



International
Labour
Organization

Evaluation Office

► Strategy and policy

► High-level independent evaluation of ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts, 2016–21



► High-level independent evaluation of ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts, 2016–21

Evaluation Office

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► Abbreviations/acronyms

APGE	Action Plan on Gender Equality
CPO	Country programme outcome
DWA	Decent Work Agenda
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
EPIC	Equal Pay International Coalition
EVAL	ILO Evaluation Office
GB	ILO Governing Body
GE	Gender equality
GEDI	Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
GEM	Gender Equality and Mainstreaming
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Framework
GFP	Gender focal point
GTT	Global Technical Team
HLE	High-level Evaluation (ILO)
ILO	International Labour Organization
PO	Policy outcome
P&B	ILO Programme and Budget
RBSA	Regular Budget Supplementary Account
SO	Strategic objective
SP	Strategic plan
ToC	Theory of change
ToR	Terms of reference
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN-SWAP	United Nations system-wide action plan
WORKQUALITY	Work and Equality Department
XBDC	Extra-budgetary resources

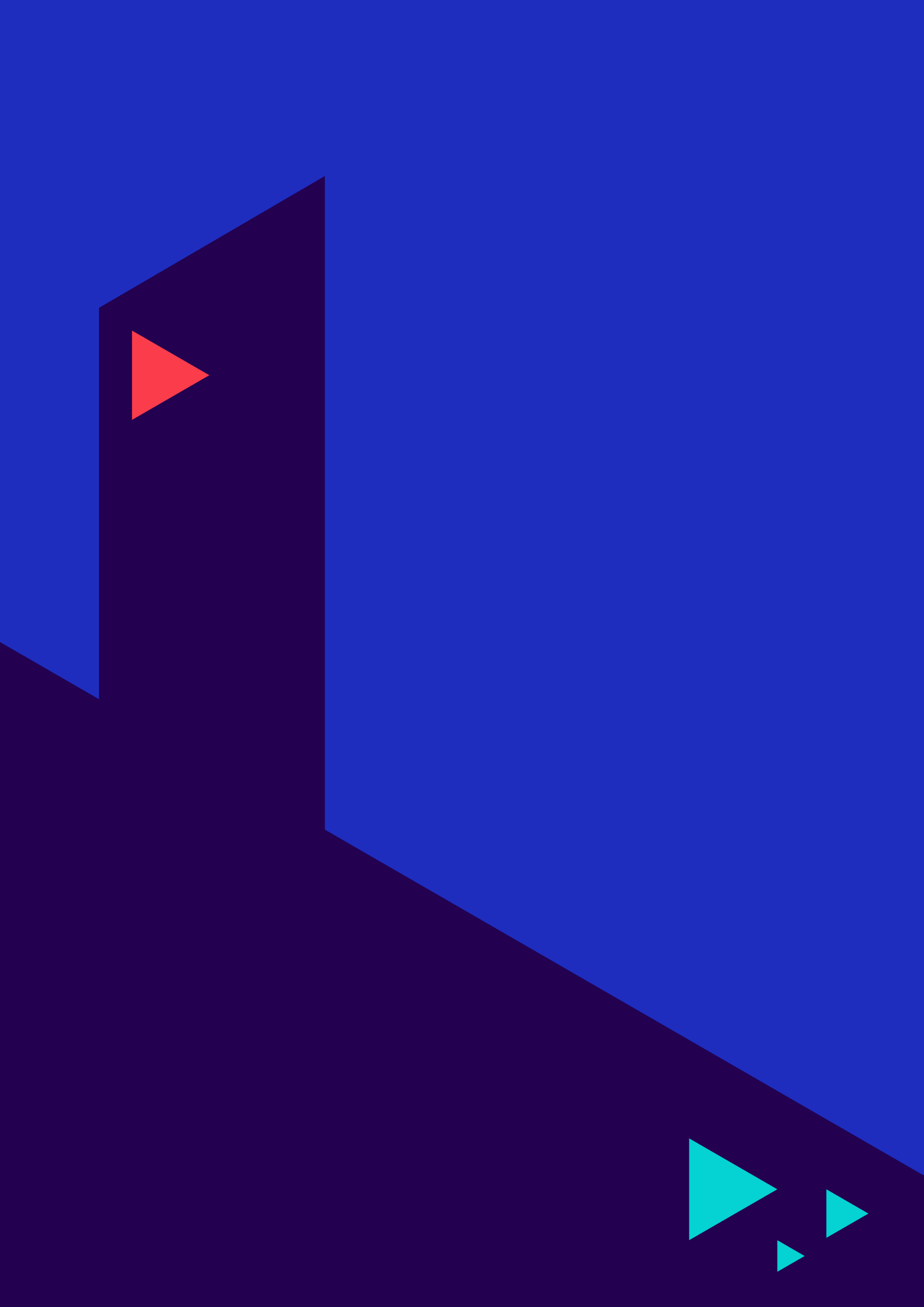
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Peter E. Wichmand, Senior ILO Evaluation Officer, was the task manager for the evaluation and member of the evaluation team. Guy Thijs, Director of the ILO Evaluation Office, provided inputs, technical guidance, management support and oversight, as required.

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Any errors or omissions are the responsibility of the ILO Evaluation Office.



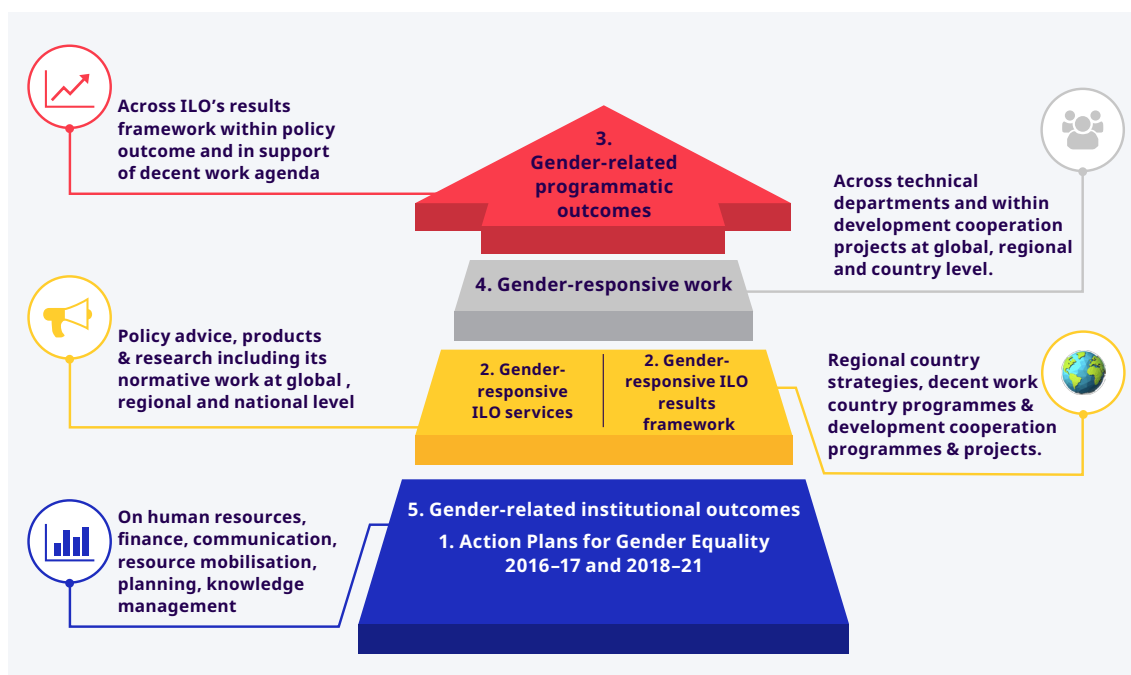
► Executive summary

Purpose and scope

The evaluation analyses the achievements and outcomes of the ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts at the programme and institutional levels for the period 2016–21. It includes a review of the progress made and gaps in implementing the [ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016–17](#) (Action Plan 2016–17) and the [ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–21](#) (Action Plan 2018–21), in response to a Governing Body request for an evaluation of the action plans to inform the development of a new action plan.¹ The Governing Body also requested a specific focus on the positioning of a more gender-responsive ILO in the UN system.² The evaluation focuses on the strategies, approaches, outcomes, achievements, gaps and lessons learned related to gender equality and mainstreaming, with summative and formative aims.³

The scope of the evaluation is Office-wide. It covers external programme results (policy outcomes) and internal institutional changes and considers how they complement one another. A reconstructed theory of change was developed and figure 1 summarizes the key programmatic and institutional components of gender equality and mainstreaming, to inform the evaluation.

► Figure 1. Components of ILO gender equality and mainstreaming



1 [GB.338/INS/7](#).

2 Gender-responsiveness (or a gender-responsive approach) means intentionally employing gender considerations to influence the design, development, implementation and results of programmes and strategies, policies, laws and regulations, as well as collective agreements.

3 A total of six case studies on gender equality and mainstreaming were conducted. These were: programmatic outcome case studies in respect of (1) policy outcomes and (2) Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) and country programme outcomes; in addition to institutional outcome case studies on (3) institutional support to gender equality and mainstreaming within the ILO; (4) gender equality and mainstreaming performance within selected departments; (5) results-based gender action plans; and (6) partnerships related to gender equality and mainstreaming. In addition, web-based surveys of constituents (150 respondents) and ILO staff (448 respondents), including the ILO Gender Network Global Technical Teams, were conducted.

Summary of findings

A. Relevance

Key finding 1: The ILO Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming * and the ILO action plans on gender equality are highly relevant to the Organization's social justice mandate and standard-setting agenda in addressing gender equality and non-discrimination.

Key finding 2: Gender equality and mainstreaming at the ILO is relevant to the needs and demands of constituents. This is reflected in the gender-transformative interventions that aim to deliver structural and institutional changes needed in the world of work.

Key finding 3: The relevance of gender equality indicators in policy outcomes, country programme outcomes and development cooperation projects is clear. However, the inclusion of specific gender objectives is uneven.

* The policy was announced in 1999 and shared in updated form with the Senior Management Team in 2016. It can be found at: ILO, [ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–21](#), Geneva, 2018, Appendix II.

The ILO's Transitional Strategic Plan for 2016–17 and Strategic Plan for 2018–21 and the respective programme and budget documents are relevant in responding to gender equality needs in the world of work by showing a growing focus on mainstreaming gender equality at the strategic level. As a cross-cutting policy driver, gender equality is mainstreamed in 17 indicators out of 35 in the Programme and Budget for 2016–17 and in 18 indicators out of 36 in the Programme and Budget for 2018–19. In the Programme and Budget for 2020–21, gender equality and non-discrimination are identified as a dedicated policy outcome with 8 indicators, and an additional 16 indicators across all other policy outcomes, ensuring continuity of previous strategies on gender equality.

Most of the ILO's policy documents approach gender in a manner that is coherent with the Office's mandate and in line with the gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) framework.⁴ Nine out of ten policy outcomes in the biennium 2016–17 have at least one gender-transformative intervention, with this figure standing at eight out of ten and seven out of eight for the biennia 2018–19 and 2020–21, respectively. Gender-transformative approaches are programmes and interventions that create opportunities for individuals to actively challenge gender norms, promote positions of social and political influence for women in communities, and address power imbalances between persons of different genders.

The strategic relevance of gender equality and mainstreaming to the Future of Work agenda was demonstrated through the launch of the Women at Work Initiative, which contributed to adoption of the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190); the inclusion in the ILO Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work of a transformative agenda on gender equality; and the adoption in 2021 of the global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis that is inclusive, sustainable and resilient. Persistent demands from constituents for training and gender-responsive policy briefs on gender equality and mainstreaming confirm the relevance of the ILO's agenda on this subject.

⁴ The GESI framework assesses gender interventions, and discerns the extent to which a programme addresses gender inequalities and social exclusion in a spectrum that ranges from "gender-blind and exploitative" to "gender-sensitive, empowering and transformative".

B. Coherence

Key finding 4: At the policy outcome level, the ILO has maintained a high level of coherence between its strategic plans and its efforts in relation to gender equality, particularly under the Women at Work Initiative.

Key finding 5: There is alignment between the ILO's Decent Work Agenda and the strategic documents that establish gender equality as one of its cross-cutting objectives and as a policy driver in the policy outcomes of its programme and budget.

Key finding 6: The ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming strategies and approaches are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Key finding 7: The ILO action plans for gender equality are fully aligned with the second United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP 2.0).

At the policy framework level, there is strong coherence between the ILO's different strategic plans and its initiatives, as reflected, for example, in the coherence between the Strategic Plan for 2018–21 and the Women at Work Initiative. Coherence is also ensured through the continuing cross-cutting policy issues on gender in both the Transitional Strategic Plan for 2016–17 and the Strategic Plan for 2018–21.

The Programmes and Budgets for 2016–17, 2018–19 and 2020–21 included significant outputs and synergies to achieve gender-responsive outcomes that are coherent at the national, regional and global levels. These included clear actions and measurable results within the institutional framework provided by the Women at Work Initiative and in line with other efforts, such as those related to decent work for domestic workers.

The reviewed ILO action plans for gender equality are aligned as required with the UN-SWAP and UN-SWAP 2.0, including the UN System-Wide Strategy on Gender Parity.

Gender equality and mainstreaming strategies and approaches, through policy outcome gender equality indicators and gender-responsive actions, show coherence with SDGs 5, 8 and 1 and the ILO's role as the custodian for 13 SDG targets, including target 5.5, can also not be ignored in this respect.⁵

C. Effectiveness

Programme outcome level

Key finding 8: ILO country programmes show a consistent, although varying, presence of gender-responsive results by policy outcome, but there is a lack of systematic monitoring and reporting on specific gender programme objectives.

Key finding 9: The mixed progress and results on gender equality in programmes and budgets and in ILO action plans for gender equality during the period reflect the complexity of achieving programmatic change on gender-responsive outcomes.

Key finding 10: The ILO's performance under the UN-SWAP 2.0 shows uneven achievements.

Key finding 11: Partnerships helped to improve the implementation of gender equality and mainstreaming efforts from policy development to development cooperation projects.

⁵ Target 5.5: Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.

Institutional outcome level

Key finding 12: The ILO has improved its framework to support institutional gender equality and mainstreaming efforts in key core institutional processes, but more can be done.

An overall analysis of the ILO's country programme outcomes shows a consistent, although varying, presence of significant results in respect of gender-responsiveness per policy outcome. From 2016–19, country programme outcomes linked to all policy outcomes reported at least one significant result in respect of gender-responsiveness, although there was significant variation across policy outcomes. The most effective country programme outcomes were those linked to the formalization of the informal economy, and to promoting fair and effective labour migration policies. Country programme outcomes linked to the ratification and application of international labour standards registered the lowest frequency of gender-responsiveness results. Many of these country programme outcome results were achieved through development cooperation projects and through working with a range of partners.

Decent work results⁶ for 2016–17 and 2018–19, when gender equality and non-discrimination were only a cross-cutting policy driver, are shown in table 1. Most telling in terms of progress is the increase of country programme outcomes in which gender equality made a “significant” contribution: from 39 per cent in 2016–17 to 48 per cent in 2018–19.

► **Table 1. Gender equality and non-discrimination: Distribution of decent work results**

Biennium	Country programme outcome contribution to gender		
	Limited	Significant	Principal objective
2016–17	54%	39%	7%
2018–19	47%	48%	5%

Note: For 2020–21, data were not complete enough to provide comparable data.

Progress reporting on results for 2020–21, which become more stringent with the introduction of the gender marker, show that many of the country programme outcomes are contributing to gender equality or have it as its principal objective, with 20 per cent of country programme outcomes being unmarked for gender results. The country programme outcomes under the policy outcome on gender equality and non-discrimination showed a somewhat lower performance in some gender-responsive indicators, but this was counterbalanced by the mainstreaming of gender equality across policy outcomes, in particular those on employment, sustainable enterprises and social protection.

The overall performance of the Action Plan 2016–17 and the Action Plan 2018–21 is shown in table 2.⁷ While both have some similar indicators and targets, the majority are different because of alignment with different versions of the UN-SWAP, making it difficult to undertake a comparison and to determine whether efforts are having the desired impact over the full period of the evaluation.

⁶ The gender and non-discrimination marker assigned during programme design to reflect perceived gender-responsiveness was used in the analysis. Reasonable attempts were made to allow for any inflation of the trends due to the self-assigned nature of the marker.

⁷ A detailed review of the achievements of the action plans for 2016–17 and 2018–21 can be consulted on the [ILO website](#).

► Table 2. Performance of the Action Plan 2016–17 and the Action Plan 2018–21

Area of results	Results (indicators met/exceeded out of total indicators)	
	Action Plan 2016–17	Action Plan 2018–21
Results-based management	1 out of 3 (33.3%)	7 out of 12 (58%)
Accountability	4 out of 6 (66.6%)	3 out of 10 (30%)
Oversight	5 out of 10 (50%)	4 out of 7 (57%)
Human and financial resources	5 out of 5 (100%)	8 out of 14 (57%)
Capacity	2 out of 3 (66.6%)	3 out of 7 (43%)
Knowledge, communication and coherence	5 out of 6 (83.3%)	4 out of 7 (57%)
Total	19 out of 33 (57.5%)	29 out of 57 (51%)

Note: Data for 2018–21 are based on the latest available as of June 2021; reporting by the end of the year could change the results.

There has been a structured process to follow up on the recommendations from the 2016 evaluation⁸ of the Action Plan 2010–15. The majority of recommendations have been acted upon, with the exception of those that were determined to be of less importance, those for which circumstances had evolved and those for which a lack of resources hampered implementation.

The ILO improved its framework to support the institutionalization of gender mainstreaming over the review period in core processes.⁹ This framework includes the increased roles and responsibilities of the Human Resources Development Department (HRD), the reformed process for appraising development cooperation projects, and the efforts of specific gender-focused staff within departments to support gender-responsive work.

D. Efficiency

Programme outcome level

Key finding 13: Efficient delivery of inclusive gender-responsive activities is demonstrated by the increased mobilization of resources to promote and realize gender equality in the world of work without an increase in staff capacity.

Institutional outcome

Key finding 14: The ILO's institutional capacity-building on gender equality and mainstreaming is uneven across the ILO's operations, for constituents and in particular for staff.

Key finding 15: The ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming support structures, including those based in the Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch (GEDI), as measured against responsibilities, are not sufficient. Overall resource allocations (staff and non-staff) to implement the ambitious Action Plan 2016–17 and Action Plan 2018–21 appear insufficient.

Key finding 16: More resources for the ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts can be accessed by creating more opportunities and tapping into the ILO's staff commitment and interest in gender equality and mainstreaming, such as network- and team-based collaboration.

⁸ ILO, *Independent thematic evaluation of ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality, 2010–15*, 9 February 2016; summarized in ILO, *Results of the implementation of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016–17, and outline of the subsequent ILO Action Plan*, GB.332/INS/6, 2018.

⁹ Custodians were assigned in different departments on the different targets of the action plans to distribute responsibilities, ownership and accountability.

Financial allocations to gender-responsive actions across policy outcomes targeting jobs and employment, labour migration, workplace compliance and labour inspection, and the protection of vulnerable groups have increased. Gender equality-responsive actions in 2020–21 were concentrated on delivering adequate and effective protection for all and on employment and skills promotion.

Many policy outcomes include capacity development for constituents through training on gender equality. This led to improvements in areas such as employment services, active labour markets, skills and employability programmes, disaster management, migration and fair recruitment initiatives.

The action plans did not present any framework or annual plan for capacity development. For instance, current training on gender equality and mainstreaming is conducted on demand or on an ad hoc basis. Training is constrained by resource availability and varying levels of expertise among staff and awareness as to what training material is available.

Resource-efficient implementation has taken place for the action plans, but has not been sufficient to support institutional capacity on gender equality at all levels. The current approach assumes that a significant amount of the coordination and implementation support can be conducted by a small team. However, resources are not sufficient to realize a more strategic and systemic approach, including systemic support in key areas and a space for a structured dialogue on how to progress in respect of gender equality and mainstreaming in various departments and policy outcomes.

E. Likelihood of impact and sustainability

Gender equality and mainstreaming in programmatic work

Key finding 17: The ILO's programmatic work is generating some impact with a gender dimension, but it is not always visible, clearly monitored or communicated.

Key finding 18: The ILO's programmatic work on gender equality lacks, in part, an overall strategy, an identity with a clear value proposition, and strategies, targets and tools to optimize impact and ILO positioning on gender, including within the UN system.

Key finding 19: The ILO has used partnerships in areas with a gender dimension to good effect. This has generated additional visibility and impact, although these instances tend to be more ad hoc in nature.

Key finding 20: ILO funding for gender equality and gender-responsive actions is increasing, but more can and needs to be done to mobilize funding, in order to increase the rate of progress for achieving outcomes.

Institutional gender equality and mainstreaming

Key finding 21: The ILO has built institutional gender equality and mainstreaming capacity to oversee a wide range of gender-related actions with impact and successes, but impact on the institution is constrained by challenges in respect of sustained and mainstreamed gender-responsive capacity development.

Key finding 22: The sustainability of gender equality and mainstreaming in the Organization is mixed. Some progress has been made in respect of its institutionalization, but sustainability needs to be built more explicitly into gender action planning and strategies to increase prospects for sustainability and to accelerate change.

Impact with a clear gender dimension is taking place in some policy areas, but may not be fully captured. There are weak gender-responsive project indicators and poor monitoring and reporting practices. The creation of a dedicated gender policy outcome has been welcome, but there is a perception that this has

not been matched by visible mainstreaming along with gender-targeted programmes across the other policy outcomes. While the visibility of global research publications, flagship products and global products that have a gender dimension or a focus on gender has improved significantly, a reliable assessment of the impact of these knowledge investments is not available.

The ILO's strategy and value proposition on gender equality and mainstreaming in programmatic work lacks a clear framework, both in respect of articulation and in the communication of results – in part a consequence of the mixing of both institutional change (internally) and programme outcome results (through ILO action and services) in the same gender equality and mainstreaming policy and action plans. In the absence of an ILO-wide common framework on gender equality in the ILO's programmatic work, interviews with staff do not demonstrate a clear or consistent interpretation of what ILO gender equality and mainstreaming is in the context of development cooperation. Gender equality and mainstreaming-related systems and support to develop strong gender-related impact are piecemeal rather than comprehensive.

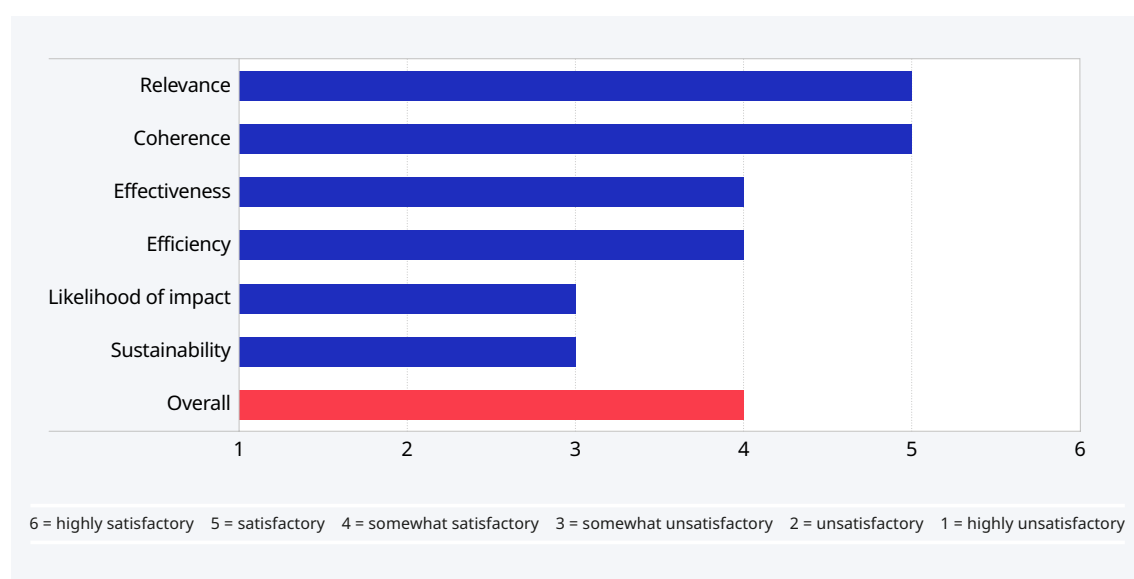
The ILO policy departments, regions, decent work technical support teams and country offices have interesting experiences, assets and tools that could contribute to the ILO's value proposition on gender equality and mainstreaming, but this is poorly documented. A well-articulated framework is required to establish a portfolio of gender-responsive interventions and typologies that reflect specific needs for support to achieve gender equality in countries. Likewise, a structured reflection on – and process for assessing – gender equality and mainstreaming-related offers relative to other actors (for example, other UN agencies) in terms of innovation, added value and how to use gender equality and mainstreaming would be welcome to create additional funding and opportunities for implementation.

Good examples of partnerships with a gender dimension exist, such as the Equal Pay International Coalition, but collaboration is not necessarily systematic, often ad hoc and less effective than desirable with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). The ILO has specific core competency areas, but is risk-averse, and staff gender capacity is uneven in the Office. There continues to be scope for a more proactive approach to partnerships and funding opportunities.

Overall assessment

Figure 2 presents a general assessment of the identified performance levels for ILO gender equality and mainstreaming efforts.

► **Figure 2. Evaluation of the ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts: Ratings by criterion**



Conclusions and lessons learned

The ILO's Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming and its action plans on gender equality are relevant to its policy framework and results framework, including its strategic plans, related programmes and budgets, and to the realization of the SDGs.

The ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming strategy and approaches are coherent with the Organization's internal framework and its development cooperation programmes. Its gender equality and mainstreaming efforts have increased the coherence between its policies, plans and Conventions. Its action plans are fully aligned with the UN-SWAP 2.0.

