In Colombia, the main sustainability strategy for the project ‘Improved Migration Governance in Colombia to promote jobs and decent work’ was capacity building. Some of the project’s activities had a clear exit strategy to ensure the sustainability of the outcomes. Other activities focused on capacity building and contributing to ongoing processes linked to government activities or employability. In this case, the results of such activities are visible and their benefits remain even after the activities themselves have been concluded.

The survey found that the majority of respondents believed that the ILO increased constituents’ capacity to continue working on labour migration, with 55 per cent of respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing (a score of 5 or 6) in this regard.

243 Interviews with ILO staff.

244 Bonne-Moreau.

245 Bonne-Moreau.

246 Thailand case study.

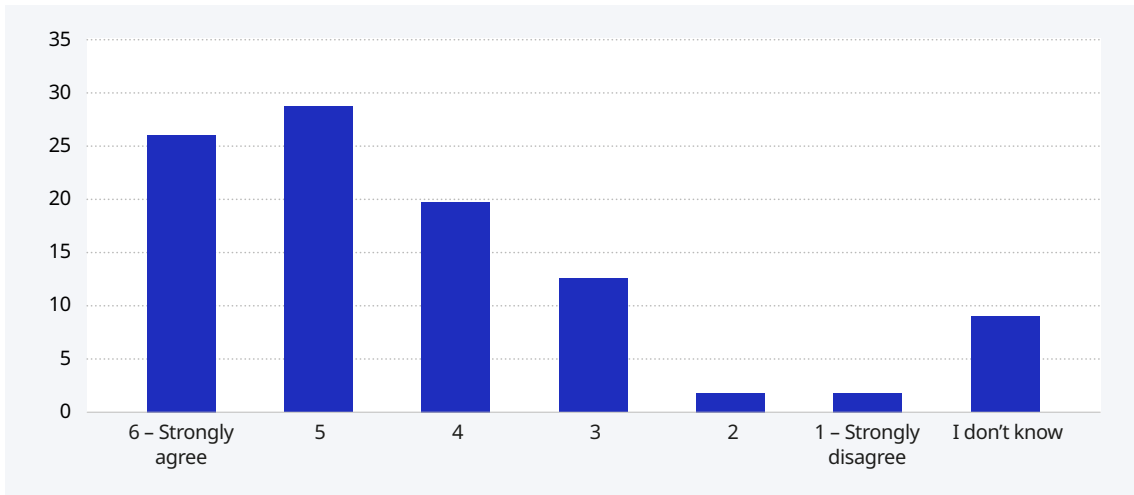
247 REFRAME Project Evaluation, 2021.

248 Fair Labour Migration – Synthesis Review, p. 25: The training of senior officials contributed to consolidating the political will of the government to focus more on labour migration.

249 Interviews with ILO staff.

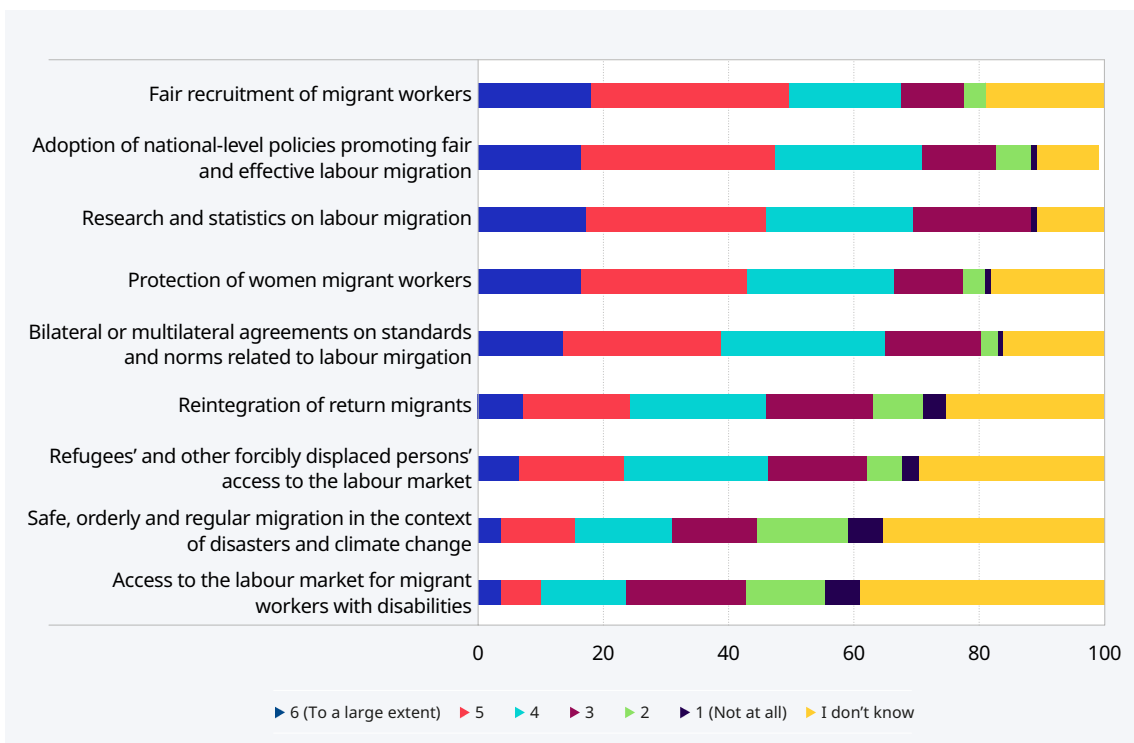
250 Bonne-Moreau.

► **Figure 24. To what extent do you agree or disagree that the ILO has increased constituents' capacity to sustain their work on labour migration (percentage, n=111, scale from 1 to 6)?**



The survey found various areas in which the ILO has created sufficient capacity among stakeholders and constituents to continue their work without ILO support. However, the capacity to sustain work differs significantly between different areas of labour migration. Respondents see the greatest increase in the capacity to sustain work in the fields of fair recruitment (50 per cent assigned a score of 5 or 6) and national policy development (47 per cent). A lower increase in capacity was found in relation to work on climate change migration (15 per cent) and migrant workers with disabilities (10 per cent). Responses were also characterized by uncertainty; in some cases, more than 25 per cent of respondents did not know if constituents had improved this capacity.

► **Figure 25. To what extent has the ILO increased the capacity of constituents to continue work on the following topics without additional ILO involvement (percentage, n=111, scale from 1 to 6)?**



In many projects, sustainability was promoted by relying on existing structures and institutions, and by collaborating with well-established implementation partners in countries of origin and destination. Interventions focused on strengthening the enabling environment by supporting the development of legal and policy frameworks, improving coordination on migration issues, and providing advocacy, awareness-raising and capacity-building; this in turn promoted the sustainability of results.²⁵¹ In many cases, follow-up projects and complementary initiatives were carried out by the ILO and its partners, as well as other non-partner organizations, to promote fair labour migration and refugee-focused initiatives, which reflected a sustained willingness to promote and build on the results achieved.²⁵²

The Synthesis Review notes that there were more positive results in countries where interventions responded to constituent needs and priorities.²⁵³ Follow-up projects and complementary initiatives by the ILO and its partners show that the interventions sustained the willingness and resources to ensure continuity in the changing context of the country. Longer-term initiatives are an important enabler of sustainability. The TRIANGLE project has sustainability built into its design, due to the longevity of the intervention (2011–27) and its ability to ensure a concerted effort over a long period of time to support social change.²⁵⁴

Challenges to sustainability

The Synthesis Review also lists the challenges to the sustainability of certain interventions. For example, lack of financial resources (especially continued funding), as well as a lack of institutionalization of outputs and outcomes in the design of interventions, and decreased possibilities for ownership.²⁵⁵