The ILO country programmes show a consistent, although varying, presence of gender-responsive results per policy outcome, though there is a lack of systematic monitoring and reporting on specific gender programme objectives. Support for programme outcomes on gender equality and mainstreaming is also uneven, and assumptions for achieving gender equality and mainstreaming results need to be reviewed. At the institutional level, while progress has been made to support gender mainstreaming in core institutional processes, more can be done.

The ILO's programmatic work is generating some gender-related impact and visibility in policy declarations, standard-setting, global knowledge and research publications. Gender-related impact is also being generated in country programmes and project work, although this is limited by a lack of strategies and tools to optimize impact, including systematic impact monitoring to inform these strategies.

The lack of a clearly articulated gender equality and mainstreaming strategic framework and value proposition for programmatic outcomes that reflect the ILO's distinctive features and current or potential comparative advantage is constraining innovation, staff contribution and product development in gender equality and mainstreaming. This, in turn, is limiting impact prospects, including a more systematic approach to partnering in order to increase impact and sustainability (including financial sustainability via new funding related to gender equality and mainstreaming).

The sustainability of institutional gender equality and mainstreaming needs to be factored more explicitly in strategy-setting, with more strategic-level and management-level dialogue around gender equality and mainstreaming implementation, and more empowerment and ownership at the staff level.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are complementary, and should be considered for inclusion in the new action plan.¹⁰ The new action plan should also consider targets from previous action plans that have not been met but are still valid.

Recommendations regarding gender equality and mainstreaming in ILO programmes

Recommendation 1

Develop an ILO gender equality and mainstreaming value proposition to facilitate the ILO's strategic positioning and enhance the visibility and impact of its programmatic outcomes.

The value proposition on the added value and contribution of the ILO in respect of gender equality should include priorities for a medium-term time frame of five years and a portfolio of gender-responsive interventions within policy areas and for a typology of countries. It would also require mapping work conducted by partners, the documenting of the ILO's comparative advantage and the identification of modalities for tools, innovations, strategies and partnerships and for the use of statistics. Gender-specific and gender-responsive programmes could create new funding opportunities and increase the ILO's comparative advantage.

¹⁰ A more detailed explanation of these recommendations is provided in [section 6](#) of the main evaluation report.

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

Recommendation 2

Develop a dedicated and comprehensive support programme for gender-responsive programmatic work to support constituents and enhance their capacity to achieve gender equality in the world of work.

This will require greater collaboration between ILO regions and headquarters to ensure region-relevant strategies and gender-responsive capacity development programmes to serve the needs of ILO constituents, including a focus on recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
ILO Senior Management (CABINET), DDG/P (policy departments), DDG/FOP (ILO regions), (DDG/MR), International Training Centre of the ILO, ACTRAV and ACT/EMP	High	Medium-term	Low

Recommendation 3

Strengthen the ILO's framework for partnering on gender equality.

A more structured framework (partnership management framework) for approaching gender-related collaboration should complement the ILO's value proposition in respect of gender equality in its programmatic work and in the UN system. This would build on the portfolio of interventions for typologies of countries mentioned in recommendation 1, and lead to a better matching of partnerships.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
ILO Senior Management (CABINET), DDG/P, DDG/FOP (Multilateral Cooperation Department(MULTILATERALS), PARDEV), DDG/MR	Medium	Long-term	Medium

Recommendations regarding institutional and programme outcomes

Recommendation 4

Develop a more systemic, programme-based approach and delivery system for capacity development and training within the ILO relating to gender equality and mainstreaming.

This should include a comprehensive structuring of needs relating to gender equality and mainstreaming competencies, using a gender equality and mainstreaming capacity development framework that describes how capacity development will be managed, implemented and monitored; and how it will be institutionalized in core ILO processes and integrated in wider gender equality and mainstreaming tools and support, to facilitate impact optimization. Systematic gender audits based on past experience can help in this regard.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
ILO Senior Management (CABINET), DDG/P, (Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch (GEDI)), DDG/MR (Human Resources Development Department (HRD)), DDG/FOP (ILO regions) International Training Centre of the ILO, ACTRAV and ACT/EMP	High	Short-term (time frame for the formulation of the new action plan)	Low

Recommendations regarding institutional gender equality and mainstreaming

Recommendation 5

Develop a medium-term strategy to mainstream gender equality in the ILO.

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

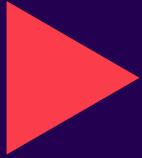
Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
ILO Senior Management (CABINET), DDG/P (GEDI), DDG/MR, DDG/FOP (all departments; current and future custodians in the action plan)	High	Short-term (time frame for the formulation of the new action plan)	Low

Recommendation 6

Further develop gender equality and mainstreaming support processes and tools to mainstream gender equality within the ILO.

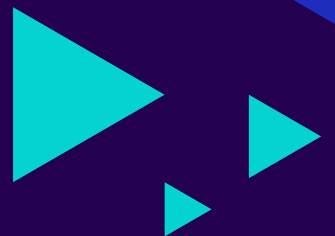
The new ILO action plan for gender equality should include strengthened gender equality and mainstreaming support processes and tools to institutionalize gender equality and mainstreaming, based on a systemic approach to gender equality and mainstreaming capacity development for ILO staff. Other elements are a strengthened ILO Gender Network; more collaborative, team-based and project-based work; more opportunities for ILO staff to champion specific areas; and more knowledge-sharing on good practice and communication on success stories.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
ILO Senior Management (CABINET), DDG/P (GEDI), DDG/MR, DDG/FOP (all departments; current and future custodians in the action plan)	High	Short-term (time frame for the formulation of the new action plan)	Low



1

Introduction



► 1. Introduction

1.1 Gender equality and mainstreaming in context

This report represents the draft evaluation report of the Independent institutional evaluation of the ILO's Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Efforts (GEM). The report stems from a request from the ILO's Governing Body (GB) for a report in March 2022 on implementation results of the last phase of the Action Plan on Gender Equality (APGE) 2020–21, relevant findings of the evaluation of the current APGE 2018–21 and its main recommendations for the APGE 2022+, and the Office's proposed outline and approach of the next APGE. The APGE is one component of ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts and its operationalization of the ILO policy on gender equality and mainstreaming that is regularly discussed by the ILO Governing Body.

The gender equality and mainstreaming context in the ILO is set out in the ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming policy of 1999, which was updated in 2016. This policy requires that gender equality and mainstreaming is internalized across the ILO and its constituent departments and field operations, as well as being reflected in all of ILO's technical work, operational activities and support services.

The policy makes all staff responsible for mainstreaming gender in their own work, in order to support the constituents to promote gender equality. While the ILO's Director-General is ultimately responsible for policy development and organizational performance on gender equality, the policy requires the commitment, participation and contribution of all ILO staff, while responsibility and accountability for success rests with senior managers, the regional directors and programme managers.

It is important, however, to note that the GEM policy is also rooted significantly in various ILO institutional mandates. ILO's commitment to gender equality in the world of work dates back seven decades, as evidenced in its conventions pertaining to fundamental labour rights where, for example, the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) and the Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111) both relate to gender equality. Additionally, the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work reiterates the principles and rights enshrined in both these conventions.

More recently, this commitment to gender equality and mainstreaming has been further reiterated and boosted through ILO's Centenary Declaration and Women at Work initiative, and its dedicated gender equality.

1.2 Purpose of the evaluation

In March 2021, the Governing Body requested a report on implementation results of the last phase of the APGE 2020–21, relevant findings of the evaluation of the current APGE 2018–21 and its main recommendations for the APGE 2022+. It also requested the Office's proposed outline and approach to the next APGE. The APGE is one component of ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts and its operationalization of the ILO policy on gender equality and mainstreaming is regularly discussed by the GB.

This high-level evaluation (HLE) thus comprises the requested evaluation of the APGE 2018–21, and includes in its scope the preceding APGE 2016–17 and looks at GEM in the outcomes of ILO's programmes as a result of GEM efforts, including the APGEs. ILO programme outcomes refer to policy and enabling outcomes in the programme and budgets (P&Bs) for the period, the outcomes of the Women at Work Centenary Initiative as well as those of development cooperation (DC) programmes. Importantly, the evaluation will look at both the institutional process for implementing GEM and how GEM (gender responsiveness) is integrated into ILO programming and how it enhances the ILO programme results for achieving policy outcomes. This HLE will also provide a link with past reviews and evaluations, such as the 2016 review of the 2010–2015 APGE and consider how recommendations were followed up.

It should be noted that this evaluation is the first time that Gender Equality and Mainstreaming is being evaluated as a comprehensive institutional effort that includes a detailed evaluation in the context of ILO's full results framework and the wider UN framework reflected in GEM results. In this regard, the evaluation will also meet the requirement of the UN System-wide APGE (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEEW) that a corporate evaluation of gender equality be carried out every eight years. Moreover, it also constitutes one of the first evaluations focusing on a theme established as a cross-cutting policy driver in the ILO P&Bs for 2016–17 and 2018–19 and will be fully embedded in the ILO's results framework of the Programme and Budget for 2020. Furthermore, the P&B for 2020–21 also includes a dedicated outcome on gender equality and non-discrimination. In this respect ILO's efforts involve five components, as set out in figure 3 below.

The evaluation covers the period 2016–2021 and examines the achievements and outcomes of ILO efforts to institutionally mainstream gender equality, as well as progress and gaps that have been measured by ILO APGE. The evaluation also looks at how gender equality and mainstreaming is or is not designed, implemented and used in support of ILO's policy and technical work.

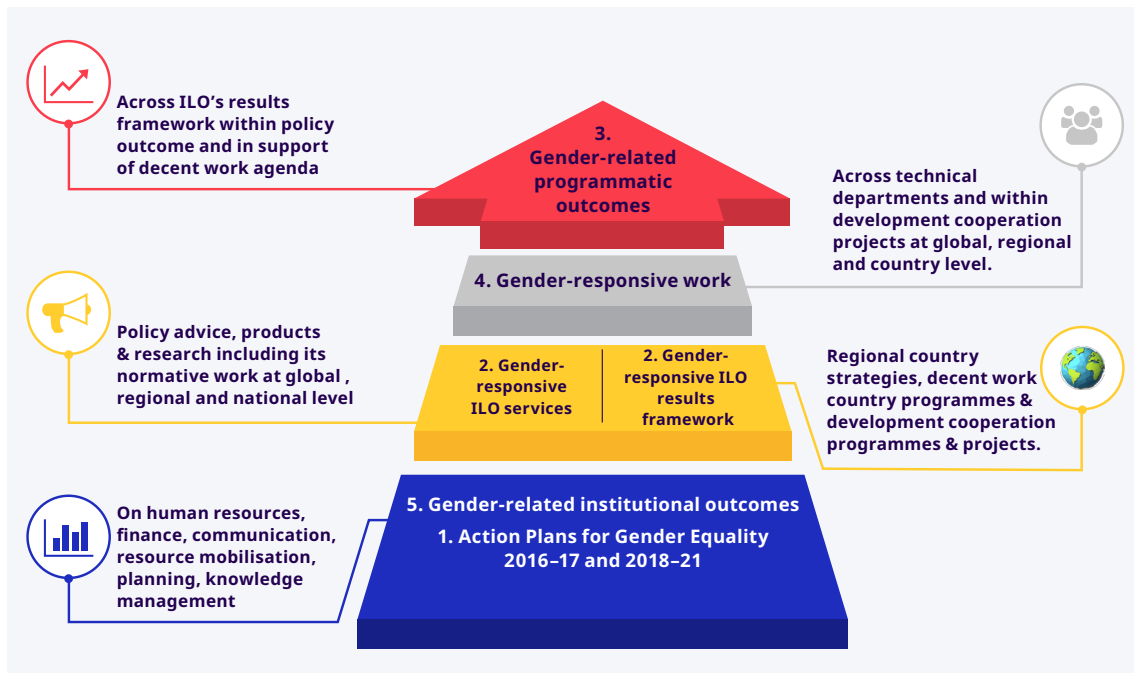
The purpose of the evaluation of ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts is, therefore, multi-fold, and includes: (i) the review ILO's GEM-related *strategies, approaches, outcomes and achievements*, particularly focusing on the achievements, gaps and outcomes of mainstreaming gender equality into ILO products and services; (ii) the review of the performance of ILO policy and technical work in operationalizing its gender equality and mainstreaming policy, as well as the extent to which development cooperation is gender-responsive; (iii) the evaluation of *Gender equality result areas in ILO strategic objectives and policy outcomes*, focusing on specific outcomes based on the scoping of GEM in policy outcomes in the P&B during the period (and providing examples of GEM efforts leading to specific PO results, in particular in supporting gender-responsive delivery of ILO's Decent Work Agenda); (iv) the review of GEM-related results of *ILO's comparative advantage* and contribution to GEM in the UN system and beyond using comparative advantage in international labour standards, tripartism and social dialogue, as well as gaps and ways to improve; (v) the identification of possible specific *cases and examples of results chains* in reaching gender-responsive results in the work of ILO; and (vi) as part of the formative deliverable of the evaluation, recommend how the *existing gender equality and mainstreaming efforts can be strengthened* by building on the findings of the evaluation and on how future strategies should be designed and implemented, including ILO's strategic positioning in the context of UN reform.

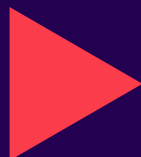
The evaluation includes the generation of an assessment of the up-to-date relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the ILO's strategy, programme approach, interventions and activities in relation to the stated objective. The evaluation provides findings, lessons learned, and emerging good practices for improved decision-making within the context of the strategic framework. It includes: major outcomes; performance assessments as per the foreseen targets and indicators of achievement at output and outcome levels; strategies and implementation modalities chosen; partnership arrangements; constraints and opportunities; COVID-19 and adaptive management strategies, including ILO's ability to respond to external shocks as a broader institutional dimension of the pandemic, and current and future impact on both institution and policy, and on programmatic goals; good practices and lessons to improve performance and delivery of ILO GEM policy and results.

1.3 Analytical framework for the evaluation

The analytical framework has involved the reconstruction of a theory of change (ToC) for the ILO's GEM policy, strategies and approaches, including the APGEs. Section 2.1 and Annex 1 of this report set out the inputs and assumptions underlying ILO GEM policy and approaches, as well as the activities process, the products (outputs) that would be created as a result of these activities, and the outcomes generated. The linkages with the components of ILO's GEM are shown in figure 3 below and discussed further in section 2.1.

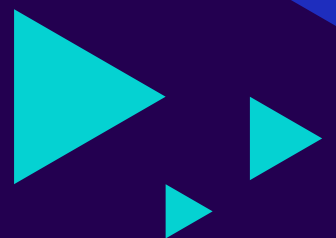
► Figure 3. Components, of ILO gender equality and mainstreaming





2

Evaluation approach



► 2. Evaluation approach

As per the Terms of Reference (ToR), the evaluation will investigate the Relevance and strategic fit of the ILO's GEM policy and implementation, Validity of Design, its progress and effectiveness, and the Efficiency of resource usage, Effectiveness of management arrangements, and the Likelihood of Impact and sustainability. The evaluation approach also takes account of ILO Guidance with regard to the COVID-19 pandemic, with all foreseen field interviews to be carried out remotely to ensure no risk to project stakeholders, ILO personnel and the evaluation team.

The evaluation approach was based on the use of a theory of change (ToC), leading to components of the GEM efforts given in figure 1, and upon the questions set out below, which were designed according to their relevant evaluation criteria/parameter. Based on the evaluation questions, the appropriate case-studies, data collection methodologies and verification, and triangulation approaches were established. The Inception Report (available as part of the supporting documentation) provides relevant details including the evaluation framework with evaluation questions and data collection approaches.

2.1 Theory of change and ILO GEM efforts

The ToC postulates that the gender strategy and APGEs should build on an analysis of the issues to be addressed. The needs analysis was fed into deliberations on what the required/desired further situation in the ILO should look like, and the clear target setting needed to reach this situation over a specified timeframe. Thus, the strategy would be based upon a clear elaboration of the future of gender equality within ILO's institutional set-up and in its development work around the world. It should include assessment of the expected channels, mechanisms and resources that would be used to mainstream gender equality. It would also look at likely (internal) institutional barriers, challenges or constraints that might need to be addressed, as well as ILO strengths that could be leveraged. Within this, a clear gap analysis would need to underly the strategy elaborated.

For the **ILO Institutional dimension (institutional processes)**, in terms of inputs/assumptions, achieving gender equality would typically require stocktaking of what this would (is thought) mean, and need in terms of ILO ("The institution"). Each ILO department or function would need to consider how this would affect their department/function, and how (their/each department) could contribute to the goal of gender equality. It would also ideally require ILO-wide stocktaking to enable departments to understand what issues/procedures would need to be examined and reviewed, along with the costs and benefits of advancing gender equality. There should be some level of prioritization of the issues to be addressed and steps to be taken. ILO departments should be given effective guidance on the development and implementation of action plans, and on how to build ownership and frame the expected benefits. Other assumptions/requirements would include: (i) progress on removing institutional constraints that slow or block progress on gender equality mainstreaming; (ii) flexibility to react to differing or changing needs; (iii) ensuring mainstreaming costs are kept reasonable or proportionate to benefits; and (vi) communicating and disseminating results, success/benefits, good practice and learning.

As far as **ILO's development cooperation work in the ToC (ILO policy and programmatic GEM)** is concerned, the starting point is ILO's institutional policy mandates (ILO conventions, ILO gender equality policy, the Centenary Declaration and Women at Work initiative, etc.) and programmatic outcomes in ILO's P&Bs. Then from these to how gender equality and mainstreaming is reflected in ILO's Decent Country Work Programmes (DWCPs). Further operationalization is given in the policy and enabling outcomes in the P&Bs during the evaluation period, specifically the 2016–2017, 2018–2019 and 2020–2021 P&Bs.

In terms of operationalization in the DWCPs, the ToC assumes that a clear linkage to the P&Bs is one requirement, along with guidance on gender-equality responsiveness, and on the assessment with other DWCPs of the quality and scale of the gender-responsiveness and specific gender equality/GEM actions foreseen. This in turn assumes appropriate feedback and institutional programming checks within ILO, including in

the core programming process and the downstream programme/project implementation cycle. This implies, amongst others, good staff training, guidance material and support, and supportive institutional practices and requirements to ensure GEM is secured in development cooperation programmes and projects. As alluded to above, outputs would also require a clear GEM strategy in programme and project launches/inception outputs, agreed result/impact indicators and an understanding of what ILO will contribute and what ILO partners will contribute to the targeted success. A further result would be effective communication and dissemination of results, success/benefits, good practice and learning, as well as efficient feedback loop mechanisms, such as past AGPE evaluations, relevant HLEs, staff feedback, etc.

The ILO APGEs (Component 1 of the HLE in figure 3), along with the above-mentioned institutional factors and conditions (Component 5 in figure 3), will in turn ensure gender-responsiveness in ILO's results framework, regional and country strategies, DWCPs, and development cooperation programmes and projects (Component 2 in figure 3). As a consequence of gender mainstreaming at the results framework, and regional and country strategies and DWCPs, ILO technical departments bring about gender-responsiveness in their work and within DC projects at global, regional and country levels (Component 4 in figure 3). This in turn makes it possible to achieve gender-related programmatic outcomes across ILO's results framework within policy outcomes and in support of ILO's Decent Work Agenda (Component 3 in figure 3). In other words, this can be seen as internal GEM-related work preparing the ground to enable ILO technical departments and staff to assure the external manifestation of this, that is gender equality and mainstreaming in ILO's programme-level outcomes.

2.2 Key evaluation questions

The evaluation parameters (evaluation criteria), as mentioned in the previous section, are thus Relevance and validity of design; Coherence/strategic fit; Results and effectiveness; Efficiency of resource use and implementation process, for example, coordination, networking, etc.; and Likelihood of impact, and sustainability. The HLE assesses the following three categories of ILO GEM progress: (i) relevance, coherence and validity design of the GEM efforts; (ii) effectiveness and efficiency, and (iii) impact and sustainability of GEM efforts (table 3). However, since more than a year of policy implementation has taken place during the COVID-19 pandemic, the evaluation will also seek to take into account the implications of the pandemic on implementation and, more particularly, on how ILO, the institution, adapted to this significant external shock as well as how DWCPs adapted at country level.

► **Table 3. Overview evaluation categories of progress and sub-areas¹¹**

Category	Focus areas/Issues
Relevance and Validity of Design	The extent to which the objectives of development interventions are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies, and the extent to which the design of the policy outcome or institutional strategy is logical and coherent. Whether valid assumptions were made, and the risks anticipated.
Coherence/ strategic fit	The extent to which the approach is in line with national-level strategies: national development frameworks, UNDAF/UNCF, priority SDG targets and indicators; Decent Work Country Programmes, and global-level strategy: ILO Strategic Planning Framework (SPF) and Programme and Budget.
Results and effectiveness	The extent to which the objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance and (with regard to the effectiveness of management arrangements); the extent to which management capacities and arrangements put in place support the achievement of results.
Efficiency of resource use and implementation process	A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted or repurposed to results and implementation process to do this.
Impact and sustainability	The strategic orientation towards making a significant contribution to broader, long-term, sustainable development changes. The likelihood that the programme results of the programme are durable and can be maintained or even scaled up and replicated by stakeholders after major assistance has been completed.

11 Extracted from the Terms of Reference (ToR) and Better Criteria for Better Evaluation Revised Evaluation Criteria Definitions and Principles for Use – OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation

Regarding COVID-19 and the specific issues and challenges it may represent for evaluations, the high-level and institutional nature of this evaluation was less adversely impacted than, for example, an evaluation of a country programme where significant field work was foreseen. The ToR already raised the issue of the likely impact of the pandemic on field work, and in accordance with EVAL's guidance on conducting evaluations under COVID-19¹² no face-to-face interviews were foreseen during data collection and stakeholder consultation. The face-to-face scoping interviews during this past inception phase, which would normally have been carried out at ILO headquarters in Geneva, were conducted remotely. The evaluation also considered the institutional response to the pandemic, with regard to the gender dimension, and the institutional aspect of this response in terms of speed of reaction and institutional agility. In the management of the evaluation, close monitoring was done of the situation and use was made of the risk matrix and related nice scenarios of the above-mentioned guidance note.¹³ The EVAL protocol on collecting evaluative evidence on ILO's COVID-19 response¹⁴ was also used to guide the evaluation in terms of addressing Covid-19 related aspects.

Regarding **stakeholders and governance and ownership arrangements**, the intended users and clients of 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, as well as directors and staff at both headquarters and field offices.

2.3 Process and methods

The overall evaluation approach and analytical framework for the evaluation comprised a desk research component over the two phases of the evaluation, initially during the scoping and inception phase and continuing during the main evaluation phase. The evaluation has been broad in its scope, with supplementary synthesis review work from ILO EVAL, detailed analysis of GEM in policy documents, comparative analysis of GEM in planned and realized POs, detailed analysis of country programme outcomes (CPOs) with gender-responsive results, and a financial and resource expenditure review.

This analytical work included a global perspective of GEM in ILO's policy frameworks, decent work programme implementation, CPOs, and ILO flagship programmes, which provided context for the HLE's findings. It was conducted by selecting excerpts from documents and examples that demonstrated the extent to which gender equality is mainstreamed at the ILO. This involved a desk review of selected ILO's conventions and policy, strategic and monitoring documents, CPO reports in decent work databases, and selected reports of the five flagship programmes. This review work provided both a qualitative and quantitative account of the evaluation questions. It included two analytical frameworks to categorize ILO's GEM efforts, namely the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Framework (GESI)¹⁵ as an indicator of the degree of gender-responsiveness in ILO's strategic documents (and supporting an assessment of relevance), and a set of 10 gender equality areas in which ILO intervenes (supporting an assessment of areas of effectiveness). These outputs provided both a qualitative and quantitative account of the evaluation questions and include two analytical frameworks to categorize ILO's GEM efforts: the GESI as an indicator of the degree of gender-responsiveness in ILO's strategic documents, and a set of 10 gender equality areas in which ILO intervenes. The former supports an assessment of relevance and, the latter, an assessment of areas of effectiveness.

Following the inception and scoping phase, the main phase of the evaluation included in the analytical framework a series of six case studies, more specifically areas of investigation that looked at a number of issues/areas across GEM in programmatic work and GEM in the ILO institution, but not with the resources

12 [Implications of COVID-19 on evaluations in the ILO](#), Operating procedures No. 1, 20 March 2020 (v.1), 24 April 2020 (v.3)

13 Risk matrix: Constraints and risks as measured against the criticality of the evaluation to the ILO, ["Implications of COVID-19 on evaluations in the ILO"](#) Operating procedures No. 1, 20 March 2020 (v.1), 24 April 2020 (v.3)

14 [Protocol on collecting evaluative evidence on the ILO's COVID-19 response measures through project and programme evaluations](#), Operating procedures, No. 2, October 2020

15 Framework developed by the Tithetse Nkhanza programme, in Malawi to assess gender on a continuum from Gender Blind to Gender Transformative. It is used through the field of development in institutional frameworks such as joint UN programmes within UNAIDs, DFID and various international and national NGOs. Please see [tn-gesi-strategy.pdf \(sddirect.org.uk\)](#)

of defined hypotheses that one would typically expect in a case study. These areas of enquiry included: Programmatic outcome case studies – GEM in: (1) policy outcomes; (2) DWCPs and CPOs; and (3) institutional outcome case studies, i.e. institutional support to GEM within ILO; (4) GEM performance within selected departments; (5) the results- based APGEs; and (6) partnerships.

Stakeholder consultation involved 73 informants across the ILO, constituents and external partners during both phases, with a number of 90 interviews during both evaluation phases.¹⁶

An important part of the stakeholder consultation effort, in particular given the COVID-19 pandemic and related guidance, was a series of web-based surveys: (i) a Constituents Survey (150 respondents); (ii) ILO Staff Survey (448 respondents), which also covered specific surveying of (iii) the ILO Gender Network; and (iv) ILO Global Technical Team (GTT).

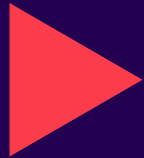
2.4 Evaluation limitations and constraints

Regarding **evaluation constraints**, one limitation was the lack of a detailed and validated ToC on ILO GEM policy. While a working draft was developed during the inception phase, it will probably require further refinement and improvement. Such a framework or “lens” on how ILO objectives and policies are translated into actions, standards, etc., within the Institution itself and in ILO's work in development cooperation, is of necessity complex, encompassing as it does the institutional dimension to GEM in the ILO institution, as well as GEM efforts and work in ILO's DCWPs. Feedback on the draft ToC during the inception report review, and refinement during the evaluation, are likely to be the most effective mitigation approaches.

Another constraint that the evaluation faced was the need to carry out remote consultations due to COVID-19 restrictions and the possible challenge of securing sufficient time in interviews to cover the full Interview Guide. As for the first challenge, this is simply the current operating reality, and may also bring the advantage of further learning on implementing evaluations in this kind of pandemic-influencing environment. Moreover, given the focus of this GEM HLE, the constraint of not doing field interviews was probably not as significant in the case of an institutional HLE compared with one of a project that had carried out significant infrastructure development and demonstration sites or pilot projects, and where field visits and monitoring would thus be more important.

The biggest challenge encountered was the scope and coverage of the evaluation and, linked to this, the need to respond to expectations with respect to the evaluation within the resourcing limits.

¹⁶ Several informants were interviewed up to three times given the key role they played in the case studies, and in providing documentation



3

Evaluation findings



► 3. Evaluation findings

3.1 Relevance

Key findings

Key finding 1: The ILO policy on gender equality and mainstreaming policy, ¹⁷ and the ILO action plans on gender equality are highly relevant to the organisation's social justice mandate and standard-setting agenda addressing gender equality and non-discrimination.

Key finding 2: Gender equality and mainstreaming at the ILO is relevant to the needs and demands of constituents. This is reflected in the gender transformative interventions that aim to deliver structural and institutional changes needed in the world of work.

Key finding 3: The relevance of gender equality indicators in policy outcomes, country programme outcomes and development cooperation projects is clear. However, the inclusion of specific gender objectives is uneven.

3.1.1 ILO declarations, conventions and policy framework

Key finding 1: The ILO policy on gender equality and mainstreaming policy, and the ILO action plans on gender equality are highly relevant to the organisation's social justice mandate and standard-setting agenda addressing gender equality and non-discrimination.

The evaluation findings show strong relevance and alignment of ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts during the period 2016–2021 with ILO's established priorities and outcomes under the 2008 (and 2016) Declarations on Social Justice and the 2019 Centenary Declaration, and the Transitional Strategic Plan 2016–17, the Strategic Plan 2018–21, related P&Bs and DWCPs as well as UN global (SDGs).

ILO recognized the relevance of gender equality and mainstreaming in the world of work in the early 1950s, as evidenced by the development of such conventions as Convention No. 100, Convention No. 111 and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No. 156). The launch of the Decent Work Agenda (1999) and the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183) solidified gender equality as a cross-cutting issue in job creation, rights at work, social protection, and social dialogue, and underscored the relevance of gender equality across all the ILO's work. Increased efforts on gender equality and mainstreaming have continued ever since as part of ILO's mandate.

ILO's priorities and outcomes as set out in the 2008 (and 2016) Declarations on Social Justice and the 2019 Centenary Declaration, the alignment of ILO's GEM efforts can be seen in the modernization of the Organization since the Declaration of Philadelphia, and its recommitment to gender equality and non-discrimination as a cross-cutting issue of the four ILO strategic objectives. This is also seen in the context of the need for a social dimension to globalization in achieving improved and fair outcomes for all, which is grounded in decent work, and the implementation of the Decent Work agenda (DWA).

A review of Strategic Plans (SPs) and P&Bs for the periods 2016–2017, 2018–2019 and 2020–2021, all provide evidence of the relevance of gender equality to the work of the ILO, particularly as it relates to the Women at Work initiative.

¹⁷ The ILO Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming was announced in 1999 and shared in updated form with the senior management team in 2016.

Strategic Plan 2016–17 has 10 policy outcomes, three cross-cutting policy drivers, among which is gender equality and non-discrimination, and three main outcomes: advocacy, governance and support. Section IV of the SP 2016–17 clearly outlines the relevance of GEM across the ILO's work (an entire section highlights the importance of working to reduce discrimination and the design of wage policies). This SP is supported by the P&B 2016–2017 aligned with 17 gender equality indicators and 21 gender equality measures. Using the GESI framework¹⁸ as an assessment tool, it was determined that the P&B 2016–17 shows relevance since 9 out of 10 policy outcomes imply at least one gender transformative intervention¹⁹ through influencing change in legislation, national policies, and plans, and in market institutions, promoting collective action through social dialogue thus enabling an environment of sustainable change towards gender equality and social inclusion.

Strategic Plan 2018–19, with 10 policy outcomes, four cross-cutting policy drivers, among which is gender equality and non-discrimination, and three enabling outcomes. The Strategic Plan for 2018–2021 indicates the relevance of gender equality and mainstreaming in ILO's vision, by recognizing the Women at Work Centenary initiative as an inherent part of the ILO's overarching strategy framework. Further, gender equality is seen as an essential component of social justice in the Women at Work initiative (under the Future of Work initiative), and as a strategic approach to gender equality and mainstreaming at policy level and its relevance in tackling the issue of unequal conditions of work for women. This Strategic Plan is supported by the P&B 2018–2019 aligned with 18 gender equality indicators and 21 gender equality measures. Using the GESI framework, it was determined that the P&B 2018–19 confirms ILO's purpose to promote structural changes in relation to gender equality and inclusion, with eight out of 10 policy outcomes implying at least one gender-transformative approach in legislation, policies, macro conditions and institutions.

The Strategic Plan 2020–21 (with eight policy outcomes, among which PO 6 “gender equality and equal opportunity and treatment for all in the world of work”, and three enabling outcomes²⁰) is supported by the P&B 2020–2021 aligned with six gender equality indicators and eight gender equality measures. Using the GESI framework, it was determined that seven out of eight policy outcomes in P&B 2020–21 through its indicators and outputs, show the relevance of gender equality and non-discrimination to the achievement of gender-transformative legislation, policies, and institutions.

The three different SPs for the period 2016–2021 include: Strategic Plan 2016–17, with 10 policy outcomes, three cross-cutting policy drivers, among which is gender equality and non-discrimination, and three main outcomes: advocacy, governance and support. This SP is supported by P&B 2016–2017 aligned with 17 gender equality indicators and 21 gender equality measures. Strategic Plan 2018–19, with 10 policy outcomes, four cross-cutting policy drivers, among which is gender equality and non-discrimination, and three enabling outcomes. This SP is supported by P&B 2018–2019 aligned with 18 gender equality indicators and 21 gender equality measures. Indication that ILO GEM efforts were part of the 2018–19 biennium are the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190) and the launching of the Women at Work initiative, which was part of ILO's seven centenary initiatives. The Strategic Plan 2020–21, with eight policy outcomes, among which PO6 “gender equality and equal opportunity and treatment for all in the world of work”, and three enabling outcomes: (a) authoritative knowledge and high-impact partnerships for promoting decent work; (b) effective and efficient governance of the Organization; and (c) efficient support services and effective use of ILO resources. This SP is supported by the P&B 2020–2021 aligned with six gender equality indicators and eight gender equality measures.

The evolution of gender equality from cross-cutting policy drivers to an actual policy outcome reflects the commitment and understanding of the role that ILO has to play in the promotion of gender equality and mainstreaming in the world of work, and particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic recovery.

18 Framework developed by the Tithetse Nkhansa programme, in Malawi to assess gender on a continuum from Gender Blind to Gender Transformative. It is used through the field of development in institutional frameworks such as joint UN programmes within UNAIDS, DFID and various international and national NGOs. Please see tn-gesi-strategy.pdf (sddirect.org.uk)

19 Gender transformative approaches are programmes and interventions that create opportunities for individuals to actively challenge gender norms, promote positions of social and political influence for women in communities, and address power imbalances between persons of different genders.

20 These outcomes are: (a) authoritative knowledge and high-impact partnerships for promoting decent work; (b) effective and efficient governance of the Organization; and (c) efficient support services and effective use of ILO resources.

Examples of the relevance of ILO gender equality to the needs and demands of constituents and social partners is the Women at Work initiative and the development of Convention No. 190. Constituents' constant demand for GEM training is also a token of the relevant role that ILO plays among its constituents, and this relevance has been equally in evidence since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, as seen for example in ILO's *Policy Brief*,²¹ and particularly in "The COVID-19 response: Getting gender equality right for a better future for women at work".²²

GEM in ILO development cooperation projects is also connected to the idea of more and better jobs, with the three main areas being: (i) access to employment; (ii) protection of vulnerable persons; and (iii) domestic migration. However, the consideration of gender as an intersectional category is not necessarily reflected in development objectives of ILO DC projects which do not always mention gender-specific objectives, but rather mention women as beneficiaries. In the case of the immediate objectives, projects appear to be more gender sensitive.

ILO partnering that has a gender element or dimension includes partnering with UNDP, where there is a partnership framework (MoU) in place, while partnering with UN Women has been more on case-by-case basis.²³ The Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) is a successful partnership, helping to position ILO in this key equality debate and effort, and member country feedback has for example emphasized the value of the coalition as a platform for discussion and networking. Mention should also be made of the long and sustained collaboration between ILO and SIDA in the realization of policy outcome on enhancing the protection of the most vulnerable workers and their families who have been strongly affected by the pandemic, which has paid special attention to women in lower paid jobs.

3.1.2 Action Plan on Gender Equality to constituents' needs

Key finding 2: Gender equality and mainstreaming at the ILO is relevant to the needs and demands of constituents. This is reflected in the gender-transformative interventions that aim to deliver the structural and institutional changes needed in the world of work.

The relevance to constituents' needs and demands can be seen in the GEM references to policy outcomes²⁴ in the SP 2016–17, such as Recruitment /Employment; Political Voice and Social Status, with GEM-related indicators 1.2, 1.3 and 1.5 in Outcome 1 in the P&B 2016–17. These indicators directly link to making the case for gender equality, non-discrimination and inclusive economic growth to constituents on the basis of their needs and demands in a period of severe youth employment challenges. This was achieved using a balanced approach of activation policies and protection of the rights of young women and men. As an example, policy-oriented research was conducted on the situation of women at work as a basis for the Women at Work Centenary initiative. This research and capacity building on the interactions between macroeconomic policies, employment and labour market policies was relevant to the constituents' needs and demands during the youth employment crisis mentioned above.

In Outcome 2 of SP 2016–17, labour standards with GEM-related indicators are present in indicator 2.3 in the P&B 2016–17 relating to the application of international labour standards to equality of opportunity and treatment. Here a gender perspective is incorporated into national needs assessments, legal gap analyses, as well as in training and capacity-building activities. In Outcome 3 (Social Protection, Political Voice and Social Status) GEM-related indicators 3.1 and 3.2 place attention on equipping constituents to address

21 "ILO social protection responses to the COVID-19 crisis: Country responses and policy considerations", *ILO brief*, 23 April 2020; "ILO the need for social dialogue in addressing the COVID-19 crisis", *ILO Policy Brief*, 5 May 2020; ILO, "COVID-19 and the world of work: Sectoral impact responses and recommendations", 10 May 2020; "Sickness benefits during sick leave and quarantine: Country responses and policy considerations in the context of COVID-19", *ILO brief*, 14 May 2020

22 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---gender/documents/publication/wcms_744685.pdf.

23 ILO partnering that has a gender element is discussed further in the section on impact (section 3.5).

24 Appendix 8 on Detailed analysis of GEM in ILO high-level and policy documents, August 2021.

knowledge gaps and collect sex-disaggregated social security data, and to design and implement gender-responsive²⁵ social protection policies. Outcome 4 (Glass Ceiling, Skills Gap and Labour Standards) contains a GEM-related indicator 4.3 supporting the expanding services for potential and existing entrepreneurs, including women and young people, focusing on integrated financial and non-financial services and on access to green business opportunities. Outcome 6 (Political Voice, Social Status, Recruitment, Employment, Social and Economic Vulnerability) includes GEM indicators 6.2 and 6.3 which seek to strengthen the capacity of constituents to promote gender equality in policy formulation and adoption of specific measures to facilitate vulnerable groups' access to formal employment. Outcome 8 (Labour Standards, Social and Economic Vulnerability) contains GEM indicators 8.1 and 8.2 in the P&B 2016–17 focusing on groups of workers most typically discriminated against in the labour market (including low-income women workers, migrant workers, people with disabilities and those who face discrimination on the grounds of race, ethnicity or HIV/AIDs). Finally, Outcome 9 (Social and Economic Vulnerability) contains GEM-related indicators 9.1 and 9.3 concentrating on better equipping constituents to develop and implement gender-responsive labour-migration interventions.

As for the SP 2018–21, references to GEM have not been identified across the 10 outcomes, although the P&B 2018–19 still shows GEM-related indicators where constituents are at the centre of it, such as in Outcome 1, indicators 1.4 and 1.5, Outcome 6, Indicator 6.1, and Outcome 8, Indicator 8.2. As far as SP 2020–21 is concerned, GEM-related indicators are found in Outcome 1, indicators 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4, Outcome 3, Indicator 3.4, Outcome 5, Indicator 5.3, Outcome 6, indicators 6.1, 6.2 and 6.4, and Outcome 7, indicators 7.4 and 7.5.

The HLE Constituents Survey show a significant majority of constituents consider (88.7% of respondents strongly agree or agree) that ILO's Gender Equality and Mainstreaming (GEM) *strategic objectives and policies* are strongly relevant to the needs of constituents on gender equality and empowerment of women (GEEW). Furthermore, 75.6 per cent of respondents consider that *ILO's actions and outputs related to GEM* are strongly relevant to the needs of constituents on GEEW, while 70.43% of respondents either strongly agree or agree that ILO's expert advice has been relevant to enhancing constituents' institutional capacity for including gender equality and empowerment of women in international labour standards.

Approximately two-thirds of constituents (66.09 per cent of the Constituents Survey respondents) consider that ILO's development cooperation projects have been relevant in providing support and assistance to specific constituents to promote and adopt GEEW. A similar proportion of constituents consider that ILO's expert advice has been relevant to enhancing constituents' institutional capacity on including gender equality and empowerment of women in tripartism and social dialogue (65.22 per cent strongly agree/agree). A comparable proportion of respondents consider that ILO's development cooperation projects have been relevant in providing support and assistance to specific constituents to promote and adopt GEEW (64.33 per cent strongly agree/agree).

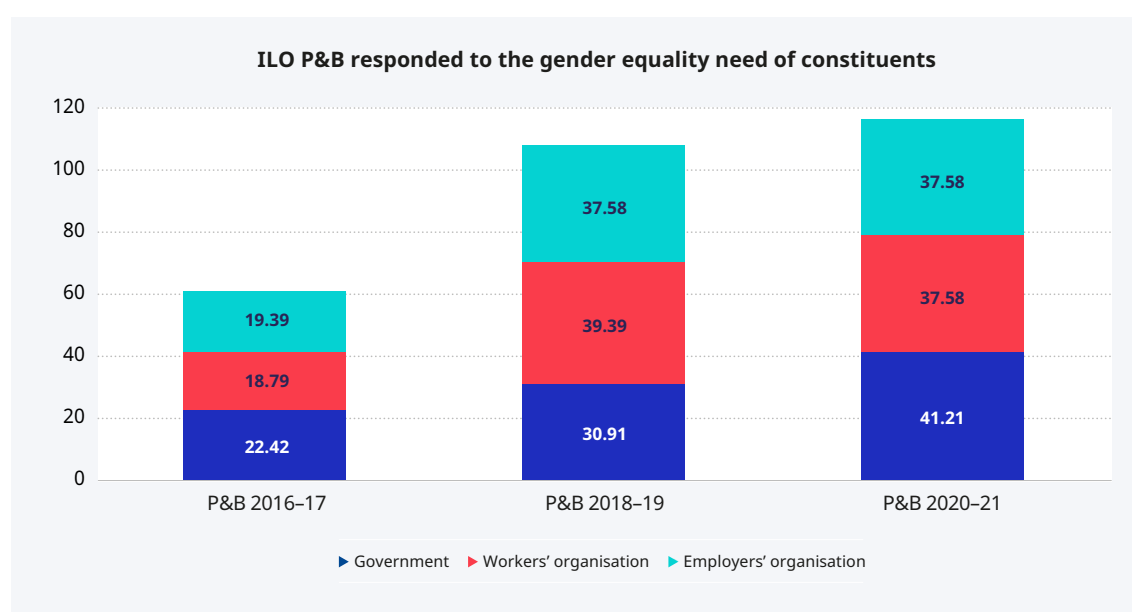
As regards the relevance of ILO's technical cooperation projects, Constituents Survey respondents consider ILO's technical cooperation projects relevant in enhancing the gender equality and empowerment of women institutional capacity – in terms of institutional capacity enhancement at policy and sectoral level (60.87 per cent), at constituents' organization level (60 per cent) and at constituents' individual level (56.52 per cent).

Moreover, ILO's expert advice is considered relevant by a majority of respondents in enhancing constituents' institutional capacity on including gender equality and empowerment of women in environmental sustainability (54.78 per cent of respondents either strongly agree/agree). While ILO's technical cooperation and expert advice projects have been relevant in facilitating meaningful and coherent gender equality and empowerment of women in social policy and sustainable development in the country (52.17 per cent strongly agree/agree). The Constituents Survey also showed that ILO programming from 2016 to 2021 on gender equality and empowerment of women was relevant to national action plans, policies, strategies of programmes or frameworks in the top four areas Harassment/Violence (89 per cent), followed by Work Conditions (79 per cent), Social Protection (75 per cent) and Youth employment (74 per cent).

²⁵ Gender responsiveness (or a gender-responsive approach) means intentionally utilizing gender considerations to influence the design, development, implementation and results of programmes and strategies, policies, laws and regulations, as well as collective agreements.

The HLE Staff Survey sought ILO staff's views on the extent to which ILO P&Bs have responded to the needs of constituents (figure 4), specifically the needs of: (i) government; (ii) workers' organizations; and (iii) employers' organizations. Interestingly, the findings showed that only approximately one fifth of ILO staff perceive that the P&B 2016–17 had responded well to the gender equality needs of: (i) government (22.42 per cent); (ii) workers' organizations (18.79 per cent); and (iii) employers' organizations (19.39 per cent), but that their perception was significantly more favourable for subsequent P&Bs. For example, significantly more staff (almost double) agree that the P&B 2020–21 responded well to the needs of: (i) government (41.21 per cent strongly agree/agree); (ii) workers' organizations (37.58 per cent strongly agree/agree); and (iii) employers' organizations (37.58 per cent strongly agree/agree).

► **Figure 4. ILO staff views on P&B responsiveness to gender equality needs of constituents**
(ILO Staff Survey)



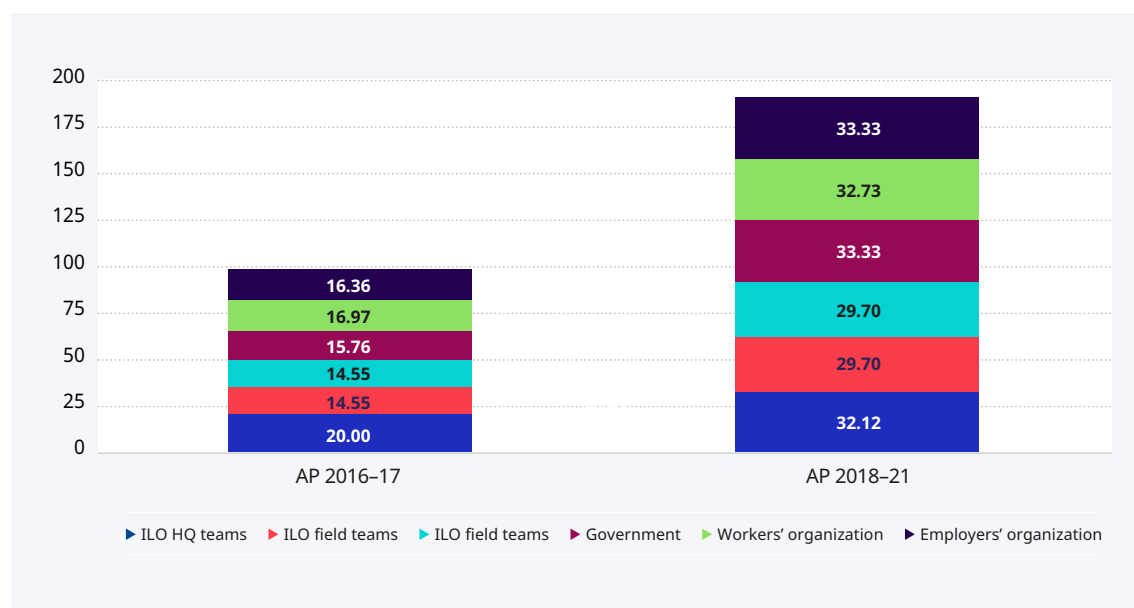
Regarding the relevance of ILO action plans and objectives to the needs of ILO staff, partners and constituents, the Constituents Survey showed that 88.70 per cent of ILO constituents perceived that the needs of constituents regarding gender equality and empowerment of women were being addressed.²⁶

The findings of the Staff Survey on how ILO staff consider that the ILO action plans (AP 2016–18 and AP 2018–21) design and objectives have responded to the needs of: (i) headquarters teams; (ii) field teams, ILO partners and constituents; (iv) government; (v) workers' organizations; and (vi) employers' organizations.²⁷ Again, the findings show that one fifth of staff consider that the Action Plan 2016–17 responded well to the needs of headquarters teams (20 per cent), followed by workers' organizations (16.97 per cent), employers' organizations (16.36 per cent), and government (15.76 per cent). More than one seventh of staff respondents consider that field teams' needs (14.55 per cent) and field team partners' needs (14.55 per cent) have been addressed. In the case of the Action Plan 2018–21, almost one third of ILO staff consider that it has responded well to headquarters teams' needs (32.12 per cent), followed by government and employers' organizations (both 33.33 per cent), and workers' organizations (32.73 per cent), while field teams (14.55 per cent) and partners (29.70 per cent) consider that their needs have been addressed (figure 5).

²⁶ HLE Constituents Survey, Question 8.

²⁷ HLE Staff Survey questions 18 and 19.

► **Figure 5. Relevance of ILO Action Plans on Gender Equality and objectives to the needs of ILO staff, partners and constituents**



All of the HLE surveys (constituents, staff, gender focal points – GFPs and GTT surveys) show either a high or a good level of relevance in relation to GEM and GEEW, in particular to DWCPs, national policies and to the needs of constituents. The Constituents Survey showed for example that ILO's country policy responses to COVID-19 and GEM are perceived as either strongly relevant or relevant, with an average of 54.9 per cent of respondents considering them either strongly relevant or relevant to the pillar using social dialogue between government, workers' organizations and employers' organizations to find solutions, followed by 53.2 per cent for the pillar protecting workers in the workplace, and 42 per cent for the pillar supporting enterprises, employment and incomes. In contrast, only 29 per cent of respondents perceive ILO's country policy responses to COVID-19 and GEM for the pillar stimulating the economy and jobs were either very relevant or relevant.

The relevance of ILO's GEM policy and approach to the needs and demands of constituents can also be observed in the gender-transformative interventions that aim to deliver structural and institutional changes needed in the world of work. The GESI²⁸ framework criteria showed, for example, that nine in 10 policy outcomes for the 2016–17 period imply at least one gender-transformative intervention.²⁹ However, for the 2018–2019 period, the number of POs decreased to eight. This was, in principle, a result of the alignment of ILO APGE 2018–21 to the UN-SWAP 2.0, which changed from 15 performance indicators to 17, as well as internal ILO decisions regarding adding and withdrawing specific indicators for selected POs.

For example, in this process, PO2 lost the indicator which gave this policy outcome at least one gender-transformation intervention in 2016–17. It is important to mention that the setting of these indicators and their targets is the result of a consultative internal process within ILO. It should also be noted that PO4 has interventions that explicitly address the strategic empowerment of women through the creation of enabling environments for sustainable and inclusive enterprises.

28 GESI is the Gender Equality and Social Inclusion model/strategy to assess gender interventions and discern the extent to which a programme addresses gender inequalities and social exclusion in a positive spectrum that ranges from sensitive and responsive to transformative or, at the negative end, with GESI blind or GESI exploitative.

29 Gender-transformative approaches are programmes and interventions that create opportunities for individuals to actively challenge gender norms, promote positions of social and political influence for women in communities, and address power imbalances between persons of different genders.

3.1.3 Policy outcomes

Key finding 3: The relevance of gender equality indicators in policy outcomes, country programme outcomes and development cooperation projects is clear. However, the inclusion of specific gender objectives is uneven.

ILO GEM policy's relevance of policy outcomes in gender equality indicators can be clearly observed in development cooperation projects, DWCPs and CPOs. However, what is missing is the systematic inclusion of specific gender objectives in the DC projects and DWCPs and CPOs.

In the SP 2016–17, GEM references to policy outcomes, reflected in the P&B 2016–17 GEM-related indicators, Outcome 8 protecting workers from unacceptable forms of work show direct interventions that intend to promote and integrate gender-responsive strategies that through legal and policy advice and institution building, will enable constituents to address gaps in the protection of workers more effectively.

According to the meta-synthesis review on key evaluation findings and lessons learned on gender equality and mainstreaming in selected ILO development cooperation projects³⁰, mention was made in section 3.3 of development cooperation projects' inconsistent sensitivity to gender whereas 34 per cent of evaluated reports from the sample list presented a gender-responsive development objective, and almost 60 per cent comprised at least one gender-responsive immediate objective. The meta-synthesis review finds that the reports tended to integrate the intersectional nature of gender and to develop tailored interventions to bridge gender asymmetries in the world of work. Also, projects benefiting from GEDI support were more likely to comprise gender-responsive development objectives than other projects (60 per cent against 28 per cent). They also had higher averages for the gender marker (3.2 against 2.6). Furthermore, the meta-synthesis mentions that the inclusion of gender in other development cooperation projects tended to be more erratic as they acknowledge the existence of gender asymmetries in the world of work as a cross-cutting concern. It is assumed that gender equality would be addressed incidentally as a direct result of general and indiscriminate interventions, while other projects preferred to deliberately cancel the gender asymmetry in favour of focusing on other forms of discrimination.