Interviewees from the ILO indicated additional challenges to sustainability, including the fragile and often changing political context. The priority of today's government may not be the priority of the government tomorrow. Likewise, leadership and management may change. Subsequently, awareness-raising and capacity-building work may need to start again from scratch.²⁵⁶ Similarly, the Synthesis Report noted political instability as a factor that negatively affects prospects for sustainability.²⁵⁷

For example, there is an ongoing effort to restructure the Filipino government agencies that are involved in labour migration, and to create a single large Department for Overseas Filipino Workers, encompassing decision-making structures and personnel. All this will have an impact on the Fair Recruitment project and the gains it has made so far. Even before this, the ILO already had to deal with changes in the personnel with which they worked. Earlier changes of leadership in the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration meant that the ILO had to start again from scratch to train staff on the concept of fair recruitment. It was noted that the involvement of a wide range of stakeholders can ensure that knowledge and capacity are sustained during such transitions.²⁵⁸

Furthermore, in many countries, the ILO is not represented on the ground, which prevents it from providing continuous support not just during a project, but also with follow-up technical assistance to support the implementation of new laws and policies. One ILO interviewee noted that “when the ILO does not have an active programme, there is no scope on the ground for follow-up, to provide training on laws and regulations for tripartite partners. The new policy is merely a piece of paper. If there is a technical cooperation project, ILO can be more present and build more capacity.”²⁵⁹ Similarly, another interviewee noted the success of the adoption of fair recruitment guidelines at a global level, but had concerns over actual implementation on

251 Bonne-Moreau.

252 Bonne-Moreau.

253 Fair Labour Migration – Synthesis Review, p. 24. Global action programme on migrant domestic workers and their families – Final evaluation and TRIANGLE in ASEAN: Safe and Fair Labour Migration – Midterm Cluster Evaluation.

254 Thailand case study.

255 Bonne-Moreau.

256 Interviews with ILO staff.

257 Bonne-Moreau.

258 Fair recruitment case study – Philippines–Hong Kong (China) corridor.

259 Interview with ILO staff.

the ground.²⁶⁰ Many ILO staff pointed out that this is a key geographical level on which the IOM dominates the playing field.

For example, in the Guatemala–Mexico corridor, a solid basis for sustainability is created in policy and legislation, but interviewees from different constituents indicated that challenges could arise in the actual implementation of these laws and policies. The people interviewed from both countries agree on the need to strengthen governments in the work of registration, supervision and inspection of placement and recruitment agencies. Similarly, there is a need to apply the government-level policies on the local level with interventions in specific territories. Funding needs to be available for projects translating the policies into concrete action.²⁶¹

Lack of support for implementation is connected to the short time frames of some of the ILO's projects. While a project may have a sufficient duration (and budget) to provide technical support to the development of legislation and training of constituents, projects are sometimes too short to provide resources to assist implementation.²⁶²

The weakness of labour market systems provides another challenge to sustainability. An ILO interviewee explained that, in many countries of origin, emigrating labour migrants are competing for job positions abroad. This emigration is a priority for the country of origin, due to remittances and the lack of employment opportunities at home. This causes a “race to the bottom” in terms of employee salaries and other working conditions, with less attention being paid to workers' rights in the countries of destination. In other words, countries of origin are less motivated to fight for their nationals' rights, as this may lead to lower levels of recruitment. To address this, countries of origin must also focus on creating decent work opportunities at home.²⁶³

The Synthesis Report also found several cases in which interventions lacked specific sustainability and exit strategies.²⁶⁴ The implementation and achievement of change through legal and policy reforms, and subsequent changes in social norms and behaviours, will not come without resistance. Sustainable impact requires resources and effort to mitigate resistance and promote change and implementation. Therefore, a lack of planning and resource availability is a huge barrier to sustainability. During the evaluation of REFRAME, many of the partners consulted in the corridors of implementation pointed out that a continuation of their engagement with REFRAME would be needed in order to support them in the implementation and monitoring of these policies and mechanisms.²⁶⁵

A final challenge, or consideration, with regard to sustainability is the dynamic nature of labour migration, which can alter the patterns and paths of migration in specific regions. Interviewees from the Guatemala–Mexico corridor pointed out that, in recent years, there have been changes to the dynamics of the movements of migratory flow. For example, Mexico is itself becoming a destination zone and is no longer only a country of origin or transit. Also, Guatemalan workers who migrate to Mexico no longer only come temporarily and around the border region, but also seek to stay longer and not only at the border. In addition, the importance of internal migration is growing. The corridor approach may also need to be expanded to countries facing challenges similar to Guatemala's, and with dynamic migratory flows, such as Honduras and El Salvador.²⁶⁶

The effects of COVID-19 on the sustainability of the ILO's work are yet to be determined. While it may have undone some of the ILO's achievements (particularly in relation to public attitudes to migrants) and highlighted additional challenges, achievements relating to policy and legislative structures should not be affected by the pandemic.

260 Interviews with ILO staff.

261 Mexico–Guatemala case study.

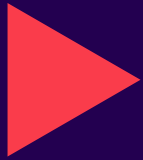
262 Interviews with ILO staff and desk review of project timelines.

263 Interview with ILO staff.

264 Bonne-Moreau.

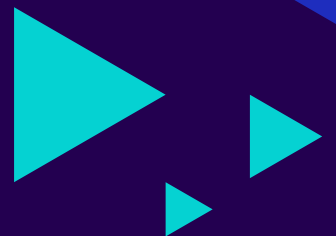
265 REFRAME Project Evaluation 2021.

266 Mexico–Guatemala corridor.



4

Conclusions



► 4. Conclusions

4.1. Overall conclusions

During the period under review, the ILO made significant progress in its overall work on fair labour migration, including fair recruitment. It has done so in the context of a difficult global policy environment, but its achievements are impressive. It has been able to improve its position vis-à-vis other international actors and agencies as an organization with a unique mandate and expertise in the labour market dimensions of migration governance. Importantly, it has been able to develop synergies between its global policy and advocacy work, and its operational work in different countries and regions, thereby enabling it to leverage significant donor support for its technical assistance projects. As a leading agency on the labour market dimensions of migration governance and the protection of migrant workers, the ILO is now firmly on the map.

However, this evaluation has also found multiple barriers to the work of the ILO. These relate to both internal and external challenges. The changing political context is a crucial factor that affects the work of the ILO in terms of its relevance, effectiveness, coherence, efficiency, impact and sustainability. The work of the ILO, predominantly on the political level, was therefore found to be both of great value as well as great vulnerability to political turmoil.

Global advocacy and dissemination of principles

The development and dissemination of general principles and guidelines for action on such issues as fair recruitment or access by refugees and other displaced persons to the labour market, has been of fundamental importance both for building consensus among ILO constituents themselves, and for determining the parameters for follow-up action at regional and country levels. Careful preparatory work, including tripartite technical meetings, has enabled the ILO to address more effectively some difficult challenges in global labour markets.

Ample examples have been found regarding the use of global-level principles by other international actors and in other global-level documentation. At a national level, interest in principles and guidelines exists, but implementation and use still lag behind in comparison to use at the global level. The non-binding nature of guidelines, principles and recommendations is a key barrier in this regard.

In addition, despite advocacy on the ratification of key Conventions, there are still many countries that have not ratified them and transposed them to national law (for example, as of late April 2021, there had been 53 ratifications of Convention No. 97, and 28 ratifications of Convention No. 143). The relevance of ratification is doubted by some constituents, meaning that there is either no longer any need for the Conventions, or there is a lack of understanding among constituents as to their importance. However, recent ratifications in Africa indicate that Conventions are still relevant for many countries.