According to the responses of the ILO Staff Survey,³¹ the level of incorporation of gender equality into the outcomes, outputs and activities of ILO development cooperation projects shows that 45.16 per cent of the respondents think that there is high incorporation or good incorporation of development cooperation project outputs, followed by 44.87 per cent who either consider there is a high incorporation or good incorporation of project activities, while 40.6 per cent consider that there is high incorporation or good incorporation of project outcomes (immediate objectives) (figure 6).

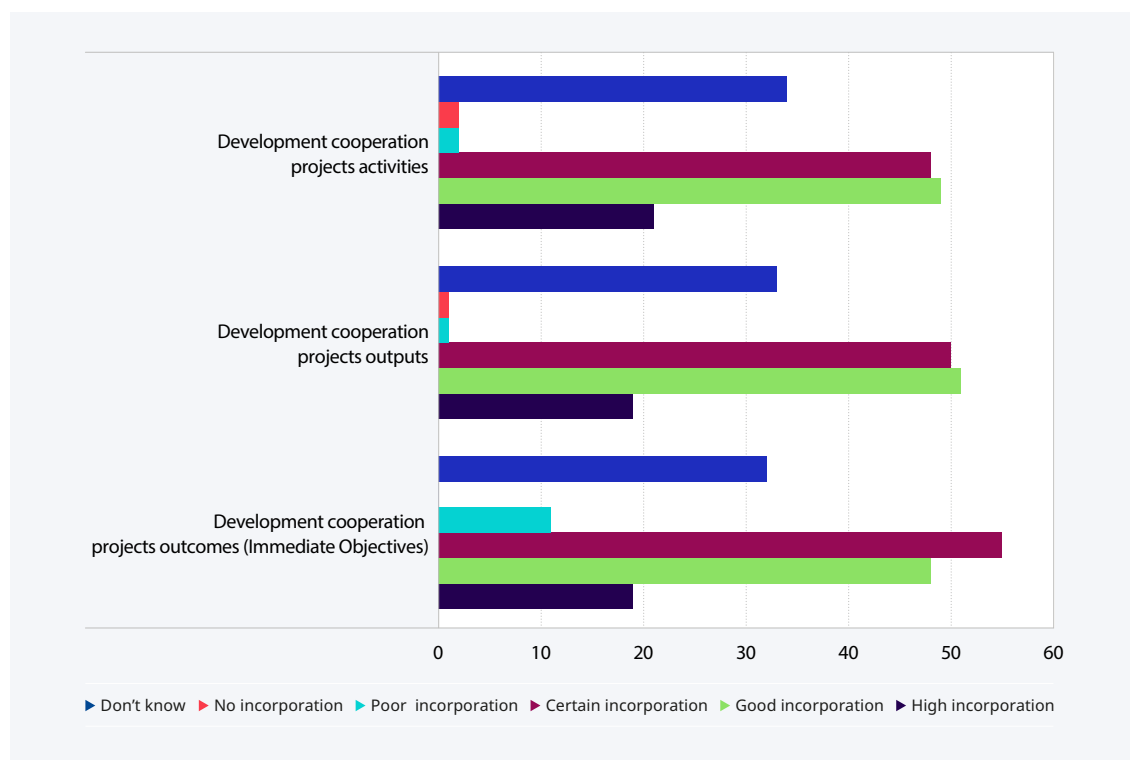
Overall, analysis of the ILO's CPOs shows a solid/consistent, although varying, presence of gender-responsive results per policy outcome. For example, for the 2016–17 biennium, CPOs linked to all programme outcomes reported at least one gender-responsive result, although there is significant variation across POs, with the most effective being PO6 (Formalization of the informal economy) and PO9 (Promoting fair and effective labour migration policies) being the most effective, recording 74.1 per cent and 71.0 per cent, respectively, while PO2, PO5 and PO4 (Ratification and application of international labour standards; Decent work in the rural economy; Promoting sustainable enterprises; and Promoting workplace compliance through labour inspection), registered gender-responsiveness rates of 31.5 per cent, 33.3 per cent, 34.5 per cent and 36.4 per cent, respectively.

The **regional breakdown** of the CPO analysis revealed at least one gender-responsive result in the 2016–17 biennium with 49.5 per cent of ILO CPOs reporting at least one gender-responsive result, globally. In most regions, approximately half of the CPOs reported a gender-responsive result during the biennium, with Europe and Central Asia being the lowest, at just under 30 per cent (table 4).

30 "Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: An ex-post meta-analysis of development cooperation evaluations, 2019–2020."

31 Question 21 related to the degree of incorporation of gender equality in the outcomes, outputs and activities of ILO development cooperation projects.

► Figure 6. Incorporation of gender equality in ILO outcomes, outputs and activities



► Table 4. CPOs with minimum one gender-responsive result per PO in the biennium 2016–17

All Region gender cross-tabulation					
			Gender		Total
			0	1	
Region	Africa	Count	150	161	311
		% within Region	48.2%	51.8%	100.0%
	Americas	Count	117	126	243
		% within Region	48.1%	51.9%	100.0%
	Arab States	Count	29	29	58
		% within Region	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
	Asia and the Pacific	Count	103	120	223
		% within Region	46.2%	53.8%	100.0%
	Europe and Central Asia	Count	77	30	107
		% within Region	72.0%	28.0%	100.0%
Total		Count	476	466	942
		% within Region	50.5%	49.5%	100.0%

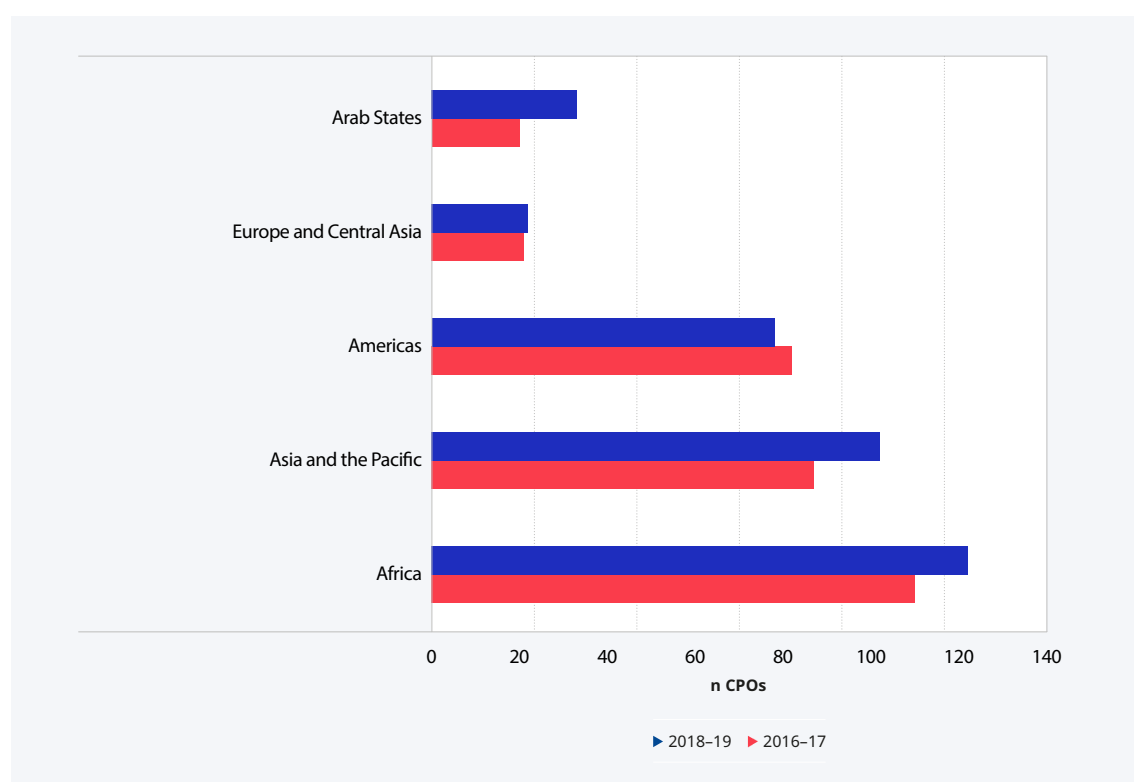
Legend of Column Gender:

0 Means that the report did not refer to gender equality and non-discrimination results.

1 Means report referred to some GE results.

The relevance of CPOs to PO GE indicators is directly traceable particularly for the 2020–21 biennium, where the link between PO6 and CPOs, is related to each indicator, for example Indicator 6.1. linked to 14 target CPOs across four regions, Indicator 6.2 currently linked to 36 CPOs, and Indicator 6.3 linked to 41 CPOs of which 25 are target CPOs, while Indicator 6.4 is currently linked to 38 CPOs of which 21 are target CPOs (figure 7). At the global level, there are: the formulation and implementation of gender-centred policy responses towards the evolving COVID-19 crisis; research on “care policies” for workers with family responsibilities in the areas of care-leave policies, childcare and long-term care or on the working conditions of childcare and long-term care workers.

► **Figure 7. CPOs linked to 2020–21 PO indicators across ILO regions**



ILO partnering within the UN system on development cooperation projects that have a gender element or dimension are those with UNDP where a partnership framework (Memorandum of Understanding) is in place, while partnering with UN Women has been more on a case-by-case basis. There are numerous other partnerships, for example across the Flagship Programmes, that may have a strong gender dimension, such as under Better Work with Tufts University.

EPIC is a successful partnership, helping to position ILO in this key equality debate and effort, and member country feedback has for example emphasized the value of the coalition as a platform for discussion and networking. Another example is the long-standing collaboration between ILO and SIDA in the realization of P&B 2018-2019³² outputs 7.3 and 7.4 which aim to enhance the protection of most vulnerable workers and their families who have been strongly affected by the pandemic, with special attention to women in lower paid jobs.

32 ILO SIDA Partnership Programme 2018-21 https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---exrel/documents/genericdocument/wcms_759969.pdf.

3.2 Coherence

Key findings

Key finding 4: At the policy outcome level, the ILO has maintained a high level of coherence between the ILO strategic plans and its efforts in relation to gender equality, particularly under the Women at Work Initiative.

Key finding 5: There is alignment between the ILO's Decent Work Agenda (DWA) and the strategic documents that established gender equality as one of ILO's cross-cutting objectives and as a policy driver in the policy outcomes of its programme and budget.

Key finding 6: The ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming strategies and approaches are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

Key finding 7: The ILO action plans for gender equality are fully aligned with the second United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN SWAP 2.0).

3.2.1 ILO strategic plans and policy framework

Key finding 4: At the policy outcome level, the ILO has maintained a high level of coherence between the ILO strategic plans and its efforts in relation to gender equality, particularly under the Women at Work Initiative.

There is strong coherence between the different SPs and the ILO activities policy framework as found, for example, in the coherence found in SP 2016–17 with the Women at Work Centenary Initiative, where ILO GEM efforts converge with policy outcomes and specific outputs. This coherence is also present in the ILO's fundamental conventions and other ILO instruments on equality and non-discrimination which provide the overarching framework for this strategy. During the evaluated biennia, efforts towards gender equality have increased and created an institutional environment to promote GEM which is coherent with ILO's efforts and mandate. This addresses the coherence between ILO's policies, plans and conventions on GEM.

ILO's P&B 2016–17 reflects coherence with the SP 2016–17, and where gender equality cross-cutting concerns were translated into clear actions and measurable results following the institutional framework provided by the Women at Work Initiative, and other interventions such as Decent Work for Domestic Workers are clearly linked to the relevant P&B outcomes, the reports show strong coherence through synergies and collaboration between interventions at national, regional and global levels.

Moreover, gender equality and non-discrimination continue to be a necessary cross-cutting policy issue in the SP 2018–21, and the Women at Work Initiative has built evidence to advance ILO's work for gender equality and non-discrimination as essential components of social justice.

The Future of Work Initiative was the centrepiece of the centenary activities. It influences the work of and is informed by ILO analytical work on demographics, migration and technological change from initiatives such as Women at Work, Green, and Enterprise initiatives.

Coherence with the Office's mandate and ambition to pursue gender-responsive outputs that are gender transformative is reflected in the ILO's policy documents analysed under the GESI framework criteria which

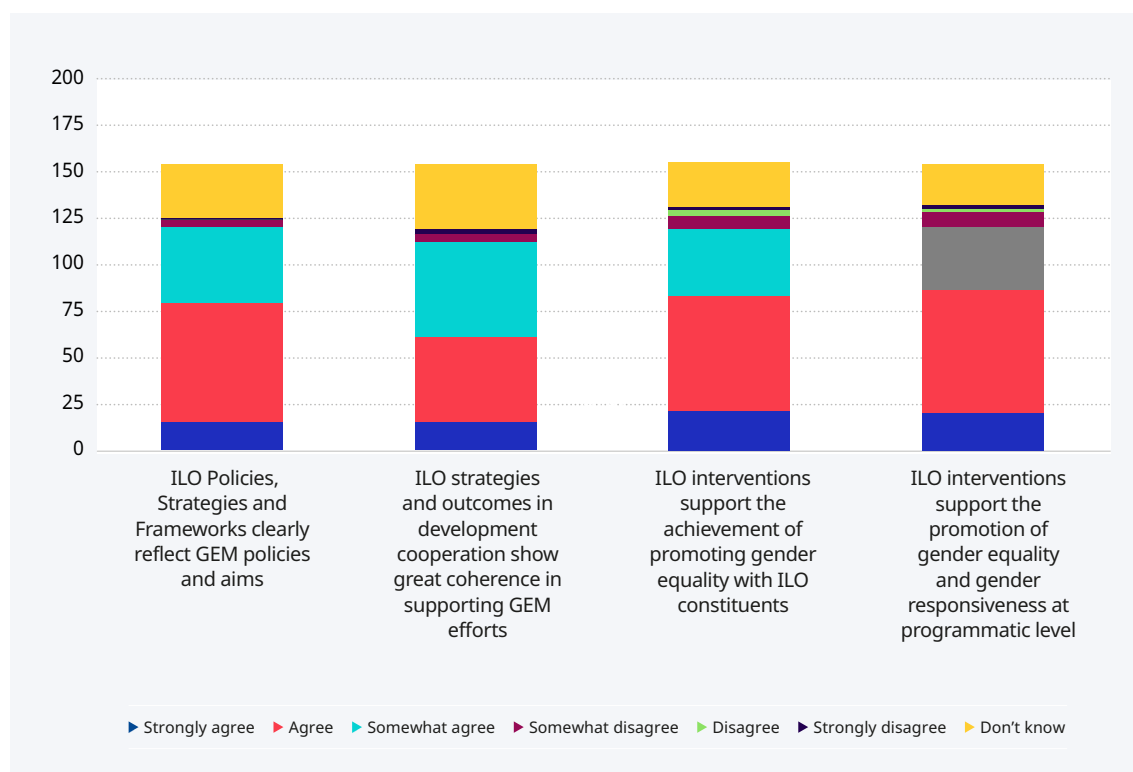
show gender responsiveness as some of the outcomes cover more than one category, depending on their indicators.³³

The HLE Staff Survey shows that a majority of ILO staff consider that coherence exists between the GEM policies and aims with ILO policies, strategies and frameworks with respondents considering (strongly agree/agree) that ILO interventions: (i) support the promotion of gender equality and gender responsiveness at programmatic level (55.84 per cent); (ii) support the achievement of promoting gender equality with ILO constituents (53.55 per cent); and (iii) ILO policies, strategies and frameworks clearly reflected GEM policies and aims (51.30 per cent) (figure 8).

In the Constituents Survey, the majority of respondents felt that ILO GEEW was aligned to existing national priorities, policy frameworks and regional frameworks, and that ILO's work was aligned with the work in their organisations.

The Constituents Survey findings on the coherence between ILO programming in gender equality and empowerment of women and the development priorities and national policy frameworks of the constituents show that 57.4 per cent perceive a high level of coherence (extremely aligned or aligned) with their national development priorities. This is followed by 25 per cent perceiving these as being somewhat aligned. In relation to coherence with national policy frameworks, some 55.6 per cent of constituents perceive ILO programming as extremely aligned or aligned, while 25.9 per cent perceive it as somewhat aligned. In the case of the regional framework only 39.8 per cent perceive it as extremely aligned or aligned, and 22.2 per cent as somewhat aligned.

► **Figure 8. Coherence between GEM policies and aims and ILO policies, strategies and frameworks**



33 See Appendix 8: Detailed analysis of GEM in ILO high-level and policy documents, August 2021, and Appendix 9: Comparative analysis of planned and realized ILO policy outcomes, August 2021.

Key finding 5: There is alignment between the ILO's Decent Work Agenda (DWA) and the strategic documents that established gender equality as one of ILO's cross-cutting objectives and as a policy driver in the policy outcomes of its Programme and Budget.

ILO's Decent Work Agenda is coherent with the strategic documents that established gender equality as one of ILO's cross-cutting objectives across the DWA and as a policy driver in the policy outcomes of its P&B.

For example, ILO's three P&Bs for the period 2016–21 included significant outputs and synergies to achieve gender-responsive outcomes that are coherent at national, regional and global levels. This included clear actions and measurable results following the institutional framework provided by the Women at Work initiative and other initiatives, such as Decent Work for Domestic Workers.

The Staff Survey findings also showed that ILO staff consider that there is clear alignment with the DWA, with 62.33 per cent of survey respondents strongly agreeing or agreeing that it promotes gender equality for ILO constituents, with a further 14.9 per cent of staff agreeing that it somewhat promotes GE.

3.2.2 ILO GEM strategies and approaches and SDGs

Key finding 6: ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming strategies and approaches are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

ILO strategic plans (2016–17 and 2018–21) have the same institutional overarching approach to gender equality as a policy driver across all policy outcomes. GE is aligned with the Beijing +20 review process and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, especially to SDG 1, SDG 5 and SDG 8.

ILO is coherent with the SDG Indicator 5 of achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls, as it strongly links to ILO thematic areas such as forced labour, future work, gender equality and non-discrimination, freedom of association and collective bargaining, labour market information systems, national employment policies, all of which are the foundation for several of the ILO policy outcomes (PO1, PO2, PO3, PO6, PO7, PO8, PO10). In relation to SDG 5 and the expected changes in the P&B 2018–21, four POs tackle some of the Agenda 2030 indicators for this SDG. It was reported in the Programme Implementation Report 2018–19 that the contribution of decent work results for the period was 7 per cent to SDG 5 and focused on ending discrimination against women in the labour market (5.1) and increasing women's effective participation and opportunities for leadership (5.5). ILO's role as the custodian for 13 SDG targets including for SDG target 5.5 is of particular relevance in this respect.

One of GEM references in SP 2018–21 is the Women at Work Initiative which directly addresses the central message of the 2030 Agenda of "leave no one behind" and in synergy with the End to Poverty Initiative are responding to SDG 5 on the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls.

3.2.3 ILO action plans and UN SWAP

Key finding 7: The ILO action plans on gender equality are fully aligned with the second United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN SWAP 2.0).

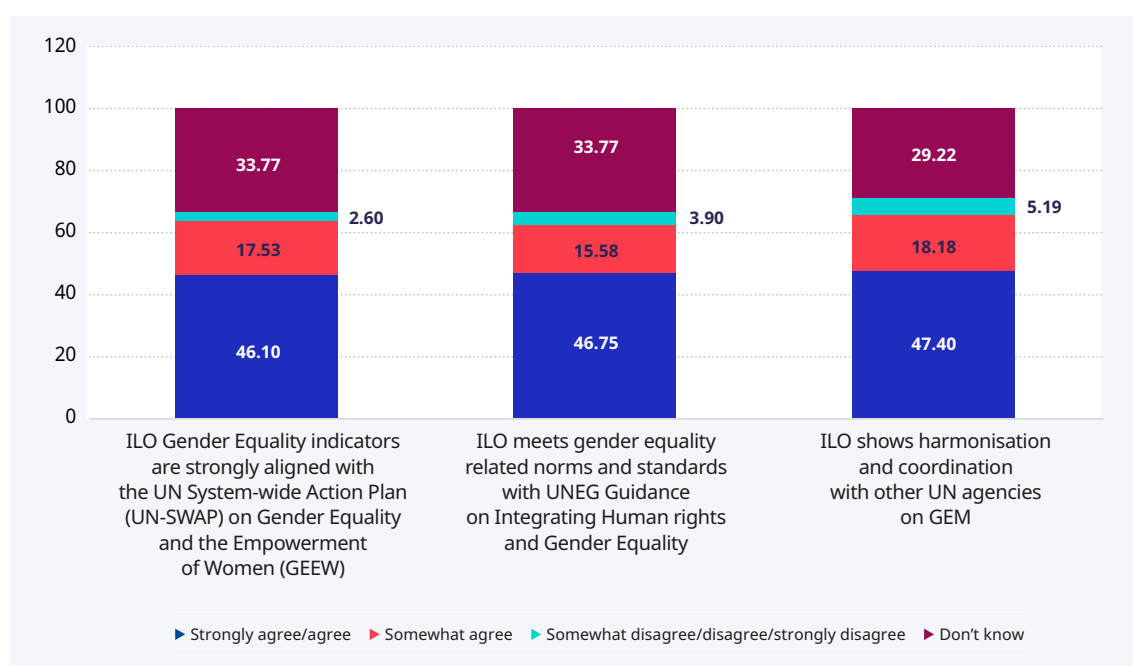
The ILO Action Plans for Gender Equality for the period 2016–21 are fully aligned as they both cover six policy areas with 15 common system-wide performance indicators, as per the Action Plan 2018–21, which provided new indicators as well as the revised ones contained in the UN-SWAP 2.0 (UN System-wide Action Plan).

Since 2014, ILO has aligned its Action Plans for Gender Equality with the UN-System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP). The UN-SWAP 1.0 was implemented from 2012 to 2017. It covered six areas with 15 common system-wide performance indicators: A. Accountability – PI1. Policy and plan; PI2. Gender responsive performance management; B. Result-based management – PI3. Strategic planning; PI4. Monitoring and reporting; C. Oversight – PI5. Evaluation; PI6. Gender responsive auditing; PI7. Programme review; D. Human and financial resources – PI8. Resource tracking; PI9. Resources allocation; PI10. Gender architecture and parity; PI11. Organizational culture; E. Capacity – PI12. Capacity assessment; PI13. Capacity development; F. Coherence, knowledge and information management – PI14. Knowledge generation and communication; PI15 Coherence. The framework used a 5-point rating scale for every performance indicator. The ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016–2017 reflects UN-SWAP 1.0., which focused implementation on gender mainstreaming and planning.

By the end of 2017, UN-SWAP 2.0 was finalized and under the recommendations set out by the GB, ILO fully adopted it for the Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–21. The current UN-SWAP 2.0 has 17 performance indicators grouped in six categories with a 5-point rating system: (i) exceeds requirements, (ii) meets requirements; (iii) approaches requirements; (iv) missing; and (v) not applicable. UN-SWAP is designed to focus on results and includes monitoring activities and outcomes for gender-related SDG results. This is also reflected in the APGE 2018–21 which fully implements it.

The Staff Survey also asked ILO staff for their views on the alignment of ILO gender equality indicators with UN-SWAP, and harmonization and coordination with other UN agencies. The analysis revealed that 47.4 per cent of respondents either strongly agree or agree that ILO shows harmonization and coordination with other UN agencies on GEM, and 46.75 per cent that ILO meets gender equality related norms and standards with UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality, while 46.1 per cent of respondents considered that ILO Gender Equality indicators are strongly aligned with the UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEEW) (figure 9).

► **Figure 9. ILO staff views on the alignment of ILO indicators, harmonization and coordination with other UN agencies**



3.3 Effectiveness

Key Findings

Programme outcome level:

Key finding 8: ILO country programmes show a consistent, although varying, presence of gender-responsive results by policy outcome, but there is a lack of systematic monitoring and reporting on specific gender programme objectives.

Key finding 9: The mixed progress and results on gender equality in programmes and budgets, and in ILO action plans for gender equality during the period reflect the complexity of achieving programmatic change on gender-responsive outcomes.

Key finding 10: The ILO's performance under the UN-SWAP 2.0 shows uneven achievements.

Key finding 11: Partnerships helped to improve the implementation of gender equality and mainstreaming efforts from policy development to development cooperation projects.

Institutional outcome level:

Key finding 12: The ILO has improved its framework to support institutional gender equality and mainstreaming efforts in key core institutional processes, but more can be done.

3.3.1 Gender-responsive results in policy outcomes and country programme outcomes

Key finding 8: ILO country programmes show a consistent, although varying, presence of gender-responsive results by policy outcome, but there is a lack of systematic monitoring and reporting on specific gender programme objectives.

Overall, analysis of the ILO's CPOs shows a consistent, although varying, presence of gender-responsive results per policy outcome, e.g. for the 2016–17 biennium, CPOs linked to all POs reported at least one gender-responsive result, although there is significant variation across POs. The most effective were PO6 (Formalization of the informal economy) and PO9 (Promoting fair and effective labour migration policies), recording 74.1 per cent and 71.0 per cent, respectively, while PO2, PO5, PO4 and PO7 (Ratification and application of international labour standards; Decent work in the rural economy; Promoting sustainable enterprises; and Promoting workplace compliance through labour inspection), registered gender-responsiveness rates of 31.5 per cent, 33.3 per cent, 34.5 per cent and 36.4 per cent, respectively.

The marker on gender equality and non-discrimination across CPOs and by policy outcome and enabling outcome A in 2020 shows that 80 per cent of the CPOs had either limited contribution, significant contribution and/or a principal gender objective while there is still an average of more or less 20 per cent of unmarked gender in CPO results. In the particular case of the **Outcome 6** with 57 per cent marked as significant contribution, 18 per cent principal objective and 10 per cent limited contribution, showing a significant 85 per cent of total CPOs. There is still 15 per cent of CPOs with unmarked gender equality and non-discrimination, confirming the trend of an existing percentage of CPOs with an unmarked gender equality and non-discrimination component being implemented. This could be a combination of a failure in the system at different parts of the implementing cycle, such as in the appraisal phase where proposals are not required to have the gender marker, or during implementation, where specific gender indicators do not seem to have been reported.³⁴

³⁴ The gender marker assigned during programme design to reflect perceived gender responsiveness was used in the analysis. Reasonable attempts were made to allow for any inflation of the trends due to the self-assigned nature of the marker. As with all self-assignment rating, there will inevitably be some over- and under-estimation, and the evaluation is also considering recent findings from internal scan work by GEDI.

Regarding a regional breakdown, analysis of CPOs with at least one gender-responsive result in the 2016–17 biennium showed that 49.5 per cent reported at least one gender-responsive result, globally, while for most regions approximately half the CPOs in the biennium reported a gender-responsive result, with Europe and Central Asia being lower, at just under 30 per cent. In 2020, the analysis showed Africa and Asia and the Pacific each with 87 per cent of CPOs with gender markers, the Americas and the Caribbean with 84 per cent, and global with 80 per cent, followed by the Arab States with 62 per cent, and Europe and Central Asia with only 50 per cent.

The decent work results reflect the ILO's GEM in different programmes and implementations such as the support delivered to seven Members States for skills development programmes focusing on specific sectors. They targeted women and youth in vulnerable situations, especially in the rural economy, the development of pro-employment strategies, including employment-intensive investment programmes that are environmentally sustainable and promote gender equality and other forms of non-discrimination for 22 Member States (PO1). In the same view, and with high impact on gender equality, ILO's institutional response to COVID-19 provided timely support to telework to protect staff from the pandemic and from dismissal (PO7).

During the 2018–19 biennium, the distribution of decent work results by the gender equality and non-discrimination marker showed that 53 per cent had made either a significant contribution to or targeted specifically the advancement of this cross-cutting policy driver. Under the framework of the Women at Work initiative, three relevant reports provide an in-depth analysis of persisting structural barriers limiting women's opportunities in the world of work and a set of recommendations to implement a transformative agenda for gender equality. The policy proposals included in these documents were the basis for the ILO strategy in the P&B 2020–21.

Decent work results for 2016–17 and 2018–19, when gender equality and non-discrimination was only a cross-cutting policy driver, are shown in table 5. Most telling in terms of progress is the increase in CPOs where gender equality made a "significant" contribution: from 39 per cent in 2016–17 to 48 per cent in 2018–19.

► **Table 5. Gender equality and non-discrimination – distribution of decent work results by contribution to gender**³⁵

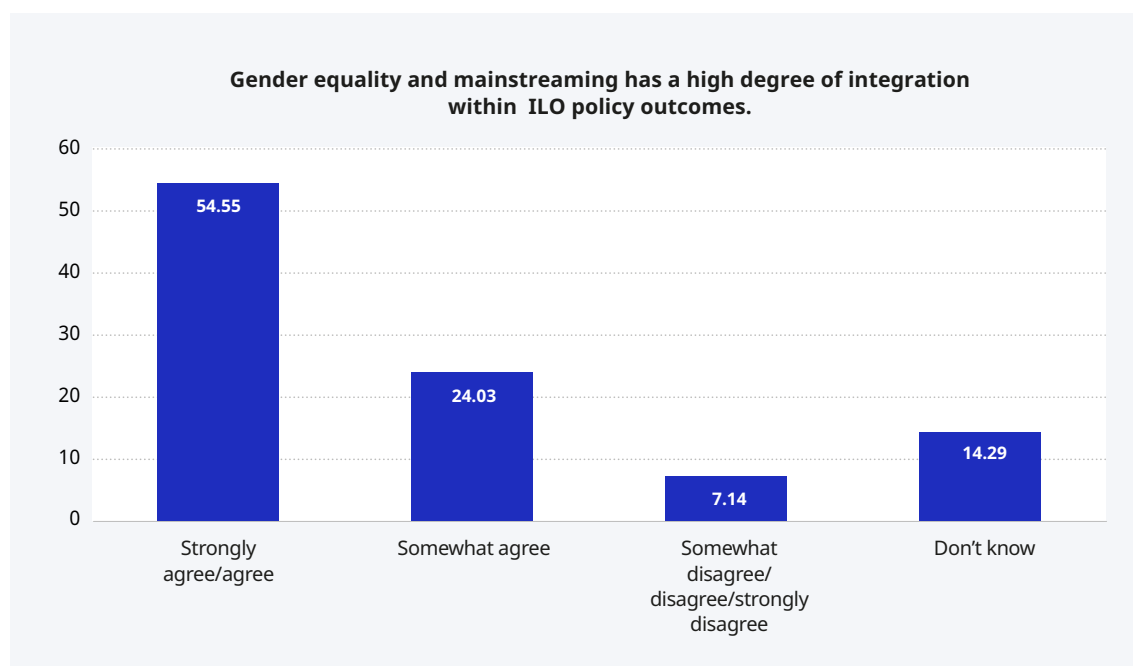
Biennium	Decent work results – contribution to gender		
	Limited	Significant	Principal objective
2016–2017	54%	39%	7%
2018–2019	47%	48%	5%

Progress reporting on results for 2020 until mid-2021 shows that many of the CPOs are contributing to gender equality, or have it as it their principal objective, with only 20 per cent of CPOs being unmarked for gender results. The CPOs under the PO on gender equality and non-discrimination showed a somewhat lower performance in some gender-responsive indicators, due to the repurposing of resources to respond to the COVID-19 crisis. However, this was counterbalanced by the mainstreaming of gender equality across POs, in particular, in relation to employment, sustainable enterprises and social protection.

The HLE Staff Survey findings showed that more than half the respondents (54.55 per cent of ILO staff either strongly agree or agree) consider that gender equality and mainstreaming have a high degree of integration within ILO policy outcomes, follow by 24 per cent who somewhat agree (figure 10).

35 Extracted from the Programme Implementation Report (PIR) 2016–17 and PIR 2018–19. Data for 2020–2021 was not sufficiently complete to provide comparable data.

► **Figure 10. ILO staff views on integration of gender equality and mainstreaming within ILO policy outcomes (ILO Staff Survey Question 31)**



3.3.2 Gender-responsive development cooperation projects

The achievement of country programme outcomes is mainly through DC projects, contributing to CPOs. A synthesis review³⁶ of the gender-responsiveness of ILO evaluation reports looked at the gender responsiveness of a sample of 38 ILO DC projects for the period 2016–2021, against the OECD DAC evaluation criteria – relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability – to appraise the gender responsiveness of the DC projects and their contribution to gender equality, using the GESI framework to score against the above-mentioned DAC criteria. This provides qualitative inputs for the validation of the HLE's general findings and ILO gender-related qualitative data on DC projects. It should be emphasized that this is a sample and, of course, is not without limitations,³⁷ but at the same time every reasonable measure was taken to eliminate bias.

The averaged GESI score for the projects sampled is shown in table 6. As can be observed, the sample scoring is on average slightly under or above the gender-sensitive score of 3.0 per cent. Somewhat interestingly, the DAC criterion of Impact registered the highest score, while the lowest average score was for the Sustainability criterion.

Some of the main findings of the review included assessment of gender sensitivity which revealed that 34 per cent of the sample of evaluation reports were listed under a gender-responsive objective, while almost 60 per cent had at least one gender-responsive immediate objective. Additionally, 60 per cent of projects benefiting from GEDI support had gender-responsive development objectives, while similar objectives were only found in 28 per cent of projects without input from GEDI.

³⁶ Appendix 7: Key Evaluation Findings and Lessons Learned on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in Selected Development Cooperation Projects: A Meta-Synthesis Review, June 2021.

³⁷ Limitations include, for example, that: (i) gender was not necessarily incorporated into the framework of the evaluation, or in some cases gender was represented only by sex-disaggregated data; or (ii) the dimension of gender not being accurately reflected in the evaluation reports, making it difficult with a literal meta-synthesis of original content, therefore, a meta-analytical approach was used.

► Table 6. Overview gender-responsiveness scoring of synthesis review sample³⁸

DAC criteria	Averaged gender-responsiveness scoring of projects sample
Relevance	3.00%
Coherence	2.75%
Efficiency	2.86%
Effectiveness	2.94%
Impact	3.28%
Sustainability	2.71%

Note: Scoring legend ranges from 1 to 5 according to ILO GESI framework – 1. Gender exploitative; 2. Gender blind; 3. Gender sensitive; 4. Gender responsive; 5. Gender transformative.

Many projects did not approach gender in an integrative way, and no evaluation report questioned the GEM relevance of projects, while a large number of evaluations affirmed that projects responded to these needs. The inclusion of gender in some projects was “variable and erratic” with some projects taking a “trickle-down” approach. Evaluation reports noted the coherence of projects, identifying alignment to GEM strategies and policies. However, the reports did not provide analytical support to indicate this coherence. The establishment of partnerships with private sector and governmental entities improved efficiency in the delivery of activities and products. Partnerships created synergies to deal with limited resources, allowed for strengthened local ownership, and provided for sharing of competencies and experiences.

Regarding impact, overall, GEM-related ILO DC projects registered impacts on the gender asymmetries in the world of work. Projects mostly contributed to tackling moral, physical, and sexual offences, ensuring gender-sensitive social protection floors, improving conditions for women in the workplace, and driving formal employment for women. Evaluation reports did contain success stories on GEM-related projects, despite the financial barriers. Successful stories of continuity and replication of gender-sensitive outputs, such as the replication of trainings, research uptake, and the circulation of knowledge products were noted by evaluators. As for sustainability, the sustainability of gender-sensitive outputs was hampered by the financial short-comings of both partners and the ILO, with several evaluation reports discussing the risk that initiatives with potential impact would need to be discontinued due to lack of funding.

3.3.3 Action plans for gender equality – progress and results

Key finding 9: The mixed progress and results on gender equality in P&Bs and APGEs during the period reflect the complexity of achieving programmatic change on gender-responsive outcomes.

Regarding the overall progress of the APGEs, table 7 shows the results achieved to-date in respect of the 2018–21 Action Plan for Gender Equality.

³⁸ Analysis by the evaluation, Aug 2021

► **Table 7. Results achieved in respect of the Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–21³⁹**

Area of results	Targets 2018–21	Results
Results-based management	12 indicators	7 indicators were met/exceeded
Accountability	10 indicators	3 indicators were met/exceeded
Oversight	7 indicators	4 indicators were met/exceeded
Human and financial resources	14 indicators	8 indicators were met/exceeded
Capacity	7 indicators	3 indicators were met/exceeded
Knowledge, communication and coherence	7 indicators	4 indicators were met/exceeded
Total	57 indicators	29 indicators were met/exceeded

The APGE 2018–21 findings for Results-based management showed just seven out of the 12 indicators were met or exceeded, while only three out of 10 Accountability indicators were met or exceeded. Four of the seven Oversight indicators were met or exceeded, eight out of the 14 Human and financial resources indicators were met or exceeded, three out of the seven Capacity indicators were met or exceeded, and five out of seven Knowledge, communication and coherence indicators were met or exceeded. In total, 29 of the 57 targets were completed or exceeded, 24 targets were not met, while there were no statistical data for four targets.

Neither the APGE 2016–2017 nor the APGE 2018–2021 outlined a framework for reporting, nor identified the responsible persons or teams. It was clear that custodians would report on their particular indicators, and that GFPs gave support, but it was not clear who was ultimately responsible for synthesizing the reports from the custodians.

Regarding a **comparison of APGE progress across the 2016–2021 period under review**, it is important to note that it is difficult to make a full comparison of progress by both APGEs. While APGE 2016–17 and 2018–21 have some similar indicators, for the most part the indicators are different (out of a combined total of 90 indicators only 24 were similar). Furthermore, the targets set for each indicator were different from one action plan to the other, regardless of whether or not targets were achieved.

Regarding specific results areas where indicators are comparable, table 8 below compares results and progress across the two APGEs.

► **Table 8. Performance of the Action Plan 2016–16 and the Action Plan 2018–21⁴⁰**

Area of results	Results (indicators met/exceeded out of total indicators)	
	APGE 2016–2017	APGE 2018–2021
Results-based management	1 out of 3 (33.3%)	7 out of 12 (58%)
Accountability	4 out of 6 (66.6%)	3 out of 10 (30%)
Oversight	5 out of 10 (50.0%)	4 out of 7 (57%)
Human and financial resources	5 out of 5 (100.0%)	8 out of 14 (57%)
Capacity	2 out of 3 (66.6%)	3 out of 7 (43%)
Knowledge, communication and coherence	5 out of 6 (83.3%)	4 out of 7 (57%)
Total	19 out of 33 (57.5%)	29 out of 57 (51%)

Note: Data for 2018–2021 are based on latest available data as of June 2021; reporting by end of year could change the results.

³⁹ Analysis by the evaluation based on progress reports on the Action Plans for 2016–2017 and 2018–2021

⁴⁰ Analysis by the evaluation based on progress reports on the Action Plans for 2016–2017 and 2018–2021

A more detailed comparison across indicators is contained in Annex 7.4. APGE progress in terms of targets met, but a number of points can be noted. Firstly, there are a lot of GEM-related indicators being measured and reported, with a significant increase during the 2018–21 Action Plan, with a near doubling of indicators.

The approach can be considered to have a number of strengths. Firstly, it promotes a relative decentralized approach to the work, with departments and actors across ILO assigning custodians of specific indicators. Furthermore, the broader system can be seen as being relatively resource efficient (beyond the resource efficiency of GEDI assessed in the following section on efficiency), which is an important consideration in terms of developing effective and sustainable institutionalization of GEM.

However, the increase in the number of indicators has impacted on the degree of achievement, both in terms of the co-ordination and support role of GEDI, and in other departments such as the Human Resources Department (HRD), in terms of indicator implementation, monitoring and reporting. Furthermore, the level of change in indicators also complicates monitoring change and impact over a longer period of time beyond each APGE's timeframe. Also, indicators vary in terms of implementation complexity (staff time, data availability and collation considerations, etc.) and importance.

It is important to stress that that the Action Plan in some respects may under-report ILO's institutional progress on GEM, as reporting against the Action Plan does not always fully capture the breadth of contributions to ILO-GEM work. This is the case, for example, with HRD **where important work has been progressed in a number of concurrent** strategies that support gender equality within the ILO. They include measures and good practices at the organizational culture level including policies on flexible working arrangements, family-friendly policies (parental leave and broader care needs), and standards of conduct in the form of discrimination, harassment and abuse policies. These policies contribute to an enabling work environment and are considered as pull factors for women so "they feel they can be respected, supported and facilitated in their career growth".⁴¹

Another example is the ILO Service Department or INFOTEC, where significant results have been generated in gender equality in terms of work performance results linked to increasing gender balance in the Department (section 3.3.8). Both in formal reporting and, in particular, in terms of regular communication and updating staff, it is important that such areas of progress are recognized and documented.

The HLE Staff Survey analysis on the use of APGE 2016–17 and APGE 2018–21 shows an improvement between the two periods. While 32.5 per cent of staff respondents reported that they had used or referred to the APGE 2016–17 in their work, this figure increased to 40.7 per cent of respondents for the APGE 2018–2021. There has also been an increase in the number of respondents who mentioned that they had been involved in preparation of the action plan, from 3.7 per cent for the APGE 2016–17 to 4.9 per cent for the APGE 2018–2021. The percentage of respondents who were not familiar with the APGE or had never referred to it in their work also decreased from 38 per cent in 2016–17 to 27.2 per cent in 2018–21. However, it should also be mentioned that there was an increase in the percentage of respondents who are familiar with the APGE but had not used it, from 25.8 per cent for the APGE 2016–17 to 27.2 per cent for the APGE 2018–21.

3.3.4 GEM support and tools

Regarding GEM-related training and capacity development, there is no overall framework for annual training, but training is provided as a response to specific requests from departments, units, or constituents. It is, therefore, ad hoc and tailored to the needs of the specific target group. In the Capacity category of the Performance Indicators table of the APGE 2016–2017, there is one requirement for the development of a capacity development plan. However, the evaluation team did not find documentation on it and there is no indication that the plan was ever developed. In the same category of the APGE 2018–2021, reference to working towards mandatory training, the indicators did not seem to support the effort of mandatory training, but rather measurements focused on workshop materials and the percentage of women participating in training.

Trainings are often a series of sharing successful experiences, where units present to each other. Methods such as *elevator pitch*, *GED-X talks*, and *fishbowl* were all used to share experiences pertaining to good practice. Thus, each unit/department would have different dynamics in relation to the unit/department culture to GEM and level of dedication and intensity of the GEM training. Training for professional development is not mandatory. New staff members are provided with an orientation package which includes an introduction to GEM, but beyond that it depends on the individual's desire to increase knowledge and capacity around GEM. Capacity building is largely dependent on the leadership of departments/units, as well as the willingness of staff, and some interviews suggested the situation varies from one department to another.

The Gender Network has provided training through the GFPs, supported by gender coordinators and senior gender specialists, although it was observed also that some gender specialists were not fully aware of training courses developed at headquarters. In the case of constituents, training also seems to be a targeted response to a specific need identified by a constituent. In the case of English-speaking countries of the ILO Africa region, capacity development for constituents was an important part of the work focus, with the limited gender specialist numbers making it difficult to match demand. More generally, the insufficient number of gender specialists, when compared to the scale of need for gender support, has been a consistent issue raised in interviews with both gender specialists and ILO regional leadership.

While resource constraints undoubtedly play a role in much of GEM-related training being more on an on-demand or ad hoc basis, this also means that it is difficult to understand the scale and nature of GEM-related training needs, from more general beginner/orientation training to training linked to specific competencies, and ILO gender support roles such as gender specialists and gender focal points (GFPs).

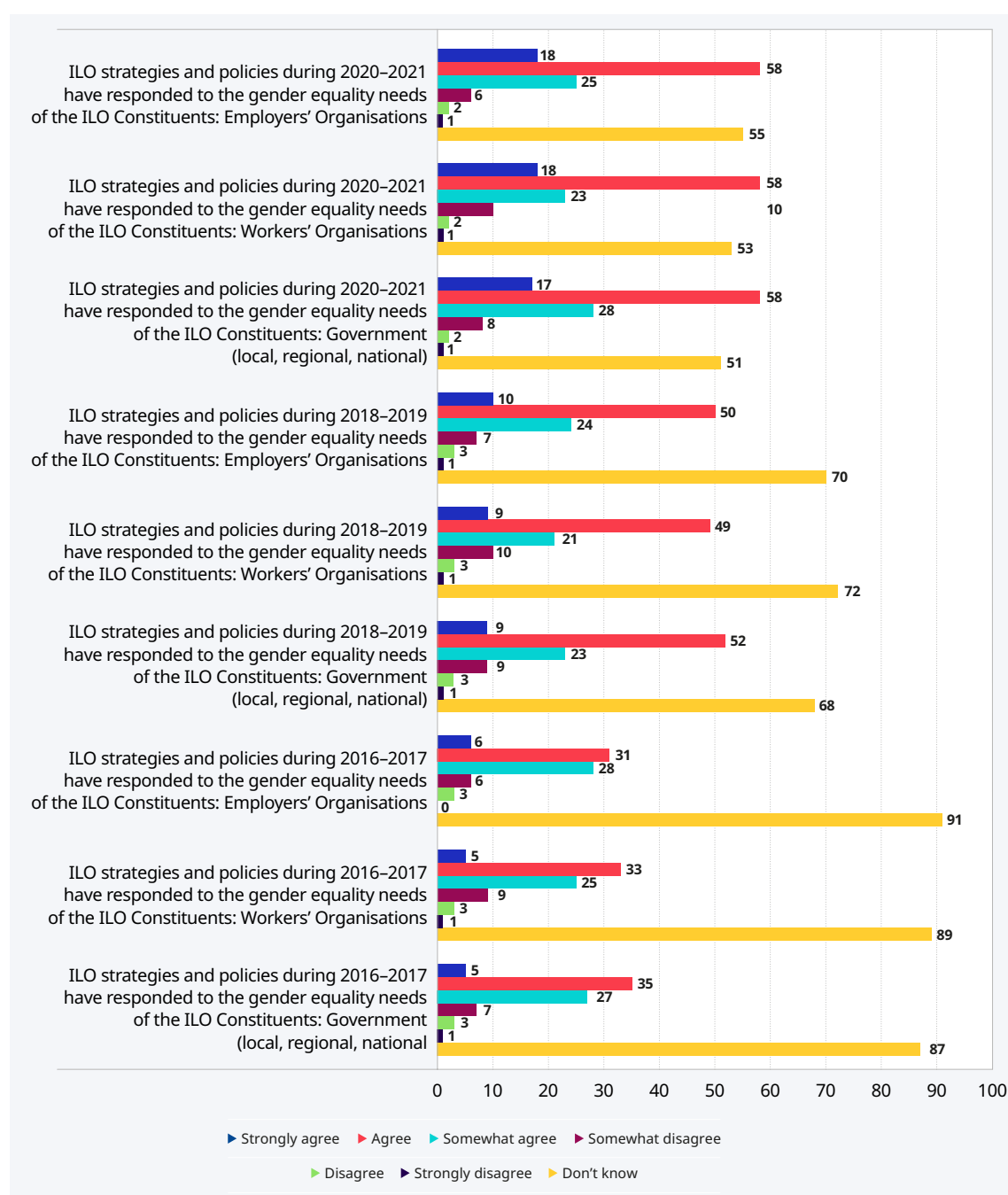
Feedback in the Staff Survey, where ILO staff were asked whether they consider that *ILO strategies and policies as institutional mechanisms responded to the gender equality needs of constituents*, show a clear trend that progressively more ILO staff consider that ILO strategies and policies as institutional mechanisms have increasingly responded to the gender equality needs of constituents from workers' organizations, employers' organizations, and government over the three periods (2016–2017, 2018–2019 and 2020–2021). For example, whereas during the first period 2016–2017, 38.2 per cent of the respondents either agree, strongly agree or somewhat agree, ILO strategies and policies as institutional mechanisms have increasingly responded to the gender equality needs of workers, compared with 47.9 per cent and 60 per cent for the 2018–2019 and 2020–2021 periods, respectively. Regarding the gender equality needs of employers' organizations, the corresponding proportion of staff increased from 39.4 per cent of respondents agreeing (either strongly agree, agree or somewhat agree) for the period 2016–17 to 61 per cent of respondents agreeing in respect of the 2020–21 period. As far as the GE needs of Government (Local, Regional, National) are concerned, the corresponding proportion of staff increased from 40.7 per cent of respondents agreeing (i.e. either strongly agree, agree or somewhat agree) for the period 2016–17 to 62.5 per cent of respondents agreeing in respect of the 2020–21 period (figure 11).

The feedback from the GFP survey is important, coming from persons with key roles in implementing GEM in ILO. Regarding familiarity and frequency of use of GEM tools and support, Gender Specialists responded that they had either been involved in preparing these or were very familiar with them and used them frequently. GFPs responses were, however, much more varied, ranging from some being very familiar with such tools and making frequent use of them, to others not being familiar with them or never having used them. Reflecting this variation on the level of familiarity and use of the GEM tools in general, a high percentage of respondents who either were familiar with the GEM tools but seldom or never use them or were not familiar with them or have never used them. For example, eight out of 17 GFP respondents were not familiar with the handbook on gender or had never used it, with a further two respondents being familiar with the handbook but never having used it. Two GFP respondents were very familiar with it and use it frequently.

Regarding the APGE itself, 65 per cent of the respondents were familiar with it but seldom or never use it or were not familiar with or had never used it, while 11.66 per cent of respondents were involved in preparing it and a further 23.4 per cent of respondents were either very familiar or familiar with it and use it frequently or regularly. As for UN-SWAP, 29.4 per cent of respondents are either very familiar or familiar with it and use it frequently or regularly, while just over three-quarters of GFP respondents (76.5 per cent) were either not familiar with it or have never used it (35.3 per cent). Even when they are familiar with it, they

seldom (23.5 per cent) or never (17.6 per cent) use it. Regarding ILO development cooperation guidelines and guidance on gender in DC projects, 82.4 per cent of respondents were either *familiar with it but seldom* (35.3 per cent) or *never use it or are not familiar with it or have never used it* (41.2 per cent). Turning to the GEDI website and resources, 52.9 per cent of respondents are either *familiar with it but seldom* (17.6 per cent) or *never use it* (11.8 per cent) or are *not familiar with it or have never used it* (23.5 per cent). While 47.1 per cent of the respondents were either *very familiar and use it frequently* (29.4 per cent) or *familiar and use it regularly* (17.6 per cent).

► **Figure 11. Extent to which ILO strategies and policies as institutional mechanisms respond to the gender equality needs of constituents (ILO Staff Survey Q14)**



From the open-ended space for comments and observations in the GFP survey, it is clear that depending on the department/unit, each one is producing tools on gender. An example of tailored gender material is EMPLOYMENT, where the existing tools did not highlight the employment dimension, such as gender and the rights to work and employment policies, including macroeconomic policies, thus they are producing tools on gender and employment in collaboration with the Employment Specialists and Gender Specialists in the field.

Regarding the progress achieved in GEM, 65 per cent of the GFPs consider the effectiveness of ILO Policies, Conventions and Declaration to be either very satisfactory (20 per cent) or satisfactory (45 per cent), with 20 per cent considering them *somewhat satisfactory*, and only 5 per cent considering them *not/satisfactory/more progress needed*. A further 10 per cent responded that they *did not know/couldn't say/not applicable*. As for progress achieved in GEM in ILO institutional practices and requirements, 40 per cent consider that the effectiveness was either very satisfactory (10 per cent) or satisfactory (30 per cent), with 30 per cent considering it somewhat satisfactory. Respondents who were less than satisfied (15 per cent) consider that progress was *not satisfactory/more progress needed*, and a further 15 per cent *did not know/couldn't say/not applicable*.