ILO standards, law and policy reform, and guidance documents

A key objective of ILO action has been to assist Member States in law and policy reform, enabling them to implement rights-based approaches to labour migration, in accordance with ILO standards and values, with the full involvement of tripartite constituents. Major projects at regional, interregional and country levels have included this among their principal objectives, and ample examples are found worldwide over the period 2016–20 of legal and policy reform in the field of labour migration.

In assessing ILO activities, it is important to distinguish between its supervisory work on the one hand, and its promotional and technical cooperation work on the other. Understandably, the Office does not itself appear to have promoted a major campaign on Conventions. Such a campaign could be a difficult

exercise, given that Convention No.97 was adopted more than 70 years ago, in 1949, and its relevance today has been questioned in some quarters. However, other Conventions and Protocols, some of them more recent, are of great relevance to the protection of migrant workers. These include those on fundamental principles and rights at work, particularly forced labour; domestic workers; work in fishing; and private employment agencies. The ILO aims to promote ratification, therefore, more as an international labour standards “package” rather than promoting the ratification of individual Conventions. Use has been made of ILO supervisory procedures (both regular supervision and through its complaints machinery) to seek the improved protection of migrant workers.

New approaches: The corridor approach

A key feature of the period has been the development of well-funded and multicountry technical cooperation projects, sometimes at the multiregional level, promoting the “corridor” approach to labour migration and its governance. Of great relevance are the capacity-building activities that link countries of origin and destination, and which address the different stages of migration. This approach is linked mostly to work on fair recruitment, and includes the involvement of other international agencies, corresponding to the recommendation in the 2017 Conference report that the fair recruitment initiative could be “deepened and strengthened through a wider range of partners and interventions”.

The corridor projects themselves have taken different approaches. Some have had a broad range of origin and destination countries from the outset, combining global, regional and national elements (for example, REFRAME). Others have begun with a smaller range of countries sharing similar characteristics, and then expanded to a wider range of origin and destination countries (for example, FAIRWAY).

Overall, the corridor approach has proved highly valuable to the effectiveness of the ILO’s work towards fair and effective labour migration, due to its strength in bringing together constituents from countries of origin and destination. The positive results found by this evaluation lead to the conclusion that the corridor approach should continue as a framework for future projects and interventions, and elements of the corridor approach should be replicated in other interventions – for example, with regional economic communities.

New issues and target groups

A further key feature of the ILO’s more recent work on fair migration – coinciding strongly with the 2016–20 period under review – has been its increased involvement with the labour market needs of refugees and other forcibly displaced persons. While this has been an issue of some sensitivity and debate, a consensus has been achieved that the ILO has a particular role to play in addressing the labour market dimensions of the refugee crisis, complementing the humanitarian work of a UN agency such as the UNHCR. The ILO could also expand its response to situations where refugees remain outside their home countries for ever-longer periods as a result of various crisis situations, and there is a need to seek ways to provide access to jobs and skills development among refugees and displaced persons in the countries in which they are presently located.

Global advocacy work prepared the ground for the steady growth of ILO involvement on this subject, most notably in the wake of the Syrian refugee crisis, but also in the Horn of Africa and North Africa, and most recently in response to the crisis in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. ILO interventions have involved a combination of strengthening policy and regulatory frameworks to enable access to formal labour markets and decent work for refugees, interventions designed to create jobs and facilitate formalization, and strengthening the employability and social cohesion of refugees and host communities (for example, through skills development and recognition). The ILO appears to have moved steadily forward in realizing the vision espoused in its principles and guidelines on the subject of cooperating with other partners in accordance with their areas of expertise, and taking specific responsibility for employment and labour market concerns that correspond to its own specific mandate.

COVID-19 mitigation measures, such as lockdowns and border closures, have had a deep effect on labour migration. The pandemic caused labour migrants either to return to their home countries (in vast numbers), or they became stuck, jobless, in their country of work. As a result, topic-wise, the work of the ILO increased in importance (regarding the protection of migrants and their access to social protection), or transformed to include returnee migrants on a wider scale. Stakeholders confirmed that the work of the ILO during COVID-19 was of great importance and value. In fact, the ILO's work on mitigating the effects of the pandemic was perceived as one of the most effective fields of work by the ILO during the evaluation period. However, various stakeholders believe that greater effort is needed from the ILO, as there are still many gaps and challenges regarding the protection of migrant workers in the context of COVID-19.

The work of the ILO during COVID-19 is likely to remain of great importance in the near future. Social protection for migrant workers in both countries of destination and origin has increased in importance, as has the need to strengthen and stabilize labour markets to absorb returnee migrants. In addition, increased distrust of migrant workers in countries of destination, combined with economic decline due to lockdowns, requires the raising of awareness on the value of migrant workers in countries of destination. Therefore, the consequences of the pandemic require continued effort from the ILO towards work with countries at both ends of the labour migration process.

Finally, the work of the ILO on labour migration is increasingly influenced by environmental concerns, green jobs and climate change-induced migration. Partnerships are sought within the ILO (with Green Jobs) and with other UN environmental agencies. In the current global climate, this trend is likely to grow, since sustainable employment will increase in importance, and the impacts of climate change on migration will become increasingly visible.

4.2. Evaluation according to OECD/DAC criteria

Relevance

ILO activities over the period have generally displayed a high degree of relevance, addressing concerns that fall within the organization's mandate, responding to identified needs and new challenges in labour migration. The relevance of the ILO's work was found to be linked to a wide range of factors, including the large scale of global labour migration that requires governance; the involvement of constituents in the design of interventions (and consideration of their priorities); and the alignment of interventions with the Governing Body and International Labour Conference conclusions that reflect the main current challenges and priorities in labour migration.

One major challenge that was identified in some countries was the engagement of the ILO with ministries of labour, when labour migration is often part of the remit of ministries of the interior and exterior. In countries where migration does not fall under the scope of the ministry of labour, the ILO does not have as strong a position to protect migrants as in countries where migration is managed by the ministry of labour.

Coherence

When evaluating coherence, distinctions need to be drawn between external coherence with other pertinent international actors, and internal coherence within the Office and its various departments or programmes.

The analysis of external coherence, or coherence with other international actors, clearly shows that the ILO works and collaborates via multiple established channels (most notably, the UN Network on Migration) with a range of international organizations, both within and outside the UN system, including the IOM, the UNHCR, UNICEF, the OECD, the International Finance Corporation and the World Bank, as well as with regional organizations such as ASEAN and ECOWAS. In some cases, such as the IOM and UNHCR, this cooperation has been formalized through memoranda of understanding (MoUs). Cooperation with the UNHCR, for example, demonstrates how a MoU can be followed up with a detailed operational plan specifying areas and also geographical regions of cooperation. Moreover, by cooperating with other actors that possess relevant and complementary expertise, the ILO both shares its own experience in accordance

with its particular mandate, and learns from the experience of others. For example, its cooperation with the World Bank on the issue of remittances appears to have been highly beneficial to both organizations.

Achieving full external coherence will always pose challenges, notably in areas such as fair migration and recruitment, an area of growing interest for donors and the international community, and in which a number of international organizations have expertise and experience. One such challenge, for example, has been to achieve coherence with the IOM, which has a presence in almost every country of the world, is highly operational, and has recently expanded its work on the labour dimensions of migration and recruitment. Regular meetings now take place between the two organizations at a senior level, to ensure that activities on labour migration are consistent with ILO standards and values. Furthermore, there has been increased cooperation at an operational level in technical assistance projects. However, interviewees indicate that additional work on creating coherence and aligning work programmes is a key necessity.