Going forward, it is worth reflecting on if and how the implementation-friendliness of the APGEs can be improved. For example, the Action Plan does not include some critical information for implementation, such as: (i) “what” – actions to be taken to achieve goals/objectives/targets; (ii) “who” which person/team/department is responsible for the actions; and (iii) “when” – targeted date for completion of activities. Furthermore, implementation might benefit from some assessment of the relative complexity or implementation ease/difficulty for the various actions.

ILO has improved its framework to support institutional gender mainstreaming over the review period in key core institutional processes, including through the increased role and responsibilities HRD plays and endorses. Under-performance against some performance indicators in the organizational culture stream of work must be read with caution though since, internally, there are some questions as to the extent to which the Action Plan indicators enable a suitable reporting of HRD contribution to gender equality and mainstreaming. Some indicators are ill-conceived (reporting on the completion of the mandatory ethics training, for example) or are misleading and sometimes the margin of action and ability of HRD to meet the set target are very limited (reporting on the accessibility of campaign on One ILO – Zero Sexual Harassment Campaign on social media). Forward-looking lessons learned on the reporting format including reviewing and re-designing performance indicators and the means of verification should be taken into consideration at the time for developing the future Action Plan.

For the period under review, there have been on-going challenges in meeting expectations on this growing list of indicators such as gender parity at the higher grades (P5 and above); establishing gender-responsive performance management; achieving consistency in supporting an organizational culture for all personnel; and clarifying the vision and needs for levels and types of trainings and other capacity-building support provided to staff to develop gender equality in the ILO workplace.

3.3.5 ILO GEM performance on UN SWAP

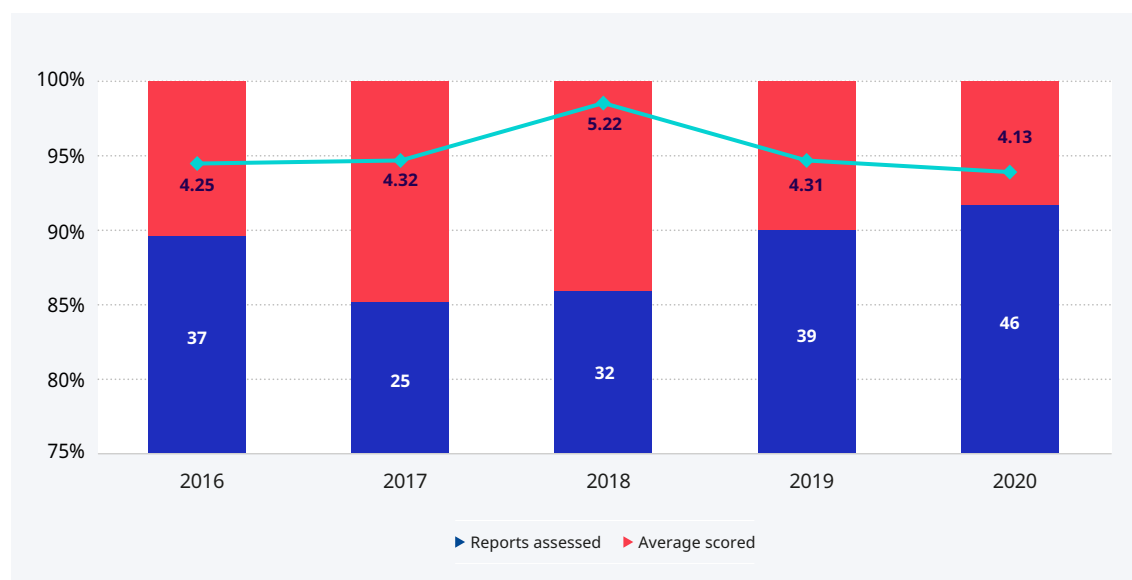
Key finding 10: The ILO's performance on UN-SWAP 2.0 shows uneven achievements.

ILO's performance on UN-SWAP and UN SWAP 2.0 during the evaluation period shows a slight but steady improvement over the period 2016–2018, according to the Universalia UN-SWAP Report⁴² to the extent that ILO has integrated gender into their reports by approaching UN-SWAP requirements (figure 12), there was a slight improvement between 2016 and 2018, while there was a very slight decrease from 2019 to 2020

42 United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 2020, ILO UN SWAP GEEW Summary Report, Draft Report, June 2021, UNIVERSALIA.

with 4.31 to 4.13, both years the meta-scores correspond to “approaches requirements” according to the 2018 UN-SWAP technical note, however, the threshold to meet requirements is established at 6.5, which indicates that ILO has failed to meet requirements during 2019 and 2020.

► **Figure 12. ILO performance on UN-SWAP GEEW meta-scores from 2016–2020**



It is important to bear in mind that the presented results are based on two different assessment criteria UN-SWAP (2014–2017) and UN-SWAP 2.0 (2018–2020). Thus, there is a change in the scorecard criteria and as well as in the scoring scale of those criteria. The scorecard changed from the 2014 scorecard-appraised reports with four different criteria, to the 2018 scorecard-appraised reports with three non-corresponding criteria.⁴³ The same is clearly seen in the Meta-scores which are not comparable in numerical terms, as the scoring scale was changed from a 12-scoring scale to a 9-scoring scale.

A wider issue linked to UN-SWAP 2.0 that is possibly also contributing to ILO's performance is the degree to which it is being used for wider learning and reflection and input to ILO's own GEM work.⁴⁴ This may well be linked to a number of factors, including ILO's organizational culture that has traditionally had a significant focus on compliance, as well as being somewhat risk averse. As discussed below, meeting certain targets, such as gender parity, means that institutional constraints will need to be addressed to identify the issues making achievement of this target impossible in the short-to-medium term. This will also require increased strategic and operational leadership from ILO that has to-date not been forthcoming, in particular creating a strategic and operational management of APGEs with the requisite autonomy to rapidly interpret and action feedback from the Governing Body (GB).

Examples of greater engagement with, and use of UN-SWAP, could for example include ILO's progress on gender parity inside the Organization, which is discussed below, where UN-SWAP 2.0 provides numerous examples of measures adopted and experience from other UN agencies relating to progressing gender parity in their respective institutions, that could inform some of ILO's internal reflection and goal setting. At the country level, ILO could also be engaging more in UN Country Team (UNCT) discussions on and assessment of UN work and performance on gender, including monitoring the assessment of UN-SWAP data and the UNCT-SWAP Scorecard.

⁴³ Changes in the criteria and scoring scales, United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women 2020, ILO UN SWAP GEEW Summary Report, Draft Report, June 2021, UNIVERSALIA.

⁴⁴ The GFP survey results also provide some food for thought in this respect, where over three-quarters of GFP respondents (76.5 per cent) were either not familiar with UN-SWAP or have never used it (35.3 per cent), and even when they were familiar, they seldom (23.5 per cent) or never (17.6 per cent) used it.

3.3.6 Partnership and ILO GEM programmatic results

Key finding 11: Partnerships helped to improve the implementation of gender equality and mainstreaming efforts from policy development to development cooperation projects.

The evaluation work has identified numerous examples of how partnership with other organizations has improved delivery of ILO DC projects. In many respects, this is not surprising, as typically partnering will seek to access capabilities, reach, or context-specific or other technical knowledge of a partner to complement the assessment of the weaknesses of one's own organization in a specific project delivery context.

An example of a project with a strong partnership in delivery is the “Win-win: Gender Equality Means Good Business” funded by the European Union (EU) and co-implemented by ILO and UN Women in Latin America and the Caribbean. During 2018, the project drove the economic empowerment of women through organizational change on GE as a necessity for competitive business performance. This project is not only co-implemented but collaborates with employer and business membership organizations in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Jamaica and Uruguay. The partnership has helped ILO's Beyond the Glass Ceiling programme. While in partnership with the Government of Norway, ILO started a project focusing on freedom of association, the right to collective bargaining, and the promotion of gender equality.

As an ILO Flagship Programme, the Better Work programme provides an example of an effective partnering approach on a programme-level, with much more systematization than many other DC project examples. This is not only because of the nature of the work (engagement with factories across several countries) and the resourcing level, but also because it is a good example of what a well-defined partnership system can bring. Regarding its GEM dimension, it is also a good example of clarity in the articulation of the gender dimension, as well as a more generally a clear articulation of its partnering (value) proposition to other target partner types.

The HLE-GEM Staff Survey findings on the ILO's results framework during the evaluation period showed a good degree of cooperation with ILO partners, which according to the ILO staff respondents has steadily increased in successive biennia, with only 23.78 per cent (strongly agreed/agreed) in the biennium 2016–2017, 37.77 per cent (strongly agreed/agreed) in the biennium 2018–2019, and 42.65 per cent of respondents perceiving a good degree of cooperation with ILO partners in the biennium 2020–21.

Discussed more in this report under impact and under ILO corporate positioning and partnering, the **Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC)** has proved effective in helping ILO to deliver increased consensus on equal pay and related issues. For partners such as ILO Member States, EPIC has provided a new forum and platform for them to voice their commitment to equal pay, as well as the opportunity to discuss among peers and learn from the experience of other countries. A good example of ILO's partnering in helping to improve delivery of GEM-related outcomes was ILO's collaboration with UN Women to secure ratification of Convention No. 190 in Ecuador, where UN Women played the lead advocacy and communications role in bringing about government ratification.

The TRIANGLE initiative seeks to address challenges faced by migrant workers in the ASEAN region, where they face increased exploitation and abuse. Inadequate protection of their labour rights, stems from root causes such as the costs, long duration, and the complexity of navigating the regular channels for migration in ASEAN countries. TRIANGLE has a significant gender dimension, as women face additional challenges in accessing safe and legal migration opportunities due to the type of work available to them often paying less and affording fewer legal protections due to lack of formalization. TRIANGLE is built in part on longstanding partnerships between ILO and the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and Global Affairs Canada, where the three organizations have been collaborating for years to improve labour migration governance in the ASEAN region.

TRIANGLE's results to-date have included migrant support services provided to almost 180,000 migrant workers (of whom 44 per cent were women) via 28 Migrant Worker Resource Centres in six countries;

reduced migration and remittance costs, with 376 employment agencies having committed to codes of conducts; and US\$10.7 million awarded in compensation to migrant workers for legal claims. Programme delivery to target groups and final beneficiaries is realized in part through technical assistance and support to governments, social partners, civil society and regional bodies, including the ASEAN Secretariat and relevant ASEAN bodies, ASEAN Trade Union Council (ATUC), ASEAN Confederation of Employers (ACE), labour ministries, workers' and employers' organizations, recruitment agency associations, academia, and civil society organizations in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam.

3.3.7 Core ILO institutional processes

Key finding 12: The ILO has improved its framework to support institutional gender equality and mainstreaming efforts in key core institutional processes, but more can be done.

The evaluation looked at the core institutional process of ILO's Human Resources Department (HRD) in implementing the APGEs, and any relevant wider experience. HRD's roles and responsibilities for enhancing gender equality in ILO work, are **"accountable for encouraging progress towards parity between women and men, and equality of opportunity and treatment of all ILO staff including in training and other relevant activities"**.⁴⁵ The definition of this role has not significantly evolved over the past decade – the training dimension was added in 2016, following lessons learned and recommendations of previous implementation plans' reviews that emphasized the need to "accompany the work plan by other processes, particularly to change attitudes and build capacity".⁴⁶

The 2016–2017 and 2018–2021 action plans supported the operationalization of the ILO policy and identified six key strategic areas where HRD is recognized as the custodian: (i) Policy and Action; (ii) Gender Responsive Performance Management; (iii) Equal Representation of Women; (iv) Organizational Culture; (v) Capacity Assessment; and (vi) Capacity Development. HRD's role in institutional gender mainstreaming under the APGEs has grown significantly over the past years, increasing from custodian responsibilities of seven performance indicators under the 2016–2017 APGE to 13 indicators under the current 2018–2021 APGE. This is, partly, in recognition of the important role and contribution of HRD in mainstreaming gender equality within the ILO institution. In this process, the UN-SWAP on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women has been a positive lever on various aspects of the approach, providing ILO with a set of core inter-related actions, key measures, and an accountability framework to support institutional gender mainstreaming.

The Example of progress on the Gender Parity Target

Gender parity within the ILO workforce is a key target for which HRD has been responsible, where the 1999 ILO's Director-General Announcements (Circular No. 564) that constitutes ILO Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming set an "Office-wide target of 50 percent of Professional posts to be filled by women by 2010, with particular care to be given to gender balance in senior posts. Career development opportunities for General Service staff will be expanded and specific measures will be taken to create a family-friendly and enabling working environment for all staff, both men and women".⁴⁷ Staffing priorities in the successive ILO Action Plans for Gender Equality have focused on achieving gender parity amongst women and men professional staff across the Organization, and targets on the percentages of women holding professional

45 ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016–2017 (page 8), ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–2021 (page 13).

46 ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2016–2017 (page 2).

47 This policy, announced in 1999 and shared in this updated form with the senior management team in 2016, includes the concept of gender mainstreaming as based on the definition in the Agreed Conclusions in 1997 of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC): "Mainstreaming a gender perspective is the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programmes in any area and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programmes in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally, and inequality is not perpetuated. The ultimate goal is to achieve gender equality."

positions and senior staff positions have been longstanding indicators. ILO gender parity strategy uses an evidence base for reporting on the UN-SWAP policy indicator.

The target on the percentage of ILO professional positions (P1–P4) held by women was met under the 2016–2017 reporting period (50.5 per cent) while the target for the percentage of ILO senior staff (P5 and above) set at 38 per cent was not achieved (34 per cent). Similar results were reported for the 2018–2021 Action Plan (i.e. 54 per cent for P1–P4, and 38 per cent for P5 and above, respectively, as of 31 December 2020).

The gender parity target, and performance to-date, is important in that it also raises a number of points and issues for reflection. Firstly, achieving these targets involves addressing a number of other issues in terms of ILO's wider organizational structure, functioning and culture. Key constraints or obstacles that face ILO and HRD, in particular, in achieving gender parity at higher grades include for example: (i) **Staff selection process**: The provisions of the staff regulations on recruitment process for regular staff positions stipulate that “best candidates win” and considerations for gender and diversity are not prioritized;⁴⁸ (ii) **Unbalanced male/female talent pool at higher staff grades**; and (iii) **reduced opportunities at P5 and above levels**, as the increase in the mandatory retirement age has resulted in fewer retirements in 2018 and 2019, and hence fewer job opportunities at senior level positions, a factor that will continue to have a noticeable impact until 2021.⁴⁹ Secondly, it is important to emphasize that ILO's experience in progressing gender parity is similar to the experience observed within the wider UN system where progress towards advancing the representation of women “remained low and uneven”:⁵⁰ representation of women is high at the entry levels (P1 and P2), before decreasing progressively at the higher grades.

HRD has implemented a range of actions to address the impediments to reaching the gender parity goal, including at the phase of recruitment by ensuring that: (i) job descriptions encourage women applicants;⁵¹ (ii) that there are processes in place to address and mitigate unconscious bias that would disadvantage women; and (iii) by supporting the pool of P3 women internal candidates' capacities to apply and compete for positions. In line with ILO policy on diversity, HRD looks at improving gender parity and geographical diversity within the ILO workforce and implement relevant initiative to support women positioned in the field.⁵²

In September 2019, a scan of the Office's human resources reports to the Governing Body over a 10-year period showed that women's overall share of regular budget professional positions had increased from 41 per cent to 47 per cent. Major progress was made up to the P4 level. However, the situation at higher staff grades has deteriorated since 2010, and although there was some progress at the P5 level during 2008–12, this has stalled and since 2008 the gender gap for directors (D1 and D2) had increased.⁵³

Going forward, ILO needs to reflect on how much it wants to progress on issue such as gender parity. They are some positions at P5 levels (directors of field offices), and for D1 and D2 that are appointed directly by the Director-General. Vacancy notices, invitations to manifest interest, short-lists and interviews have been introduced to allow the Director-General to make the best-informed decision for direct selection. Considering that this process differs from the rigid staff selection process under the staff regulations, and should allow for more flexibility, gender parity targets could for example be considered.

If ILO wants to make a visible leap in pursuing accelerated GEM implementation, setting clear and time-bound targets for achieving gender parity at P5 and above grades could be one and to make a leadership

48 The provisions of article 4.2(a)(i) of the Staff Regulations which stipulates that “the paramount consideration in the filling of any vacancy shall be the necessity to obtain a staff of the highest standards of competence, efficiency, and integrity. Due regard shall be paid to the importance of maintaining a staff selected on a wide geographical basis, recognizing also the need to take into account considerations of gender and age.” Consequently, certain measures, if so desired, may require adjustments to the Staff Regulations and will need to be prepared through appropriate consultative processes and brought to the Governing Body for decision”. ILO, Governing Body, “Composition and structure of the ILO staff: Action plan for improving the diversity of the ILO workforce”, 2019, 2.

49 ILO, Governing Body, “Composition and structure of the ILO staff: Action plan for improving the diversity of the ILO workforce”, 2019, 2.

50 United Nations, General Assembly, “Improvement in the status of women in the United Nations System, Report of the Secretary-General”, 2019, 1.

51 “Women comprised 36.8 per cent of the applicants for positions in the Professional and higher categories, indicating that more must be done regarding outreach to encourage more female applicants”. United Nations, General Assembly, Improvement in the status of women in the United Nations System, Report of the Secretary-General, 2019, 29.

52 The Management training course (online) was designed to support women focusing on women in the field, and disadvantaged nationalities. Malkia (“Queen” in Swahili) programme is running two cohorts each year (with a total of 80 participants) where women at P3 levels and from less visible geographical backgrounds are given opportunities to build networks and skills to become line-managers, while recognizing the difficulties that they are facing.

53 ILO, Governing Body, Mid-term report on the implementation of the ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality 2018–2021, 3.

statement and set a headline target. This would be in line with relevant recommendations of the report of the UN Secretary-General on the improvement in the status of women in the United Nations system,⁵⁴ and ideally this should be part of a wider set of organizational measures that could move the dial forward on gender equality mainstreaming. This should include accountability for the implementation of these measures.⁵⁵

As part of wider benchmarking, this is an example of the kind of area that should be a focus of a more robust strategic management of APGE implementation, in order to provide more support for implementation, improve institutionalization and increase leadership contribution and accountability. UN SWAP could be used more strategically to inform ILO reflection and research on options, and the costs, benefits and experience of other UN agencies. For progressing towards gender parity some **temporary special measures** could include ensuring that women make up at least 50 per cent of candidates at the interview and short-listing stages; mandatory selection of qualified female candidates for posts where parity has not been achieved; and written justification from senior managers for the selection of male candidates for posts at levels in departments and offices where parity has not been attained. Regarding UN-system experience, other examples under Equal Representation of Women (UN-SWAP Performance Indicator 12) and of special measures from other UN agencies are set out in the below (table 9).

► **Table 9. Examples of special measures from other UN agencies⁵⁶**

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- **The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** has women-only candidate pools for bureaus that have fallen below 45 per cent representation and strengthened accountability of managers to reach gender balance targets.

 - Multiple entities enforce the removal of ranking of recommended candidates to allow for greater latitude in the final selection process, and compare candidates' qualifications against the job vacancy requirements, as opposed to against one another.

 - Both the **United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR)** and **UNDP** apply flexibility in turn-around time in post criteria for female candidates.

 - **UNHCR** considers women who have separated to be internal candidates for a number of years after separation, as well as women from other agencies.

3.3.8 ILO policy and service departments

With respect to the pursuit of gender equality and mainstreaming within the ILO institution, the evaluation also briefly considered the implementation of GEM in two ILO departments, one service department (INFOTEC) and one policy department (ENTERPRISE), which involved a selection of interviews with both departments. It should be emphasized that the review of GEM progress and experience in both departments was rapid and involved selected desk and document reviews and interviews with selected staff members. Thus, it is important to stress that these findings in no way purport to be a definitive review of the departments' work and performance. Rather they seek to shine a light on some aspect of GE mainstreaming that may be of value in terms of results and related learning or possible reflection points that could feed into a discussion during the process of the formulation of the next APGE.

The interviews show that successes in advancing gender equality and mainstreaming have partly been due to leadership from departmental heads, engaging departmental managers (unit heads) for their ideas on how to progress GEM, and including agreed actions in Beginning of Cycle plans.

INFOTECH has achieved significant work performance gains as part of its work on promoting gender equality since 2016. One informal element of the approach was awareness of how improving gender balance in INFOTEC could also contribute to strengthening the department's overall performance, in terms of boosting the department's collective skills reservoir in areas where some past research or studies had shown that women outperform men in a number of occupational roles, such as project management, hedge fund

54 United Nations, General Assembly, Improvement in the status of women in the United Nations System, Report of the Secretary-General, 2019, 25–29.

55 It would be relevant to consider the sample of strategies to achieve the equal representation of women as presented and further exemplified in [UN-SWAP Guidance on Performance indicator 12](#).

56 Equal Representation of Women, UN-SWAP Performance Indicator 12.

management.⁵⁷ While no positive discrimination measures had been taken, there was some awareness/openness to the notion that the recruitment of women could bring some skills that would make a positive contribution to the department's rapidly expanding workload and project portfolio.

Thus, over the 5-year period covering 2016–20, INFOTEC recorded the following results with regard to GEM (table 10): (i) women working in INFOTEC increased 46 per cent (from 26 to 38), representing a 5 per cent shift in INFOTEC's overall gender balance (from 34 per cent women representation to 39 per cent); (ii) women delivering major INFOTEC IT projects increased 167 per cent (from 12 to 32); and (iii) women in INFOTEC have also contributed significantly to the geographical distribution of the department, which now comprise 23 nationalities.

► **Table 10. Overview of GEM results in ILO INFOTEC 2016–2020**

Year	No. women working in INFOTEC	No. IT projects led by women ¹	Staff engagement men ²	Staff engagement women ²
2016	26	12		
2017	29	18		
2018	34	21	3.32	3.94
2019	35	29		
2020	38	32		

Notes: ¹ INFOTEC review of all ILO projects in INFOTEC-approved work plans for the period 2016–20. ² Staff member engagement assessed individually for innovation, quality of work, willingness to share, contribution to mentoring, leadership and participation demonstration in UN and Office-wide initiatives including working groups, committees, boards, and special interest groups focusing on advancing ILO's agenda. The Engagement Level Rating Scale used was as follows: 5 Fully Engaged/4 Frequently Engaged/3 Neutral (Engaged/Not Engaged in equal measure)/2 Rarely Engaged/1 Not Engaged.

Source: INFOTEC internal analysis and monitoring developed partly for the Case Study 4 work.

Overall, INFOTEC's work to improve departmental gender balance and diversity over the past five years, and feedback showed that the results are considered to have been extremely beneficial to the department, and the broader ILO Office. It is considered to have helped deliver an increasing number of projects of growing complexity, with the increasing gender balance having also brought more out-of-the-box thinking. Its activities have strengthened INFOTEC's project management (for example, ILO's ERP roll-out was managed by women, with very high skill-levels and performance seen in areas such attention to delay, follow-through, relationship development and management, and in complex project/roll-out management. Another area where the recruitment of women was considered to have boosted departmental capability was in business analysis skills.

Although difficult to link and quantify all results to improved gender balance and diversity, the increase in women representation has changed the total results in a positive manner. The overall performance and reputation of the department have been communicated through various customer satisfaction surveys, direct feedback from senior management and key stakeholders, and from the overall visibility of INFOTEC within ILO.

In the case of Enterprise department, mainstreaming started with a discussion between the Department Director and unit heads to solicit ideas for actions and measures to be taken, and specifically to be incorporated into beginning-of-cycle planning. One action that was taken was the organization of a presentation from a local university professor on gender awareness, which was also attended by ILO staff from other departments, including HRD and GEDI, and which was well received. One of the lessons learned from this was that using unconscious bias was an effective way to introduce GEM to staff.

57 Selected research, and media coverage referenced, included for example, selected research or studies in specific sectors or roles – see for example: Ronald Bisaccia, "Why women make better project leaders than men", in CCIO Magazine, March 2015; Geoffrey James, "Science Says: Woman in Business Outperform Men", in INC., September 2016; Stephen Turban, Dan Wu and Letian (LT) Zhang, "When Gender Diversity makes firms more productive", in Harv Bus Rev., February 2019.

Interviews suggest that more can be done in institutional mainstreaming in the Department, notwithstanding the important gender-related dimension to ENTERPRISE's policy work. Staff feedback in both departments suggested that more targeted support and guidance on how to mainstream gender in their work would be welcome, and that there was scope for greater ILO leadership from Department leads and ILO management in general.

From the policy perspective of ENTERPRISE's work, the scope and limited time/resources for this area of enquiry and interviews have not included a review of ENTERPRISE's policy work, as this was not part of the focus of this area of enquiry. However, in terms of considering potential GEM-related assets (knowledge, intervention models, projects, etc.) that could possibly contribute more broadly to GEM-related programmatic work, this does not seem to be a process that is in place across ILO policy departments. An indicative example is given in sub-section 3.5 on Impact and Sustainability with respect to the competence/expertise of ENTERPRISE that could have wider potential benefit for ILO.

But it is possible also that such a model could have potential application for other ILO interventions, for example under EMPLOYMENT, in areas such as SKILLS. Tools or methodologies that provide greater outcome predictability have value for governments, as they offer the possibility of greater reassurance with regard to the investment of scarce policy resources. This is likely to become more pronounced, as the impact of COVID-19 and climate adaptation place increased pressure on public finances, and as some green recovery and Build Back Better initiatives under-deliver in terms of socio-economic stimulus, economic growth and employment creation (and preservation).

Insofar as the findings on factors that have contributed to gender mainstreaming in both the ENTERPRISE and INFOTEC departments are concerned, common feedback factors included (Departmental) leadership messaging that GEM was a key factor, as were openness to ideas and requesting actions for integration in beginning-of-cycle planning. Creating awareness on promoting gender and working to create an open and gender-inclusive work environment were important as was the need for leadership to show availability to mentor newly recruited women staff and to communicate belief in their development and contribution. Another feedback point was insufficient systematic and targeted support and guidance on how to advance GEM in their departments and in their daily work, and insufficient incentives and accountability measures (carrot and stick) to support GEM efforts in the Organization.