Environmental sustainability was a much lesser concern in the context of labour migration, as the reasons for migrating were largely economic. Some stakeholders argued that green jobs and sustainable work practices should be the ILO's key priority in upcoming years. This is especially relevant in the context of COVID-19, when many of the jobs dominated by migrants (such as in the tourism sector) have been destroyed, presenting an opportunity to reset and promote the development of green skills that would make both migrant and non-migrant workers more competitive in labour markets following the pandemic. Nevertheless, more research would be welcome on the extent to which people migrate due to changing climate conditions (for example, the inability to grow sufficient crops). The first steps in this regard have been made in recent years (such as in IGAD, and with a new research project in Asia).

Addressing the rights of persons with disabilities was identified as important by interviewees, but was barely addressed in the ILO's project design or country strategies. Migrants can become disabled for various reasons – for example, as a result of accidents in the workplace or poor and stressful work conditions that affect their mental health. These concerns are currently lacking specific attention in the ILO's work on labour migration, especially when their work is performed informally.

Effectiveness

In evaluating effectiveness, this HLE analysed the extent to which the ILO delivered its planned outputs and outcomes or results, as well as the extent to which constituents found these useful and gained capacity to tackle issues relating to labour migration, in line with the relevant ILO standards.

The ILO has, for the most part, delivered its outputs in relation to labour migration in a good quality and timely fashion, despite the challenges posed after 2020 by COVID-19. In fact, the analysis of the P&Bs found that, in some cases, targets were exceeded. In the context of the pandemic, the ILO modified its approach to achieving some outputs, and found new and innovative ways to tackle challenges. Some examples (for example, from the Philippines) have been provided in the main body of this report.

The ILO's outputs in the field were considered useful by their intended recipients. This was confirmed in almost all of the evaluation interviews, and in the survey of ILO stakeholders. All products and services on labour migration were scored at the higher end of the scale, at 70 per cent or more, in terms of their usefulness. The highest scores were achieved for technical assistance to Member States in developing better policies and legal frameworks, followed by statistics on labour migration. Next came technical assistance to employers' and workers' organizations, the facilitation of bilateral and multilateral agreements on labour migration, and direct services to migrant workers. However, other outputs that were still considered useful received lower scores, such as: campaigns to ratify relevant Conventions; regional and cross-country reports; communications and media engagement outputs; country reports; services supporting enterprises and job creation; and workshops and conferences.

The HLE also found that the delivery of outputs led in turn to the achievement of broader outcomes and results. One key aspect that underpins the strength of so much ILO work in the area of labour migration, as elsewhere, has been social dialogue. ILO capacity-building activities have increased the knowledge and ability of local and regional actors to address labour migration by reference to international labour

standards. The ILO has also strengthened the capacity of ministries of labour to take a more active role in overall policy and implementation, in countries where labour migration had previously been addressed largely as a security and border control issue, with the leading role taken by other ministries and agencies of government. Several good examples of this come from Latin America, in the context of the REFRAME project and the Regional Conference on Migration.

In some countries, an important outcome of the ILO's work has been an increased awareness among constituents of the value of labour migrants and their contribution to the national economy. Indeed, some ILO contributions during the evaluation period can be considered groundbreaking and unprecedented in their context. Such examples include the establishment of the first unions of foreign workers in Kuwait and Malaysia, which ensure migrant workers' rights to freedom of association and direct participation in collective bargaining.

Over the five-year period of this evaluation, various ILO activities, at both global and field level, have generated a great deal of knowledge. This includes guidance documents and manuals, global and conference reports, a general survey on labour migration instruments, working papers, country-specific reports, and much more. A quick review of the MIGRANT section of the ILO's website easily shows its wide range of publications on different topics concerning or related to labour migration. As emphasized by this HLE, major progress has been made concerning statistics on labour migration, conducting global estimates, incorporating modules on labour migration into overall labour force statistics, and providing capacity-building to Member States to carry out their own statistical work on labour migration.

At the same time, some gaps were identified during the HLE. First, it was not possible to identify any overall "vision statement" indicating the full gamut of the ILO's achievements over the period under review, or setting out how the various components of ILO activity complement and support each other. Second, while major projects generally have their own websites, these rarely provide a comprehensive account of achievements and outcomes over a fixed period. It can be difficult for an external analyst or evaluator to identify the major and most significant results.

Furthermore, while the added value and unique strengths of the ILO are well known, challenges regarding its visibility lead to the ILO's voice often "getting lost in the crowd", and to a lack of attribution of impact and progress directly to ILO. Earlier evaluations, such as the 2013 Independent Thematic Evaluation, already highlighted the need for the ILO to achieve greater visibility. One, for example, recommended a regular flagship report on labour migration.

Efficiency

The availability of financial resources for the ILO's work on labour migration has grown during the evaluation period, in large part due to increasing extrabudgetary funding, allowing the ILO to expand its labour migration work to more countries. Relevant constituents and other stakeholders perceived the ILO's work as being timely, easily available and accessible. The targets set out in P&Bs were largely met or exceeded.

These results were, at least in part, enabled by efficient internal coordination. Several examples of this are available. Very close cooperation and joint projects have been carried out between MIGRANT and FUNDAMENTALS, in line with the fact that the ILO's approach to the protection of migrant workers seeks to eliminate abusive recruitment and employment practices, which can amount to forced labour and human trafficking. The Fair Recruitment Initiative itself was a joint activity of FUNDAMENTALS and MIGRANT, and major field projects have since been jointly designed and implemented. There have been important and growing synergies regarding work on skills. A further example is the inclusion of a migrant worker dimension into the ILO's overall labour force statistics.

However, an increase in funding without an expansion of the numbers of core staff with a high degree of technical expertise has placed unsustainably high pressures on existing staff. This inevitably leads to the risk of "burnout", and reduces the capacity of the organization to maintain the same quality of work in the longer term. To alleviate these pressures, the ILO has relied on temporary staff, working on a project-by-project basis. Nevertheless, this has reduced the level of technical expertise at regional and local levels.

Donors place limits on the share of funds that can be used to hire staff, in order to ensure that the majority of funds reach the beneficiaries. The ILO staff interviewed were convinced that, in some cases, these caps reduce rather than enhance project outcomes. This is because project managers, who are unable to hire staff, rely on consultants who take time to become familiar with the country or project context, or are simply unable to deliver some of the project's activities to the required level of quality. However, some donor organizations indicated their openness to flexibility in terms of budget allocations.

Another source of inefficiency concerns the ILO's monitoring systems. Several reports noted that it was impossible to assess impact due to a lack of data, missing baselines, and weak or absent monitoring frameworks. The adequacy of M&E frameworks varied, from completely adequate in certain countries, including the use of SMART indicators, to inadequate in others, where essential information on project activities could not be traced back. The evaluation of impact appeared particularly challenging, due to lack of organizational know-how on how to assess the ILO's impact.

(Likelihood of) impact

Overall, it appears that the most widespread impact of the ILO's work on labour migration has been the development of policies on reforming national laws and policies in accordance with ILO standards, and concluding bilateral agreements on labour migration between countries of origin and destination. A key challenge remains the effective implementation of these policies. Various barriers, such as negative attitudes within society at large, lack of political will and resources, and changing political leadership, were among the factors that impeded the effective implementation of such new laws and policies. The implication of these challenges is that a new generation of ILO projects on labour migration should pay due attention to implementation, including monitoring and supervision.

Despite these significant achievements, the ILO sometimes had to operate in unfavourable contexts, and face constraints that limited or even potentially undermined the gains being made. In certain cases, tripartite national steering committees were established, but not in a way that was conducive to social dialogue. In other cases, a lack of political will, and relatively weak capacity among the social partners, made it difficult to generate sufficient momentum for policy reform. In some cases, the relevant ILO standards for the protection of migrant workers had been ratified, but were poorly enforced. It proved difficult to secure the resources required for effective supervisory measures.

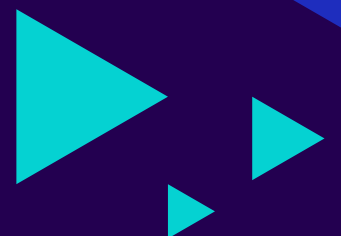
Sustainability

The adoption of law and policy frameworks, together with the strengthened capacity of constituents and their ownership of achievements, are the most important factors contributing to sustainability. With its strong focus on both capacity-building and institutional mechanisms for social dialogue, the ILO has been actively building sustainability into all of its project designs. However, the often unfavourable political context, and the lack of resources for implementing new laws and policy measures, constitute the main potential barriers to sustainability. These factors can undermine the ILO's efforts to ensure the sustainability of its results and impacts. One lesson is that, on a complex and sensitive topic where consensus can be difficult to build, fully sustainable impact cannot be expected within a short period of time. Long-term projects such as TRIANGLE, with its eventual 16-year duration, can be considered to have particularly good prospects for sustainable results, being implemented for a long enough period to underpin and support wider social change.



5

Lessons learned

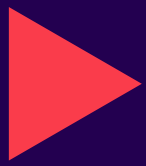


► 5. Lessons learned

The evaluation period of 2016–20 witnessed an increase in projects and funding, demonstrating that the topic of labour migration is an important priority for donors, and that the ILO has established itself as a key implementing partner. The short period during which the ILO's portfolio of projects and interventions has grown shows that this current growth and expansion might not be sustainable in the context of the currently available human resources. **An important lesson derived from the evaluation is that the ILO should carefully monitor its staff availability and workload, to determine whether implementing another project is feasible.** If the ILO cannot give its full support to project implementation, the effectiveness of the Organization (and potentially also donor support) will decrease.

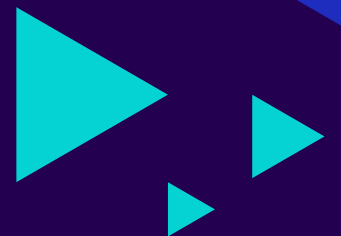
The evaluation demonstrated that, despite its growing project portfolio, the visibility of the ILO as key player in the area of labour migration is not always guaranteed. Particularly with regard to joint projects involving other actors, the achievements and role of the ILO are not always clearly recognized and promoted. **An important lesson is, therefore, that in multipartner projects or networks, the ILO's usual approaches to visibility are insufficient to stand out from the crowd.** It is important for the ILO to consider what other approaches to visibility and dissemination can be taken to address this.

From interviews with national-level constituents, the evaluation found that the implementation of regulatory frameworks is not a guarantee that impact will be achieved for the beneficiaries (for example, labour migrants). Various respondents indicated concerns regarding the implementation and monitoring of adopted policies and laws. In this regard, it was also challenging for the evaluation to find concrete examples of changes in the situation of labour migrants. **An important lesson learned for the future is that impact for labour migrants is not automatically achieved with the adoption of laws: constituents need additional support to ensure monitoring by the government (for example, labour inspection), ensure compliance by employers and recruiters, and disseminate information for public awareness.** These aspects need to be considered in the design and budgeting of an intervention.



6

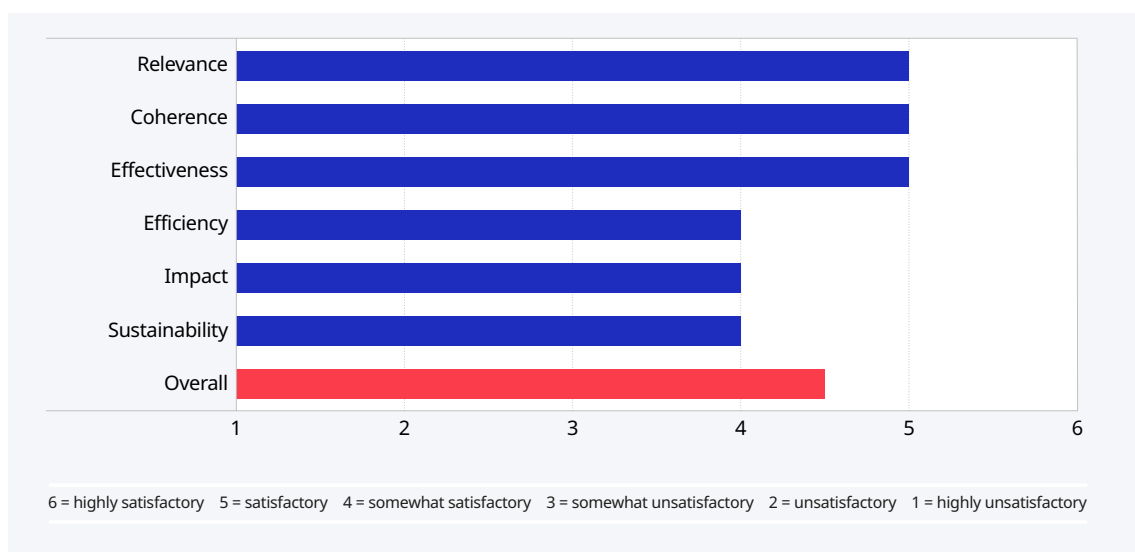
Overall assessment



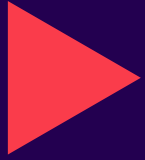
► 6. Overall assessment

The scores attributed to the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the ILO's work on labour migration comprise the survey results, scores from the Synthesis Report, the P&B results (for effectiveness only), and the assessment of the evaluation team. The evaluation used a six-point scale (also used in the survey) to express these scores, with 1 being the lowest score, indicating highly unsatisfactory, and 6 being the highest, indicating highly satisfactory.

► **Figure 26. Overall assessment of the ILO's work on fair and effective labour migration**²⁶⁷

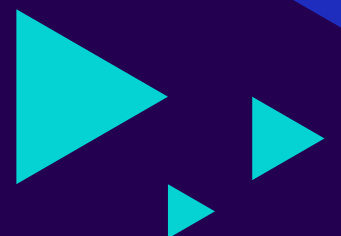


²⁶⁷ The weighting was as follows: ILO staff survey responses: 1; Constituents and donors survey responses: 1; Synthesis Report scores: 2; P&B results (effectiveness): 1; evaluation team scores informed by desk research and interviews: 4.



7

Recommendations



► 7. Recommendations

Recommendation 1. Increase ILO visibility by expanding capacity to communicate and by strengthening its participation in global, regional and country-level groups and networks. The ILO should lead initiatives, demonstrate impact and set the agenda in promoting fair and effective labour migration and in addressing labour mobility issues related to crisis, such as access of refugees and those forcibly displaced to labour markets.

Global advocacy – including through the development of guidance materials and other efforts to share the ILO's strengths and values with international partners – has been of key importance. Ensuring the visibility of the ILO's achievements is also of key importance, particularly in order to demonstrate impact. However, this high-level evaluation has shown that the achievements and roles of the ILO are not always visible, particularly among other international actors.

Increased visibility includes not only the dissemination of the ILO's achievements, but also its visibility as a key labour migration actor in global and country-level discussions, to ensure a solid position alongside other international organisations. This ensures that impact on the ground can be better attributed to the work of ILO. The added value provided by the ILO is already recognised by constituents and other UN agencies; however, in practice, on the ground, the ILO's actual work is not always distinguished or made sufficiently visible. Through its participation in working groups (e.g. the UN Network on Migration), ILO can more assertively define and demarcate its areas of work in relation to other agencies, particularly the IOM. In addition, the ILO could take a stronger role in initiating and leading global initiatives, and subsequently getting other agencies on board the 'ILO-train'.