3.3.9 GEM in ILO proposal appraisal process

The project proposal appraisal process underwent considerable change during this period, with a new process becoming operational in 2017. It takes a three-tiered approach to proposal appraisal, largely based on the budget of the proposal.

The appraisal checklist is a key tool in the appraisal process. It enables the appraiser, project originator and other relevant units and offices involved in the appraisal process to review the project design and identify areas for improvement.⁵⁸ The appraisal checklist consists of questions and quality criteria, which are structured along the principles of effective development cooperation (relevance, ownership and sustainability, results, and finally transparency and accountability).

A strength of the process is that the appraisal checklist also incorporates EVAL's monitoring and evaluation appraisal checklist mandatory for projects over \$5 million (i.e. evaluability appraisal, see Guidance Note 16). In completing this form, EVAL will assess and provide comments for all relevant evaluability components (marked in grey). A total of 20 components will be assessed using a four-point scale (see the worksheet EVAL SCORE). An aggregate score will indicate the overall project's evaluability as per its design. Concluding remarks will point out the components in need of further improvement before the final appraisal. In cases where the project originator is unable to incorporate some of the given comments prior to the final appraisal, they should indicate this and inform EVAL and PARDEV about when and how these comments will be addressed.

Annual Reports list numbers (percentages) of proposals which have met the gender markers, and identify two that were used in the assessment of the proposals: (i) Gender Marker 2A: **significant contribution**

58 See IGDS 520 on Appraisal Mechanism.

including gender equality and non-discrimination analysis in the description, and this is reflected in the project outputs and outcomes; and (ii) Gender Marker 2B: **principal objective** with gender equality and non-discrimination as the primary focus, with such analysis in the description justifying all interventions whose outputs and outcomes contribute to the advancing of gender equality.

A comparison of the gender dimension in proposal appraisals over the period under review is not possible, given the changes made to the proposal appraisal process during this period. In 2016, the percentage of active DC projects with a gender marker 3 and 4 was 32 per cent, representing an increase from the 27 per cent of 2014–15. The 2017 Appraisal Report noted that gender mainstreaming in DC project proposals was slowing improving, 32 of DC projects marked as gender responsive, compared to the 27 per cent baseline in 2014–15.

Significant staff resources and co-ordination have been invested in the appraisal process, including in the gender dimension assessment. While a full-scale assessment is neither possible nor in the scope of this evaluation, which focuses on the GEM dimension, there are some reflection points that are worth raising. PARDEV has emphasized that quality proposal development, and gender-responsive proposals therein, is an ongoing effort that has to be repeated. While this is completely understandable and valid at one level, from the perspective of GEM, it is worth asking if this means mainstreaming will be ongoing process. In addition, what is the balance between proposal appraisal and feedback and accountability mechanisms (e.g. incentives and sanctions) for proposals that do not meet requisite criteria? This is, of course, a complex issue and one where a separate question is whether the gender dimension should have the same treatment as other proposal appraisal dimensions? A more pressing issue is the monitoring of the GEM dimension in the post-appraisal ILO project cycle process, once proposals receive funding (see below).

Regarding the use of the gender marker in institutional processes, GEDI has done some very recent and valuable work in carrying out a scan for the programme implementation report for P&B 2020–21 marker on Gender Equality and Non-discrimination (GEND).⁵⁹ This scan used the same methodology as an earlier

► Box 1. Review of use of gender markers in institutional process

A key finding was that for the relatively large share of mismatches between authors' self-assigned code and the reviewer's suggested code (based on PROGRAM guidance criteria), the authors' codes were almost always higher than those based on the criteria – in most of the code mismatches, authors had self-assigned a higher code than that identified by the reviewer (i.e. a large number of 2 and 3 self-assigned codes were found to be 1 or 0). Furthermore, many texts were found to contain only some disaggregated data and a phrase or sentence about gender mainstreaming was self-assessed as mostly code 1 but re-assessed under the scan review as 0. For example, reference "to be used across all the deliverables", or a reference to women and men or gender equality or the use of phrases such as "gender mainstreamed" approaches, but with little elaboration or take-up in the subsequent activities. The scan findings also noted that two examples of policy outcomes that were conspicuous by their absence of marker codes 1, 2 and 3 – except for some good practices that are signalled in the scan tables – were increasing, from a GEND perspective, the institutional capacity of employer and business membership organizations including women's parity in decision-making, and skills and lifelong learning. It should also be pointed out that, in some cases, the scan identified under-reporting/assessment, such as, for example, some interesting approaches (e.g. intersectional points/linkages) and good practice that was also not captured in the gender marking.

Either way, the scan represents a useful input to internal ILO organizational learning and discussion on the gender marker. Moreover, this is the kind of conversation that needs to be happening in a robust management framework (be this in the senior management team with additional specialists, or in a dedicated ILO task force, etc.), or at least a specific work group feeding a findings and issue paper into such a APGE strategic or management forum.

59 ILO7GEDI, "Scan related to programme implementation report for P&B 2020–21 marker on Gender Equality and Non-discrimination marker (GEND)", Internal Document, August 2021. The methodological approach involved random selection of global product descriptions across a mix of the policy outcomes, regions, and authors' self-assigned codes for the GEND marker.

review of Outcome-Based Work plan (OBW) Dashboard scans of global products and of CPOs in English, French or Spanish.

3.3.10 Core ILO institutional processes – selected reflection points

Experience in pursuing the ILO targets on gender parity is also interesting with regards to findings and reflection points going forward. The experience to-date shows that achieving gender parity cannot be pursued in a vacuum as a standalone target, but rather that this result area is complex and multi-faceted, and requires discussion at strategic and management levels within ILO. At a strategic level (as they go to the heart of questions such as what will ILO's GEM strategy – institutional dimension – look like over the coming five years, and how ambitious does ILO want to be?); and (ii) at a management level as they require dialogue and thinking through the implications, such as in terms of HRD policy, ILO positioning, cost and resource implications to implement, etc.

Regarding the project cycle core institutional process, this is an additional example of one of the current weaknesses of ILO's GEM approach internally, where a strategic-driven and process-driven dimension is missing. The lack of a full cycle of GEM-monitoring for projects makes it possible, if not probable, that some of the effort on GEM at the appraisal process by PARDEV is being dissipated as funded projects move into project start phase and implementation, which is regrettable. Similarly, the Synthesis Review work findings suggest there are costs to the absence of a full-cycle process. The summary review work carried out with regard to ENTERPRISE and INFOTEC suggests some striking results on how gender is contributing to strengthened departmental APGEmance (INFOTEC). Also, there may be further unmined potential and corporate assets to support GEM in ILO programmatic work (ENTERPRISE) on top of its existing range of work on gender-related themes. But it also suggests that these departments can, and want to do more regarding GEM, but lack more strategic and systematic support, including incentives and sanctions. As with the APGEs in general, and across the institutional processes and departments involved in this part of the work, the picture is one of significant effort and investment in progressing institutional GEM and, in some areas, of both promising progress and areas of under-achievement. But there is also a picture of a GEM approach that is not yet sufficiently strategic, systematic and enabling ILO departments and staff to make their best contribution to advancing GEM in the Organization.

3.4 Efficiency

Key findings

Programme outcome

Key finding 13: Efficient delivery of inclusive gender-responsive activities is demonstrated by the increased mobilization of resources to promote and realize gender equality in the world of work without an increase in staff capacity.

Institutional outcome

Key finding 14: The ILO's institutional capacity building on gender equality and mainstreaming is uneven across the ILO's operations, both for constituents and, in particular, for staff.

Key finding 15: The ILO gender equality and mainstreaming support structures, including those based in the Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch (GEDI), as measured against responsibilities, are not sufficient. Overall resource allocations (staff and non-staff) to implement the ambitious Action Plan 2016–17 and Action Plan 2018–21 appear insufficient.

Key finding 16: More resources for the ILO gender equality and mainstreaming efforts can be accessed by creating more opportunities and tapping into the ILO's staff commitment and interest in gender equality and mainstreaming, such as network- and team-based collaboration.

3.4.1 Policy outcomes

Key finding 13: Efficient delivery of inclusive gender-responsive activities is demonstrated by the increased mobilization of resources to promote and realize gender equality in the world of work without an increase in staff capacity.

An analysis of expenditures against gender mainstreaming actions⁶⁰ showed that overall resource allocation to gender equality (GE) and gender-responsive (GR) actions increased between 2016 and 2021, mostly through extra-budgetary resources (XBDC) (table 11). The Organization allocated to GE&GR initiatives⁶¹ a total of \$132.7 million XBDC in the 2016–17 biennium and \$273.3 million XBDC in 2018–19. This constitutes an increase from 32 to 61 per cent of the total ILO XBDC budget for this period. Whereas Outcome 6 received only 7 per cent of XBDC funds compared to other policy outcomes in 2020–21, gender equality and gender-responsive actions received over \$880 million XBDC, which represents 188 per cent of the ILO XBDC total estimated budget,⁶² as officially reported in the P&B for this period.⁶³

► **Table 11. ILO GE&GR total resource allocation for period 2016–21 (\$ millions)⁶⁴**

Biennium		XBDC	RBSA	Total
2016–17	GE&GR ¹	132.7	n.a. ²	132.7
	TOTAL ILO	410	35	445
	% GE&GR of total ILO budget	32%	–	30%
2018–19	GE&GR ¹	273.3	3.4	276.7
	TOTAL ILO	450	36.4	486.4
	% GE&GR of total ILO budget	61%	9%	57%
2020–21	Outcome 6	35	0.7	35.7
	GE&GR ¹	881.8	n.a. ²	881.8
	TOTAL ILO	470	36.4	506.4
	% O6 of total ILO budget	7%	2%	7%
	% GE&GR of total ILO budget	188%	–	174%

Notes: ¹ Inclusion of all relevant CPOs with interventions marked at level 2 or above, linked to POs. ² RBSA allocations relevant to GE&GR initiatives could not be identified for 2016–17 and 2020–21. – = nil. n.a. = data not available.

60 See detailed analysis in Appendix 11. Financial portfolio and expenditure overview, gender equality and gender responsive actions in the ILO, 2016–2021. The data on resources are from the ILO's Finance Department, the ILO's Programme and Budget, Programme Implementation Report, the Development Cooperation, Decent Work results and Outcome-based Work planning (OBW) dashboards of the ILO.

61 Inclusion of all relevant CPOs linked to POs with interventions with a gender marker of 2 or above.

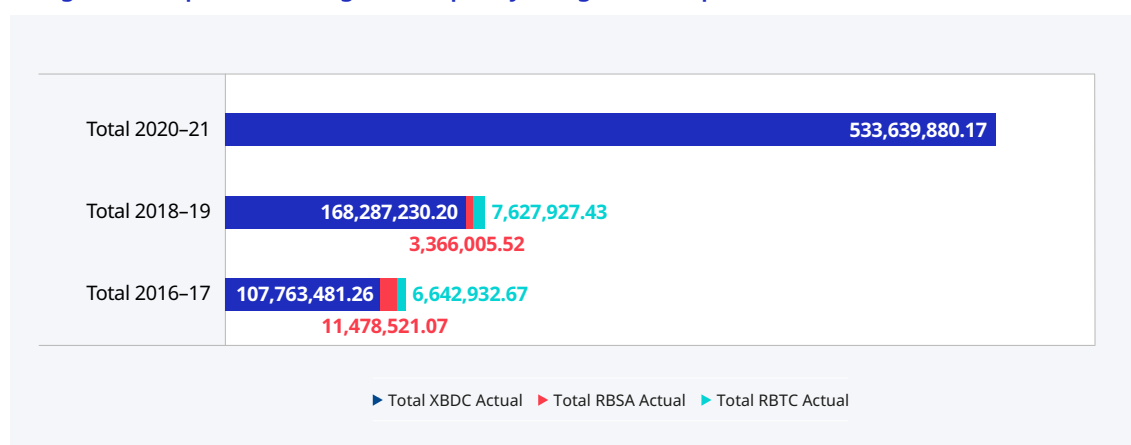
62 Excluding regular-budget resources.

63 It should be noted that this relates to resource allocation and expenditures on “gender equality and gender responsive” actions rather than GEM.

64 Source: Based on data from the ILO's P&B documents (2016–2021) and Finance Department, XBDC – Extra-budgetary Development Cooperation, RBSA – Regular Budget Supplementary Account.

Expenditure on gender equality and gender-responsive actions showed an upward trend over the period under review, remaining within the budget allocations described above (figure 13). Overall, the largest expenditure share on GE&GR actions in 2016–21⁶⁵ was linked to XBDC (over 80 per cent), followed by RBSA funds and RBTC, respectively.

► **Figure 13. Expenditure on gender equality and gender responsive actions in the ILO, 2016–21**



A closer analysis of XBDC expenditure figures shows, however, an uneven level of attention to gender equality and gender-responsive actions at outcome level, with only 4 per cent of initiatives with objectives relevant to gender equality⁶⁶ in 2016–17, slightly increasing to 8 per cent in 2018–19 (figure 14). An improvement is identified in 2020–21, with the largest expenditure share concentrated on interventions that include gender equality in outcomes,⁶⁷ representing 53 per cent of the overall XBDC expenditure.

Gender equality and gender-responsive actions were concentrated mostly on interventions targeting **jobs and employment in 2016–2019** (Outcome 1 of the PB 16–19), representing 38 per cent and 41 per cent of ILO's overall expenditure for this period (figure 15). The second largest gender-responsive expenditure in 2016–2017 was on initiatives on workplace compliance and labour inspection (16 per cent – Outcome 7), protecting workers from unacceptable forms of work (13 per cent – Outcome 8), and labour migration (12 per cent – Outcome 9). During the 2018–19 period, ILO's GE&GR efforts were also significant on interventions targeting labour migration (the second largest after employment activities, with 25 per cent – Outcome 9), and the promotion of sustainable enterprises (10 per cent – Outcome 4). Gender equality and gender-responsive actions in **2020–21** were mainly mainstreamed through initiatives ensuring an **adequate and effective protection for all (31 per cent – Outcome 7)**, closely followed by interventions on employment and decent work for all (27 per cent – Outcome 3), and skills promotion (12 per cent – Outcome 5).

In terms of **programmatic outputs for 2016–17**, gender equality and gender-responsive actions were mainstreamed for the most part across initiatives on institutional development and capacity building programmes in industrial, sectoral, trade, skills, infrastructure, investment or environmental policies for more productive and better-quality jobs (P&B – Indicator 1.4). Still within the same outcome, activities on decent jobs and skills for young women and men through multi-pronged policies and programmes (P&B – Output 1.2) were the second largest expenditure targeting gender equality in this period, followed by activities aimed at strengthening collaboration among social partners, and other institutions and partners to improve workplace compliance (P&B – Output 7.2).

⁶⁵ RBSA and RBTC resources could not be linked to activities with relevant gender markers specific to CPOs, and POs.

⁶⁶ Interventions receiving a gender marker of 4.

⁶⁷ Interventions receiving a gender marker of 3.

► **Figure 14. XBDC expenditure on gender equality and gender responsive actions in the ILO, by gender marker (2016–21)**



This trend continued during the **Biennium 2018–19**, with targeted actions on decent jobs for young women and men through multi-pronged policies and programmes (P&B – Indicator 1.2) concentrating the largest expenditure efforts on gender equality. Capacity strengthening of constituents on pro-employment macro-economic policies (P&B – Indicator 1.4) closely followed it, along with actions to assist sustainable enterprises and potential entrepreneurs (P&B – Output 4.2) and building and monitoring of governance frameworks and other arrangements on labour migration and mobility (P&B – indicators 9.2 and 9.3).

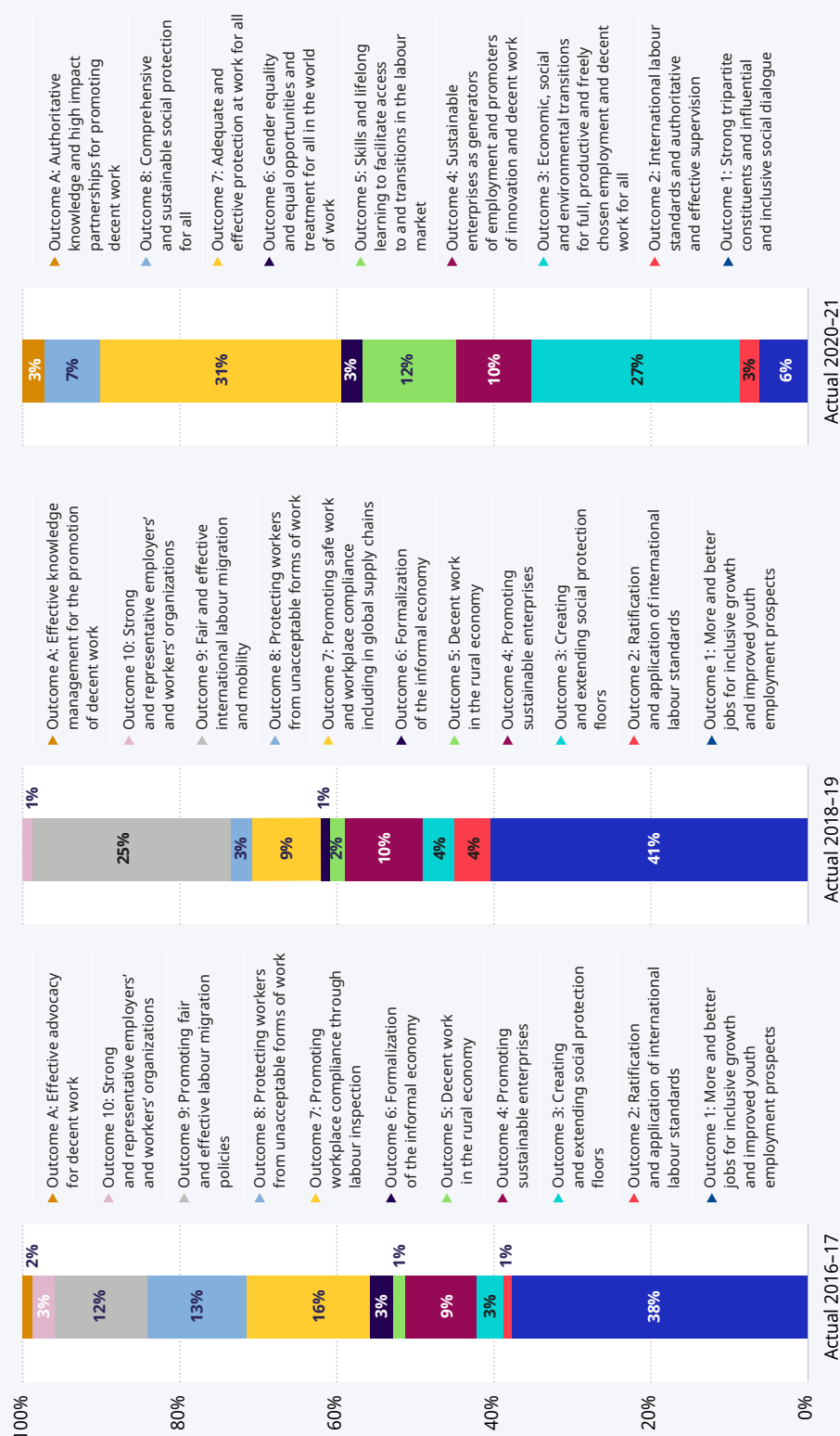
Activities to increase capacities of member States to promote and realize fundamental principles and rights at work (P&B – Output 7.1) largely concentrated GE&GR efforts in the **Biennium 2020–21**. Initiatives linked to Output 7.5 to increase constituents' capacities to develop fair and effective labour migration frameworks, institutions and services to protect migrant workers were the second largest to target gender equality, along with capacities to formulate and implement new generation of gender-responsive national employment policies, including for youth (P&B – Output 3.1). Increased capacity of the ILO constituents to identify current skills mismatches and anticipate future skill needs (P&B – Output 5.1) was the intervention type mostly addressing gender equality in relation to Outcome 5.

The **regional landscape** indicates that gender equality and gender-responsive actions were implemented mainly in the Asia and the Pacific and Africa regions in 2016–17 and in 2020–21. The Arab States and Asia and the Pacific were the regions that mostly worked on gender equality in 2018–19 (figure 16).

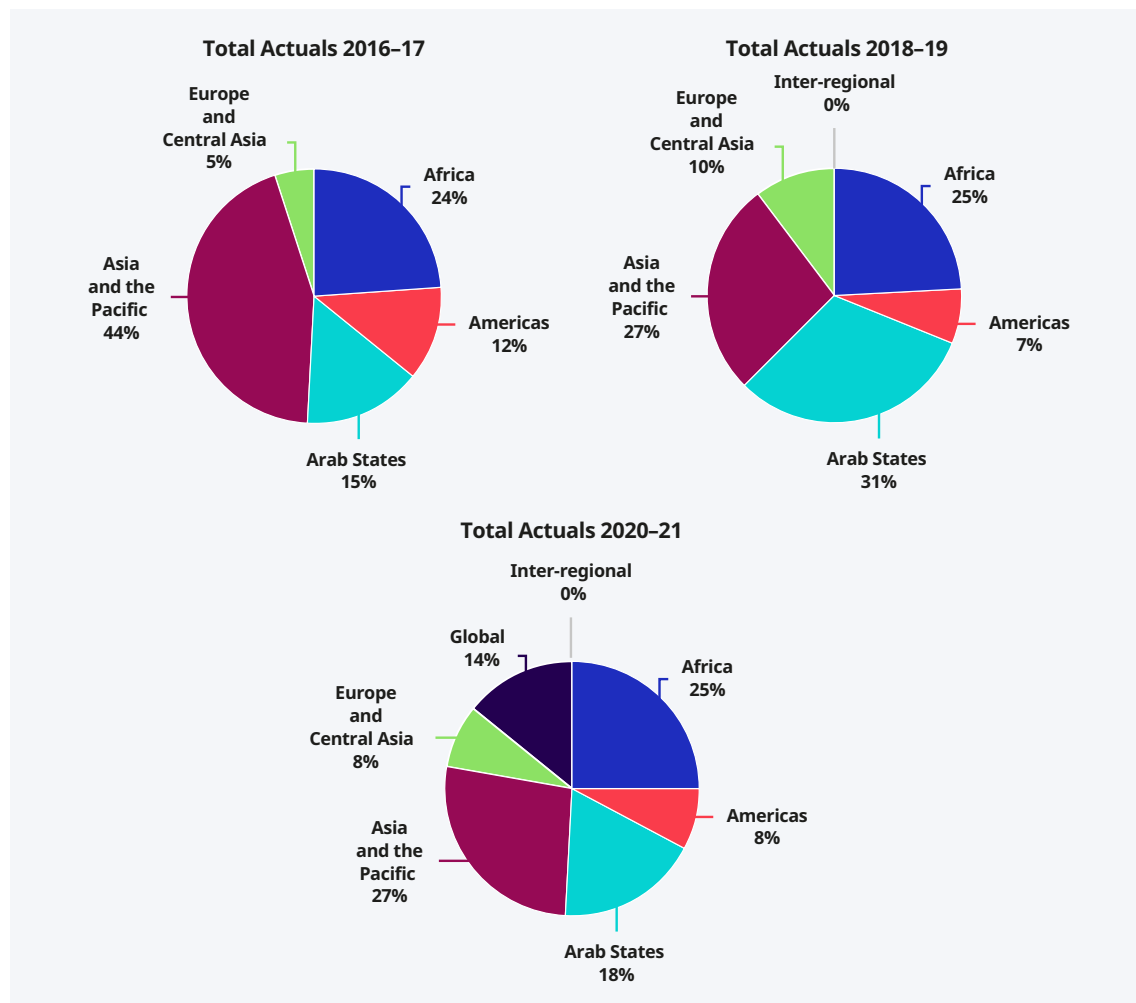
A disaggregated analysis of interventions based on their associated gender maker shows an overall upward trend in the expenditure on activities aimed at promoting gender equality at outcome, output and activity levels (Gender Marker 4). More concretely, Africa, and Europe and Central Asia regions allocated the largest share of resources in 2016–17 to initiatives designed to promote gender equality⁶⁸ at outcome level, totalling close to \$4 million XBDC. These efforts continued to be concentrated in Africa in the following biennium (\$4.9 million XBDC), followed by Asia and the Pacific region with \$3.6 million XBDC. This trend remained in the current biennium, with Asia and the Pacific region dedicating close to \$14 million XBDC to well-designed activities to address gender equality, closely followed by Africa with \$10 million.

68 Initiatives with a gender marker of 4.

► Figure 15. Distribution of total expenditure on GE&GR by policy outcome, 2016–2021



► **Figure 16. Regional distribution of ILO expenditure on gender equality and gender-responsive initiatives, 2016–21**



Gender equality and gender-responsive actions were concentrated mostly on interventions targeting **jobs and employment in 2016–2019** (Outcome 1 of the PB 16–19), representing 38 per cent and 41 per cent of the ILO overall expenditure for this period. The second largest gender-responsive expenditure in 2016–2017 was on initiatives on workplace compliance and labour inspection (16 per cent – Outcome 7), protecting workers from unacceptable forms of work (13 per cent – Outcome 8), and labour migration (12 per cent – Outcome 9). During the 2018–19 period, ILO's GE&GR efforts were also significant on interventions targeting labour migration (the second largest after employment activities, with 25 per cent – Outcome 9), and the promotion of sustainable enterprises (10 per cent – Outcome 4). Gender equality and gender-responsive actions in **2020–21** were mainly mainstreamed through initiatives ensuring an **adequate and effective protection for all (31 per cent – Outcome 7)**, closely followed by interventions on employment and decent work for all (27 per cent – Outcome 3), and skills promotion (12 per cent – Outcome 5).

The above findings will be further explored and considered. Again, it should be noted that this relates to resource allocation and expenditures on “gender equality and gender-responsive” actions rather than GEM per se, in other words not including resourcing on institutional GEM as one caveat but rather resourcing for the external, programmatic outcome part of the evaluation. What is of interest is that these findings suggest a lower percentage for PO6 that may reflect a lower-than-expected allocation for PO6, but this needs to be further explored. Again, it should also be emphasized that this analysis is in respect of XBDC only (i.e. XBDC-funded implementation of CPOs).