Actions that can be taken include:

- Enhancing cooperation with national and regional-level media to disseminate the impact of the ILO and its constituents;
- Improving the capacity of ILO staff at headquarters and field level to communicate and disseminate the work and achievements of the ILO through various media and platforms;
- Increasing the ILO's participation in global, and especially country-level networks, development cooperation groups and other forums for discussion, where ILO can set out its agenda for labour migration;
- Initiating and leading international initiatives regarding fair and effective labour migration, and subsequently engaging other actors to follow the lead of ILO; and
- Enhancing the information provided about projects and interventions provided on the ILO's website and its project websites to give a comprehensive account of achievements and outcomes over a fixed period.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
Labour Migration Branch (MIGRANT), Department of Communication and Public Information (DCOMM), regional offices, decent work technical support teams (DWTs)	High	Long-term	Low-medium (dissemination) Medium (on-the-ground presence)

Recommendation 2. The ILO should continue and enhance its work in respect of migration corridors and regional economic communities, through capacity-building and the sharing of best practices with regional economic communities and constituents.

The continuation and strengthening of cooperation with regional economic communities can have a significant impact on various factors affecting labour migration. While in some areas, the effectiveness of this

approach is already clear, other regional economic communities still require strengthening before impact can be achieved.

While in some areas the effectiveness of this approach is already clear (e.g. bilateral agreements between Asian and Arab states, tripartism in the SADC region), other regional economic communities (RECs) still require strengthening before impact can be achieved.

Actions that can be taken include:

- Designing interventions targeted at strengthening the functioning of RECs directly;
- Supporting the establishment and capacity of regional-level workers' and employers' organisations;
- Advocating for the importance of developing regional-level labour migration governance systems, and continued support to the design of such governance; and
- Sharing of best practices, achievements and benefits that have accrued from recently adopted bilateral and multilateral migration agreements, as evidence and advocacy tools to encourage governments to engage in bilateral and multilateral dialogues.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
MIGRANT, Governance and Tripartism Department (GOVERNANCE), regional offices, DWTs, International Training Centre of the ILO	Medium	Long-term	Medium

Recommendation 3. The ILO should ensure that its development cooperation work explicitly identifies a sustainability plan and follow-up, and provides for greater technical support at the country level to encourage the implementation of and compliance with ratified Conventions, relevant policies and laws, and its global guidelines and recommendations.

The ILO created impact through the design and adoption of labour migration policies and legislation. However, a pressing need for the future is to strengthen mechanisms for implementation and supervision. The high workload and insufficient resources on the ground are key barriers in this regard. The ILO's non-binding documents (guidelines and recommendations) require extensive follow-up and advocacy to ensure their implementation.

The evaluation found that the main challenge to wider impact and sustainability is the lack of support available to actually implement and monitor newly adopted policies and laws, to ensure that they create the intended results for migrant workers and refugees. In particular, this was mentioned in relation to the Fair Recruitment project, where global-level principles and guidance exists, but more effort is needed to translate it to the national level. In addition, the ILO produces many non-binding documents that require extensive follow-up and advocacy to ensure their implementation.

Actions that can be taken include:

- Prioritising, designing, planning and advocating among donors for longer-term projects that include specifically allocated resources for follow-up support after a law or policy has been designed;
- Consulting with donors to advocate for more flexibility in budgets for staff costs, to ensure technical follow-up support can be provided for the implementation of laws and policies;
- Ensuring that projects and other interventions include a clear sustainability plan, focusing specifically on steps to be taken to implement laws and policies, as well as stakeholders' roles and responsibilities in this regard;
- Tailoring capacity-building training, social dialogue and ownership efforts not only towards the objectives of the project, but also towards its further implementation and follow-up work;

- Demonstrating more clearly the relevance of labour migration standards to national law and practice (not only the two Migrant Workers Conventions, but also other standards relevant to migrant workers and their protection); and
- Complementing non-binding documents with concrete technical support at a country level to ensure their adoption and compliance.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
MIGRANT, Partnerships and Field Support Department (PARDEV), International Labour Standards Department (NORMES), regional offices, DWTs, Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV), Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP), Strategic Programming and Management Department (PROGRAM)	High	Long-term	High

Recommendation 4. ILO should strengthen its monitoring and evaluation systems on labour migrations on global, regional, and national levels.

The HLE has identified gaps in the ILO's monitoring and evaluation (M&E) approaches in labour migration interventions. Several reports noted that it was impossible to assess impact due to a lack of data, missing baselines and weak, inadequate or absent monitoring frameworks. ILO staff indicated challenges in the measurement of impact, due to the continuous involvement of the ILO in the countries of work. Projects are often succeeded by their next phases or new projects that build on the foundations of the previous ones.

A similar issue was noted with regard to cross-cutting issues addressed through labour migration projects. For example, the ILO's M&E plans often lack indicators, or indicators are unclear, that would allow the gender-responsiveness of the programme/project to be measured. In addition, as environmental concerns in the context of labour migration are increasing in importance, the integration of an environmental dimension into interventions could benefit strongly from standardised indicators to measure its effectiveness.

Gaps in M&E translate to a lack of evidence on the achievements of the ILO and the impact on migrant workers that is attributable to the ILO's work. This results in a lack of recognition and visibility of the ILO's impact and its position vis-à-vis other international actors in labour migration. It would help for the ILO to define some standard core monitoring indicators that could be used across all projects on labour migration. This would help to simplify monitoring and evaluation across projects, and to better track the performance of the organisation's labour migration department as a whole.

Actions that can be taken include:

- Enhancing the capacity of ILO staff to design M&E frameworks and to monitor the effectiveness, and particularly the impact, of ILO interventions (for example, through external training, but also through internal templates and guidelines for M&E);
- Undertaking longitudinal assessments of impact and sustainability for more projects, and doing so one year and three years after the end of projects, based on impact and sustainability indicators agreed during the design stage (also recommended in the HLE on sustainable enterprises); and
- Integrating clear indicators for cross-cutting issues (gender equality, non-discrimination, environmental sustainability, persons with disabilities) into M&E frameworks during project design, to ensure these factors are included in every intervention.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
MIGRANT, PARDEV, PROGRAM, support from EVAL	High	Medium-term	Medium

Recommendation 5. The ILO should continue to strengthen its work on fair recruitment, particularly in order to better translate global outputs to the national level, and enhance synergies between its projects and between ILO initiatives and other organizations' initiatives on fair recruitment.

The ILO's work on Fair Recruitment was considered highly relevant by all constituents, and perceived as one of the most effective areas of the ILO's work of. The evaluation found that the general principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment as well as recruitment fees and related costs, have great potential to respond to the needs of Member states and their respective legal systems, as they are based on a comprehensive study of practices in ILO member States. This is, therefore, one of the areas in which the ILO is visible, provides clear added value, and its work is recognised.

However, interviews confirmed that the uptake of this instrument by the member States and private actors remains low. Constituents noted insufficient regulations and enforcement of Fair Recruitment, linked to issues of informal employment and corruption. One reason indicated for this was the non-binding nature of the Guidelines, but also a lack of awareness of the potential of this instrument to support governments and constituents to reap the benefits of fair recruitment, as well as the multitude of Fair Recruitment interventions implemented by the ILO and other international actors.

Insufficient attention is paid to the translation of the Fair Recruitment principles and guidelines into concrete legal frameworks at national level, which would enable both workers and employers to derive rights and obligations from them. Consequently, the impact of these instruments also remains hard to assess.

Actions that can be taken include:

- Providing guidance to governments on the development of legal and policy frameworks that solidify the Fair Recruitment principles into rights and obligations, and which all actors can rely upon;
- Integrating into interventions additional support for the enforcement of Fair Recruitment frameworks, to ensure that (new) regulations are implemented effectively;
- Creating synergies (e.g. joint objectives, projects, work plans) between different projects and initiatives on Fair Recruitment (also involving other Fair Recruitment actors such as the IOM), to ensure a coherent, unified approach with uniform objectives towards regulatory systems for Fair Recruitment at national level; and
- Enhancing or introducing Fair Recruitment as a thematic area in national-level social dialogues to bring forth the perspectives of both workers and employers in the development of Fair Recruitment policies and legislation.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
MIGRANT with NORMES, and Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch(FUNDAMENTALS)	High	Long-term	Medium

Recommendation 6. The ILO should enhance its efforts to address the challenges caused by COVID-19 on social protection for migrant workers and refugees in the labour market and enhance its engagement with both origin and destination countries in respect of decent work opportunities and skills recognition and protection, both in the short term and in the longer term.

The pandemic came towards the end of the period covered by the HLE, but is likely to be a major factor in future years, with labour migrants exposed to a wide range of difficulties. As observed in this HLE, the pandemic has already increased attention on the topic of returnees and their reintegration into home societies, as well as the social protection of migrant workers. The ILO has already conducted some important work on this issue. However, some stakeholders indicated that the ILO could still do more, and that the issues related to COVID-19 and labour migration are far from resolved.

Aside from the new challenges, the pandemic-induced economic decline (and large-scale job losses), together with distrust of migrants (who may be perceived to have brought the virus), may have undone

some of the progress made by the ILO on awareness-raising and the sensitisation of stakeholders to the benefits of labour migration. To restart labour migration and ensure the protection of migrant workers' rights, renewed and enhanced efforts are needed worldwide to address the challenges caused or exacerbated by COVID-19.

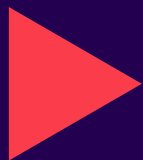
In the short term, actions that can be taken include:

- ▶ Enhancing and continuing efforts to promote social protection for migrant workers, returnee migrants and refugees, and building functional social protection systems at national level in countries of origin and destination;
- ▶ Continue liaising between countries of origin and destination on the return of migrants, payment of outstanding wages, and the overall protection of migrants who became stuck as a result of COVID-19;
- ▶ Supporting countries of origin in the creation of decent work opportunities, skills recognition for returning migrants and the subsequent absorption of returnees into the national labour market system;
- ▶ Engaging with employers in countries of origin with regard to their skills needs and the value of returning migrants as possible employees. This may include the creation of upskilling opportunities for migrant workers to meet the demands of employers in their country of origin; and
- ▶ Enhancing the safety of migration, for example by supporting countries on the vaccination of labour migrations (e.g. in cooperation with the World Health Organization, trade unions and employers), by addressing the overcrowded housing of migrant workers in countries of destination, and by informing employers and migrants on hygiene and sanitation at work.

In the medium term, actions that can be taken include:

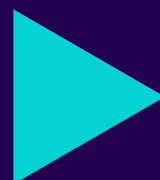
- ▶ Supporting the establishment of regional-level social protection agreements or governance, as well as supporting the adoption of bilateral and multilateral labour migration agreements with a focus on social protection;
- ▶ Enhancing labour market systems and decent work opportunities in countries of origin to reduce the fragility of national systems in the event of mass return, and to reduce reliance on remittances (and subsequently strengthen negotiation positions on the rights of nationals abroad); and
- ▶ Adapting future project proposals and interventions to the priorities of the Global Call to Action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
MIGRANT, Social Protection Department, GOVERNANCE, Deputy Director-General for Policy (DDG/P), Deputy Director-General for Field Operations and Partnerships (DDG/FOP), DWTS	High Medium	Short-term Medium-term	Medium



8

Office response



► 8. Office response

Office response

The Office welcomes the findings of the high-level evaluation, which recognize the significant progress made in its overall work on fair and effective labour migration governance, including fair recruitment, and the unique nature of its mandate and expertise in this area.

Recommendation 1

The Office generally agrees with the recommendation to strengthen the visibility of the ILO's work on labour migration. The Office will continue to step up its communication efforts with its constituents and in collaboration with UN agencies and other stakeholders, while asserting leadership within national and regional migration networks. The Fair Recruitment Initiative will launch a Knowledge Hub, which will further expand the ILO's visibility and outreach.

The Office notes that the ILO is an active member of the Executive Committee of the UN Network on Migration and is active in 26 national and regional subnetworks. The ILO is leading as a co-chair or executive committee member in 15 of these. The ILO's capacity to participate in these groups can be limited by a lack of an ILO in-country field presence.

Recommendation 2

The Office agrees with the recommendation to continue enhancing capacity-building in this area, including through the mobilization of resources. The ILO will continue to strengthen its partnership with the International Training Centre of the ILO in order to deliver targeted training activities.

Recommendation 3

The Office agrees with the recommendation and the finding that, as the workload has increased, staff resources may be insufficient to meet the increasing demand. A sustainability plan can support monitoring and evaluation, though it may not address the staffing deficit. While a substantial increase in development cooperation funds can help to support regular budget staff in some countries, a multiplicity of development cooperation projects can also raise expectations for and place burdens on regular budget staff to provide more technical oversight. Relevant technical units and decent work technical support teams could explore the strategic prioritization of field- and headquarters-level resources to close staffing gaps, and support the implementation of international labour standards and ILO tools and guidance.

Recommendation 4

The Office agrees with the recommendation. As indicated in the ILO's Strategic Plan for 2022–25 and the Programme and Budget for 2022–23, the ILO will continue enhancing its measurement, monitoring and reporting systems to improve results-based management, transparency and accountability.

Recommendation 5

The Office agrees with the recommendation to continue strengthening work in the area of fair recruitment. The Office also recognizes that the ILO's work on fair recruitment has had a significant impact thus far, and has demonstrated concrete results at the national, regional and global levels, including in regulatory

and policy reform. The adoption of the new five-year Fair Recruitment Initiative strategy and accompanying Knowledge Hub will further increase constituents' capacity to implement ILO standards and guidance.

Evidence of how widely governments and the social partners recognize the importance of the ILO's fair recruitment guidelines is their inclusion in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, endorsed by 152 countries and in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly in indicator 10.7.1, for which the ILO is a custodian agency.

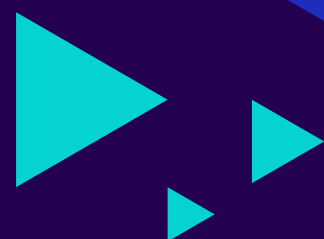
As for the recommendation to enhance synergies with other organizations' initiatives on recruitment, it would be important for an appropriate division of responsibilities with the IOM to be followed on both sides, to ensure that institutional mandates are respected and that joint work contributes to higher impact, rather than to competition or duplication.

Recommendation 6

The Office agrees with the recommendation and will continue to enhance its efforts to address the challenges caused by COVID-19.



Annexes



► Annex 1. Results achieved under P&Bs 2016–17 and 2018–19

► Table A1. Results achieved under P&Bs 2016-17

		Total		Africa		Americas		Arab States		Asia-Pacific		Europe-Central Asia	
		Target	Result	Target	Result	Target	Result	Target	Result	Target	Result	Target	Result
Indicator 9.1: Member States or regional or subregional institutions that have developed or implemented policy, legislation, bilateral or multilateral agreements, or other governance frameworks in line with relevant international labour standards, the ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration and through tripartite dialogue													
2016–2017	Member States and regional/subregional organisations	12	19	6	7	1	4	1	1	4	6	0	1
Indicator 9.2: Member States or regional or subregional institutions that have established or strengthened institutional mechanisms and inclusive practices or services for the protection of migrant workers, or for the promotion of productive employment and decent work for migrant workers													
2016–2017	Member States and regional/subregional organisations	21	19	6	6	2	6	3	1	8	5	0	1
Indicator 9.3: Member States or regional or subregional institutions that have developed a knowledge base and statistics on labour migration to better inform policy and enhance synergies between labour migration, employment, training and development policies													
2016–2017	Member States and regional/subregional organisations	10	9	5	3	1	1	1	1	3	3	0	1

► **Table A2. Results achieved under P&Bs 2018-19**

		Total		Africa		Americas		Arab States		Asia-Pacific		Europe-Central Asia	
Indicator 9.1: Number of member States that have formulated or adopted fair labour migration policies, legislation, bilateral or multilateral agreements improving the protection of migrant workers and others working abroad, and the functioning of labour markets													
		<i>Target</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Result</i>
2018–2019	Member States and regional/subregional organisations	22	21	8	9	2	2	1	1	10	8	1	1
Indicator 9.2: Number of regional and subregional institutions that adopt or revise (sub)regional governance frameworks or arrangements on labour migration or mobility													
		<i>Target</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Result</i>
2018–2019	Member States and regional/subregional organisations	5	5	3	4	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0
Indicator 9.3: Number of member States that have established or strengthened institutional mechanisms to implement and monitor governance frameworks on labour migration													
		<i>Target</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Result</i>	<i>Target</i>	<i>Result</i>
2018–2019	Member States and regional/subregional organisations	19	24	5	3	4	3	1	4	8	13	1	1

Source: Derived from: ILO, “The ILO at work. ILO programme implementation 2016-2017”, International Labour Conference, 107th Session, 2018; and ILO, “Decent work results: ILO programme implementation 2018-2019”, Report to the Director-General I (A), International Labour Conference, 109th Session, 2021.

▶ Annex 2. Fair Recruitment programme

The concept of an ILO Fair Migration Agenda was first articulated in a report prepared for the 2014 International Labour Conference²⁶⁸. The previous year in November 2013, a Tripartite Technical Meeting on Labour Migration had provided guidance on the ILO's future activities. Thematic priorities included: effective protection of migrant workers; sound labour market needs assessment and skills recognition; and cooperation and social dialogue for well-governed labour migration and mobility. Potential components of an ILO agenda on fair migration were identified in the conference paper as:

- ▶ Promoting decent work in countries of origin, including the contribution of migrants;
- ▶ Formulating orderly and fair migration schemes in regional integration processes;
- ▶ Promoting bilateral agreements for well-regulated and fair migration between member States;
- ▶ Instituting fair recruitment processes;
- ▶ Countering unacceptable situations;
- ▶ Realising the rights-based approach;
- ▶ Contributing to a strengthened rights-based multilateral agenda on migration; and
- ▶ Tripartism, knowledge and capacity building on cross-cutting issues.

The *Fair Recruitment Initiative* was launched in 2014 as a key part of the Fair Migration Agenda, seen as critical to the ILO's work in the area of the national and international recruitment of workers, and adding impetus and visibility to these efforts. Its vision is to ensure that both national and cross-border recruitment are grounded in labour standards, are developed through social dialogue, and ensure gender equality. Specifically, they:

- ▶ are transparent and effectively regulated, monitored and enforced;
- ▶ protect all workers' rights, including fundamental principles and rights at work, and prevent human trafficking and forced labour
- ▶ efficiently inform and respond to employment policies.

Following extensive discussions and negotiations with ILO constituents, including a Tripartite Meeting of Experts held in September 2016, the General Principles and Operational Guidelines for Fair Recruitment were adopted and widely disseminated. These contain 13 general principles providing safeguards for workers in the area of recruitment. A more extensive set of operational guidelines are then set out in various sections, identifying the respective responsibilities of governments, enterprises and public employment services. In the last of these areas, further distinctions are drawn between the responsibilities of labour recruiters on the one hand, and employers on the other.

In 2017, the Conference report and discussions, Resolution and Conclusions, and resulting Plan of Action were launched. For the second time in three years, the issue of labour migration figured prominently on the International Labour Conference agenda. The background report prepared for the Conference addressed the governance challenges in a changing labour migration landscape. Different chapters covered such issues as:

- ▶ the main global and regional trends relating to labour migration;
- ▶ key challenges to labour migration governance;
- ▶ bilateral agreements relating to labour migration;
- ▶ challenges in facilitating labour migration and mobility at subregional and regional levels

²⁶⁸ *Fair Migration: Setting an ILO Agenda*, Report of the Director General, Report 1(B), ILC, 103rd Session, 2014.

- ▶ fair recruitment of migrant workers, with particular reference to the ILO's general principles and operational guidelines on the subject; and
- ▶ the way forward, with proposed points for discussion.

Extensive conclusions, with recommendations for follow-up action, were adopted by the Conference, as discussed below. Furthermore, a Resolution requested the ILO Director-General to:

- ▶ prepare a plan of action to give effect to the conclusions, for the consideration of the Governing Body;
- ▶ communicate the conclusions to the relevant global, regional and international organisations for their attention, and to take them into account when providing the ILO's inputs to the Global Compact; and
- ▶ take account of the conclusions when preparing future Programme and Budget proposals, and give effect to them and to the relevant aspects of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, to the extent possible, when implementing the Programme and Budget for 2018-19.

In the conclusions, 10 areas were identified as warranting special attention, namely:

- ▶ Protection of migrant workers and labour market integration;
- ▶ Skills recognition and development;
- ▶ Fair recruitment;
- ▶ Social protection;
- ▶ Freedom of association;
- ▶ Data and statistics;
- ▶ Temporary labour migration;
- ▶ Bilateral agreements; and
- ▶ Regional governance frameworks on labour migration.

With regard to future priorities, the ILO should “deepen and scale up its work on international labour migration in response to constituents’ needs, and take a leadership role on decent work in labour migration”. Ten specific priorities for ILO action were identified: international labour standards; skills; fair recruitment; data; social protection; freedom of association; temporary labour migration; irregular labour migration; bilateral and multilateral agreements; and collaboration with relevant institutions that deal with labour migration.

On the basis of these discussions, a plan of action was presented to and approved by the ILO Governing Body in late 2017, covering the five-year period between 2018 and 2022. While retaining the overall priorities identified earlier, the plan is grounded in four key principles, and the actions envisaged are organised along four broad means of action. A first key principle is *context specificity*, recognising the need for policy responses tailored to the needs of governments, employers and workers in countries of origin, transit and destination. A second principle is *rights-based and grounded on social dialogue*, guided by international labour standards (in particular the fundamental principles and rights at work and the ILO Conventions and Recommendations relevant to labour migration), and policy frameworks and guidelines. A third principle is *adaptability*, identifying different means of action for the ILO to deliver on priority areas and build on lessons learned and previous relevant interventions. The final principle is *gender-sensitivity and non-discrimination*, seeking to integrate gender equality and non-discrimination throughout the migration process, with attention to migrant women, youth and those with disabilities, as well as other groups of migrant workers that may be exposed to situations of vulnerability, particularly migrant-dominated sectors such as domestic work.

The four broad means of action are, respectively: knowledge generation and dissemination; technical assistance for statistics, evidence-based law and policy reform; capacity building and institutional strengthening for enhanced dialogue; and collaboration and partnerships at all levels. The Office, as requested by the Conference conclusions, has been stepping up its leadership in global labour migration debates. The ILO

has also deepened partnerships with the UN system, including the IOM, as well as with other stakeholders, including academic institutions, to strengthen the delivery and impact of ILO approaches in the field.

A final section deals with implementation arrangements, monitoring, evaluation and reviews of the plan of action. Continued efforts will be made to mobilise extra-budgetary resources to support the plan of action. However, additional regular budget allocations will be needed as initial capital and in order to demonstrate to partners that the Office is committed to promoting fair and effective labour migration governance. Furthermore, the plan of action requires cooperation and coordination across the Office, headquarters and in the field.