3.4.2 Institutional outcome: Implementation and support

Key finding 14: The ILO's institutional capacity building on gender equality and mainstreaming is uneven across the ILO operations, both for constituents and, in particular, for staff.

Both APGEs (2016–2017 or 2018–2021) did not include a framework, strategy or annual plan for training under Human and Financial Resources or Capacity. The review of GEM training resources and actions shows that while training to build capacity around GEM is available, it is more on-demand and ad hoc in nature. It is constrained by resource availability, varying levels of awareness among staff of what is available, even when a range of GEM-support materials for orientation and training has been developed. There is, for the most part, a lack of a programmatic approach to developing gender-related skills and competencies beyond initial orientation for new staff members, and this is not surprising given the small size of the GEDI team and limited staff resources.

It should be emphasized that an uneven outcome from capacity building is to some extent normal, as there will be many factors that influence return on training investment. It is rather an issue of whether GEM capacity development and skills development is available to all those that would like to receive it and is delivering an optimal effort to allow people to do their work in a gender-aware manner.

This is likely to be an important area of opportunity going forward, with a view to developing a more strategic and increased institutionalization of GEM work in the ILO. Resource constraints have meant that GEDI (and related contributing partners, HRD, PARDEV, EVAL, etc.) have done what was possible with resources, but the lack of a systemic approach and responding more to ad hoc demand invariably means that capacity development efforts will be uneven. This can partly be seen in the disparity of the ILO organizational demand for GEM-related capacity development, in terms of feedback from the surveys, where there is a clear message regarding training.

For example, the ILO Staff Survey⁶⁹ analysis showed that one-third of respondents (33.8 per cent) either *agree or strongly agree* with the gender training package as being sufficient to build their gender equality knowledge and support their work tasks, with a further 18.6 per cent of respondents *somewhat agreeing* while 17.9 per cent of respondents either *somewhat disagreeing, disagreeing or strongly disagreeing*, and 29.7 per cent responding *don't know*. Similarly, as discussed elsewhere in this section, interviewees in ILO regions on ILO institutional GEM and programmatic GEM regularly raised the point that there was a need for better and more systematic GEM-related induction training for newly recruited staff.

Key finding 15: The ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming support structures, including those based in Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch (GEDI), as measured against responsibilities, are not sufficient. Overall resource allocations (staff and non-staff) to implement the ambitious Action Plan 2016–17 and Action Plan 2018–21 appear insufficient.

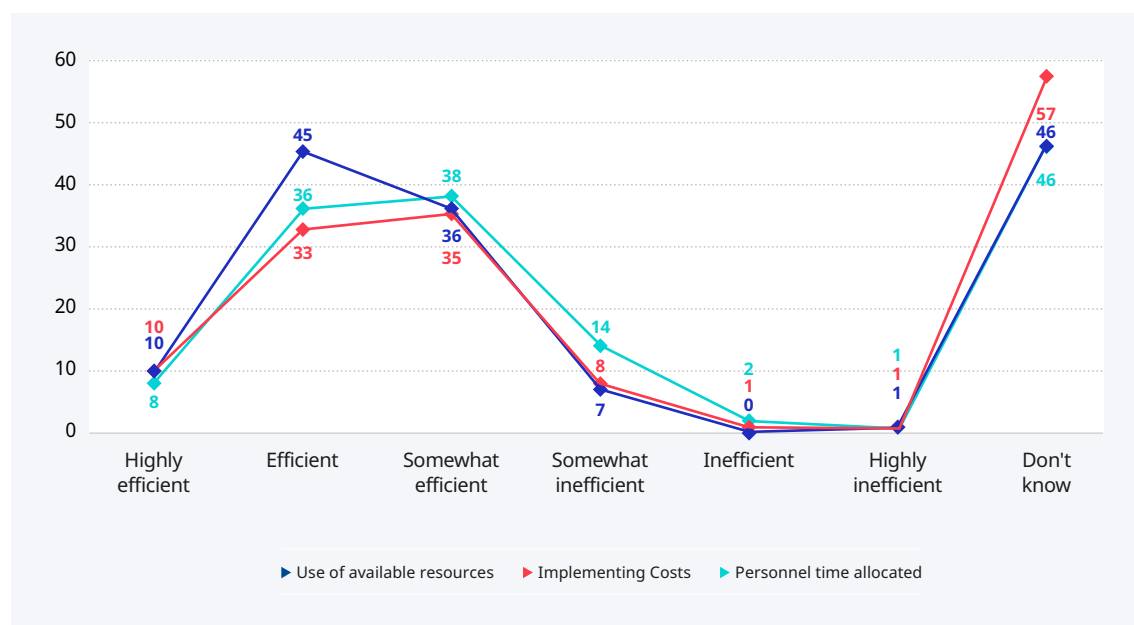
Regarding the efficiency of GEM relevant strategies, approaches and actions, the ILO Staff Survey showed, where staff express a direct opinion,⁷⁰ that they consider GEM strategies, approaches and actions to be generally efficient in terms of use of resources, with 62.76 per cent of the respondents perceiving them to be more or less efficient.⁷¹ Concerning efficiency in implementing costs, 53.8 per cent of the respondents marked either *highly efficient* (6.90 per cent), *efficient* (22.76 per cent) or *somewhat efficient* (24.14 per cent), with 39.31 per cent of the respondents responding *do not know*. Regarding efficiency in terms of personnel

69 ILO Staff Survey Q39.

70 A direct opinion here refers to expressing a view as to whether GEM strategies, approaches and actions have been efficient or not efficient, as there were a high proportion (approximately one-third) of *don't know* responses.

71 The specific breakdown regarding use of available resources to be either *highly efficient* (7 per cent of respondents), *efficient* (31.03 per cent of respondents) or *somewhat efficient* (24.83 per cent of respondents).

► Figure 17. Efficiency of GEM relevant strategies, approaches and actions



time allocated, 56.56 per cent of respondents consider GEM strategies, approaches and action to be more or less efficient (5.52 per cent of the answers were *highly efficient*, 24.83 per cent *efficient*, and 26.21 per cent *somewhat efficient*), with just under one-third (31.71 per cent) choosing *don't know* (figure 17).

The high proportion of don't knows should be kept in mind when interpreting the response, which is likely to be linked to the fact that survey respondents did not have ready access to information on GEM-related resources and inputs and results to make an assessment of efficiency in terms of resource use, implementation costs, and personnel time. Hence, respondents are more likely to basing their response on a broad perception of efficiency.

Regarding GEDI in ILO headquarters, a full assessment of efficiency would require detailed time analysis of all GEDI staff who have worked on the APGEs in core APGE co-ordination, and implementation-related work, as well as GEM-related actions and activities under the APGEs, including trainings, awareness-raising, support on internal processes, etc. In any case, this is only one part of the work of the wider GEDI unit, and APGE reporting. The review of GEM tools and actions launched shows a high level of output given such limited resources. In the circumstances, the GEDI team has got through an impressive body of work and has shown impressive levels of productivity and commitment. This small team has a significant workload of co-ordinating and developing of the Action Plans, but also of co-ordinating and monitoring AGPE implementation progress, as well as launching and implementing specific actions in the Action Plan. Appreciation for the efforts of GEDI work on GEM can be seen in the above staff survey perception of a relatively efficient GEM effort given available resources and personnel resources.

Significant effort, a high level of work output and engagement has been demonstrated by the core implementation and co-ordination team (GEDI) in co-ordinating the implementation of the 2016–17 and 2018–21 Action Plans for Gender Equality, not least given the small size of this team, and in this respect, it has been resource-efficient, but it is not sufficient to support the gender equality institutional capacity of ILO at all stages. The current approach assumes (implicitly) that a significant amount of the management and co-ordination and implementation support can be done by a very small co-ordination team, but this team has also numerous other work areas and responsibilities, including GEM support for the Europe region, where the lack of a dedicated gender specialist has meant that significant GEM support work falls back on GEDI.

3.4.3 Institutional management of Action Plans on Gender Equality

Implementation of the Action Plans for Gender Equality, in particular where departments hold custodian responsibilities for indicators, is constrained by a lack of a robust management and strategic framework, systemic support in key areas, over-focus on actions, and activities with a lack of space for a structured dialogue on how to progress gender equality and mainstreaming in various departments and policy outcomes areas. Addressing these issues could increase prospects for mainstreaming, and sustainability of over time. This would enable better mainstreaming and institutionalization of specific areas of GEM institutionalization work.

An example alluded to elsewhere in this report is HRD's work in implementing its responsibilities under the APGEs. In the case of gender parity, for example, this is a complex issue which has intersecting points with numerous other aspects of ILO organization functioning and development. These include organizational culture, recruitment, and whether specific measures should be discussed and considered to address the structural issues in advancing gender parity at senior staff grades within ILO (and the relative importance of this issue against other internal institutional aspects, as well as GEM in ILO Programmatic work). This requires an appropriate managerial level at which such strategic and complex issues can be discussed and where direction or decisions can be provided.

It is important to emphasize that there is some systemization in areas related to institutional GEM. One example is current HRD planning to develop a suite of training modules. However, overall, implementation is being constrained somewhat by insufficient systematization, and this is linked in part also to resources, as systematizing any process requires more resources (e.g. staff or external resources) in the short term before efficiency and mainstreaming gains can be reaped downstream.

Overall, feedback suggests a network of gender specialists who are working too much on their own, in the sense of a lack of systemic support, and often facing work demands and expectations that bear little correlation to the resources available. From a resourcing perspective, the GEM implementation approach is predicated in part on the gender network and related support through the Gender Specialists and the GFPs, supported by content and inputs from headquarters. However, interviews with gender specialists and regions show for the most part scepticism regarding the adequacy of resources. Firstly, there is an acute lack of gender specialists compared to the GEM-related needs and work to be done and, secondly, unproven assumptions that many GFPs have sufficient time to support GEM work beyond their other work responsibilities. Thirdly, as discussed already, survey results (e.g. ILO Staff Survey) show varying familiarity and use of GEM resources, tools and support, while survey and stakeholder interview feedback has regularly emphasized the need for more customized GEM support. The above raises issues regarding some of the assumptions underlying the Theory of Change, which would need to be revisited.

This also raises questions about some of the assumptions, implicit or otherwise, underlying GEM mainstreaming. Increasing GEM resources and support to include more customized GEM support means providing more resources for this, to GEDI and related GEM actors in the gender network. The limits of the current approach have not, however, been addressed by management, in terms of a structured approach to either: (i) addressing resource constraints; (ii) identifying other approaches; or (iii) a mix of both of the above. This connects with other issues raised in the evaluation findings, in terms of GEM leadership and organizational commitment in ILO, managerial shortcomings or blockage points, accountability and organizational change, as these issues are multi-faceted.

It should also be noted that the management-related issues raised here are not new, with managerial blockages or shortcomings having been identified in previous ILO evaluations, such as the 2016 evaluation of the 2010–2015 APGE.

A strength of the approach is the distributed responsibility for APGE indicators through indicator custodians is one area where accountability is being strengthened within ILO, and this is something that can be built upon. Overall, there are mixed views inside ILO regarding progress and ILO 'walking the walk' – during interviews many ILO staff acknowledge that while there has been progress there has not enough progress. Interviews and the ILO Staff Survey point to a common perception of insufficient top-level leadership on GEM within ILO, and as well as a perception of too much lip service being paid to GEM by ILO senior and middle management. Being seen to walk the walk is important, and the importance attributed to gender

equality mainstreaming by the ILO Africa region's leadership is just one example of this. The need for more accountability and prioritization of GEM at leadership level can be seen in the APGE results for some of the accountability indicators, where targets for P5 and above have for example not been met.

3.4.4 Resourcing

Key finding 16: More resources for the ILO's gender equality mainstreaming efforts can be accessed by creating more opportunities and tapping into ILO staff commitment and interest in gender equality mainstreaming, such as network- and team-based collaboration.

ILO GEM efforts need to explore ways to harness greater resources by creating more opportunities, including bottom-up opportunities, to tap into ILO staff commitment and interest in gender equality and mainstreaming, such as more options for network-based and team-based collaboration.

This lack of clarity also impedes the identification of resources (human and financial), and the areas and types of technical support that may be needed by the Department to implement and achieve the gender equality and mainstreaming targets. The absence of a narrated vision for HRD's roles and responsibilities vis-à-vis gender equality also favour short-term targets at the detriment of a clearer gender-transformative agenda. The evaluation also identified risks related to the lack of interlinkages between gender, diversity and inclusivity and recognizing the impact of intersecting personal characteristics on people's experiences. This impacts negatively on progresses in adopting and implementing Leave No One Behind agenda.⁷² Although at the policy level, these interlinkages are coming into play (e.g. parental leave take into consideration different experiences of parenthood), the absence of a clear narrative on gender, diversity and inclusivity presents risks of competing priorities, dispersed efforts, and approaches in silos.

Notwithstanding the resource constraints that have constrained GEM implementation efforts, the approach is also not sufficiently harnessing all potential resources that might be brought to bear in this effort, in particular staff commitment and interest in gender equality, facilitating greater collaborative networks and teamwork around gender-responsive interventions, and tapping more into untapped energies within ILO.

Another important area or resourcing that is not sufficiently looked at is the creation of high-visibility gender models and interventions to drive the ILO market and visibility around gender and, in particular, with a view to accessing new/additional income in the area of gender equality. Engagement of ILO departments and staff involved in implementing the Action Plans for Gender Equality and addressing the weaknesses in the process for GEM product development (and strategy) means the process is constrained by a lack of a robust management and strategic framework, and sufficient results-orientation.

3.5 Likelihood of impact and sustainability

Key findings

GEM in Programmatic Work

Key finding 17: The ILO's programmatic work is generating some impact with a gender dimension, but it is not always visible, clearly monitored, or communicated.

Key finding 18: The ILO's programmatic work on gender equality lacks, in part, an overall strategy, an identity with a clear value proposition, and strategies, targets and tools to optimize impact and ILO positioning on gender, including within the UN system.

⁷² Leave No One Behind (LNOB) is the central, transformative promise of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Key finding 19: The ILO has used partnerships in areas with a gender dimension to good effect. This has generated additional visibility and impact, although these instances tend to be more ad hoc in nature.

Key finding 20: ILO funding for gender equality and gender-responsive actions is increasing, but more can, and needs to be, done to mobilize funding to increase the rate of progress for achieving outcomes.

Institutional GEM

Key finding 21: The ILO has built institutional gender equality and mainstreaming capacity to oversee a wide range of gender-related actions with impact and successes, but impact on the institution is constrained by challenges in respect of sustained and mainstreamed gender-responsive capacity development.

Key finding 22: The sustainability of gender equality and mainstreaming in the Organization is mixed. Some progress has been made in respect of its institutionalization, but sustainability needs to be built more explicitly into gender action planning and strategies to increase prospects for sustainability and to accelerate change.

3.5.1 Impact of ILO's programmatic work

Key finding 17: The ILO's programmatic work is generating some impact with a gender dimension, but it is not always visible, clearly monitored, or communicated.

ILO's global initiatives, such as the Women at Work Centenary Initiative, as part of the wider centenary initiatives, have generated significant visibility and impact, including with regard to the gender dimension of these initiatives. Staff feedback has also emphasized how the Women at Work initiative has helped in ILO's positioning, for example by being a highly visible reminder of ILO's work over previous decades in standards-setting for the world of work and for advancing women's role and rights therein. The adoption of Convention No. 190 in 2019 also brought visibility, plus additional opportunities and levers with regard to this convention's gender dimensions, which has also provided ILO with a good entry point with UN Women.

ILO's research and global publications is another source of impact with important gender dimensions. Global research publications have been a core strength of ILO, and not only leverage and showcase ILO's technical expertise, but such publications can also bring impact in terms of supporting ILO positioning. An example of this is ILO's work on the care economy,⁷³ where internal staff feedback and some external partner feedback confirmed the impact of the care economy report in creating significant visibility for ILO in this space.

While global research reports are generating visibility and supporting corporate positioning of ILO, the evaluation findings suggest there may be scope to further strengthen impact. Some staff feedback, while acknowledging the value of such research and thought leadership, also raised points about: (i) the resource demands and cost of such research efforts; and (ii) ILO not always doing enough to leverage and follow through on such research and publication efforts. This was seen as a weakness with the first care report in 2018, where staff interviews considered that ILO had not extracted as much visibility and impact from the report as it might have (e.g. impact from more advocacy work on the back of the report), linked to corporate weaknesses in communication and dissemination and advocacy, areas where ILO staff consider that ILO corporate strengths are well behind some other agencies, in particular UN Women.

73 Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work, ILO, 2018.

But this also raises an important point in terms of strategic planning and GEM. The evaluation has not seen evidence of a structured framework for planning such research publications, in terms of systematic analysis of linkages to ILO policies, including GEM, post-publication plan for communication, visibility and advocacy, impact generation, including regional assessments and if a global publication would offer varying levels of return by region. Other issues to consider would be the extent to which ILO has models or solutions that can be leveraged in ramping up delivery in ILO countries (and fund-raising) on the back of such publications, as well as ensuring that such research is optimally relevant to each ILO region, notwithstanding that regional and country contexts and their variations may be complex and not always easily managed. This is a challenge in most global research endeavours, where regional and county variations may at times be significant and, thus, considering this in the impact planning framework (for example, whether there is scope for specific regional variants or knowledge products, etc.) could strengthen downstream (post-publication) impact.

3.5.2 Gender-related impact across regions and countries

The detailed analysis of ILO's flagship programmes, for example, showed⁷⁴ that ILO's GEM efforts have targeted and impacted (at different levels of intervention) almost all categories of gender equality, with the exception of the gender pay gap. Among the most frequent effects of the interventions from the flagship programmes cited were raising the political voice and improving the social status of women at work (denouncing harassment, participating in community and professional associations, and taking part in social dialogue), targeting women and girls in contexts of social and economic vulnerability (migration, rural economy, HIV, fragile states), and improving occupational safety and health (hazardous work, handling agriculture equipment).

The Better Work, Social Protection Floors for All, IPEC+, and Jobs for Peace and Resilience Programmes report reveal results that are gender transformative. These results span support and advocacy for the development and enactment of new legislation, institutional building and strengthening, skills development, and employment with potential to impact meaningful and sustainable change. Better Work, IPEC+, Safety and Health for All, and Jobs for Peace and Resilience also report gender strategic and empowering results, which include young and adult women in the change process, supporting them to build skills and make active choices, such as taking their children out of child labour, engaging in entrepreneurship, and designing occupational safety and health (OSH) solutions for their own work settings.

However, the ILO's programmatic work across its regions and countries is generating some impact with a gender dimension, this impact is not always visible or monitored and captured, with the result that seeking out impact takes time, and examples tend to be mostly for individuals and not systemic. Other challenges in identifying impact can be that some impact with a clear gender dimension is taking place in another policy area (e.g. social protection) but the gender dimension may not be full captured, or where the intervention/project indicators are gender weak. On visibility, while ILO staff have welcomed the creation of a dedicated gender policy outcome, there is a perception among some field staff that this has not been matched by larger gender-focused programmes, when compared to 5–10 years ago, and that the replacement of the Gender Bureau was a step backwards in terms of visibility (ILO-wide, in countries where such programmes were operational, and in terms of staff perception of ILO's commitment to GEM). Visibility for global research publications and through leadership productions with a gender dimension is much better, although it is likely that more can be done to assess impact from these knowledge investments.

Better Work is one ILO example of a more systemic approach to monitoring impact. The Better Work programme has a pronounced focus on women, where the average proportion of women employees in the garment sector is approximately 80 per cent. With its impact monitoring partner Tufts University, a significant impact assessment exercise⁷⁵ was carried out in 2015, which showed that the programme was

⁷⁴ Appendix 9 on Comparative Analysis of GEM in planned and realized policy outcomes and Appendix 10 Analysis of CPOs with gender-responsive results, August 2021

⁷⁵ This impact monitoring exercise involved large-scale collation and analysis of almost 15,000 survey responses from garment workers and 2,000 responses from factory managers across Haiti, Indonesia, Jordan, Nicaragua and Viet Nam.

having a positive impact on working conditions, worker wellbeing, factory performance, buyer behaviour, and social and human development. The findings showed one example that improving working conditions is an investment for factories and not a cost. A strength of its approach is in part working at different levels of the ecosystem and global supply chain, where it seeks to understand the drivers for improved working conditions in the apparel industry, including examining the evidence establishing a business case for improved working conditions, which will be a key factor in creating sustainable business models. For one ILO member country, Better Work also was an example of a transformative gender equality programme where gender was not front and centre, but where significant gender-transformative outcomes such as improved women working conditions and improved women empowerment were achieved through the focus on achieving better work.

The lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation of impact is a constraint that needs to be addressed. The case study review work on core GEM institutional processes raised the issue of weak gender-monitoring processes from the point when proposals pass to funded projects and to their preparation, inception and full implementation phases. These issues on impact are in part a downstream consequence of those activities. However, an interim improvement could also be a more systematic collation of gender-related results, at least for larger projects, for example, using an online dashboard, and a reinvigorated gender network.

Better Work, as an ILO flagship programme, has had a number of advantages and factors in terms of developing its impact, and monitoring and communicating, including running over a longer period of time, multi-country learning, a more defined impact system, and greater resources and higher-than-average visibility. These points should be borne in mind in future reflection on ILO efforts for gender-related impact. For example, the impact monitoring carried out by TUFTS University would have further contributed to anticipating that Covid-19 would result in only 60 per cent of workers returning to factory jobs. Also, the disproportionate effect that this would have on women given the programme's existing knowledge of its impact, in particular on improvements in households' livelihoods and developmental outcome money sent home by workers helps to improve their families' lives.

The **Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC)** is a very different type of initiative – discussed in more detail in later sub-sections on ILO corporate positioning and partnering, it provides interesting reflection points regarding GEM-related impact and impact pathways. Launched under ILO's leadership, with a strong gender dimension offering opportunities and entry points on gender equality. Discussed also under ILO positioning in detail below under the Organization's positioning and partnership on GEM, it represents an interesting aspect of ILO GEM-related impact in a number of respects, particularly with regard to learning and the value of more strategic reflection on the tools, approaches and pathways to impact. Firstly, like ILO global research publications, it has generated strong visibility for ILO. Secondly, in terms of member and stakeholder perception, interview feedback from a number of EPIC members showed that its results and impact to-date had exceeded their expectations, and in this respect, EPIC has generated positive perceptions of ILO as an actor capable of mobilizing other key stakeholders with a view to creating specific results and impact. A third point is the very clear focus of EPIC, which was seen at least by some members as one of its strong points. A member country also emphasized the tripartite nature of ILO's involvement as another asset base for EPIC's prospects for generating results in this space.

While ILO's programmatic work across its regions and countries is generating some impact with a gender dimension, it is not always visible or monitored and captured, with the result that seeking out impact takes time, and examples tend to be for the most part individual and not systemic. Other challenges in identifying impact are that its clear gender dimension is taking place in another policy area (e.g. social protection) and it may not be fully captured, or where the intervention/project's indicators are gender-weak. On visibility, while ILO staff have welcomed the creation of a dedicated gender policy outcome, there is a perception among some field staff that this has not been matched by larger gender-focused programmes when compared to 5–10 years ago, and that the replacement of the Gender Bureau was a step backwards. Visibility for global research publications and leadership productions with a gender dimension is perceived as much better, although it is likely that more can be done to assess impact from these knowledge investments.

As regards some of the constraints mentioned above related to ILO's lack of systemic monitoring of impact, EPIC is interesting. It underlines the value of dedicated staff willing to launch and try new things, and the

implementation support work from the EPIC Secretariat was praised by one country. There has also been some gradual resource mobilization from EPIC member countries, which no doubt benefit from the credibility and trust built by ILO and the coalition.

On the theme of impact optimization, there may be scope for ILO to reflect on whether this kind of targeted membership mobilization or coalition-approach as an initial generation of visibility that can actually create initial visibility, and influence-reach and momentum to open up other opportunities. This could be in respect of other global themes, or sectoral or regional themes. One of the open questions EPIC is dealing with is how much impact may trickle down to the individual country level. This is a complex question but trickle-down impact in any case rarely meets expectations, and this may, therefore, be an interesting opportunity to reflect on how EPIC can maximize impact at country and regional levels, and what would be realistic impact targets at global, regional and country levels. This would also contribute to wider ILO development on programmatic GEM, given the synergies with other areas around GEM strategy, impact tools development, ILO positioning, and possibly the wider use of this kind of coalition/platform approach.

3.5.3 ILO Narrative and value proposition in programmatic work

Key finding 18: The ILO's programmatic work on gender equality lacks, in part, an overall strategy, an identity with a clear value proposition, and strategies, targets and tools to optimize impact and ILO positioning on gender, including within the UN system.

Consistently cited elements of ILO's narrative and value proposition around GEM were its deep technical expertise in areas of ILO focus, a view also shared in interviews with external partners. Another dimension was **ILO's global initiatives**, with the centenary initiatives and the Women at Work initiative regularly cited in terms of the attention and impact, and global **research publications**. The latter have been a core strength of ILO, leveraging and showcasing ILO's technical expertise.

Numerous ILO policy departments and ILO regions and country teams are doing interesting things in GEM, and/or have interesting experience, assets and tools that are contributing or could contribute to ILO's value proposition on GEM, but there is a lack of a clearly articulated framework. In terms of visibility and identity or branding, at least some of ILO's staff perceives a decline in the visibility of larger scale ILO GEM programmes during the past years. There does not seem to be a structured reflection and process for assessing GEM-related offers relative to other actors (e.g. other UN agencies), or in terms of innovative value in terms of new products/offering development, or how to use GEM to create additional funding opportunities. This is something that would significantly improve financial sustainability and address ILO resource constraints in taking GEM to the next level.

Overall, however, ILO's strategy and value proposition around GEM in programmatic work lacks a clear framework, both in articulation and in its communication. This appears to be due to a number of factors, an important one of which is the consequence of being bundled in the same GEM policy and APGEs as internal ILO GEM policy and action plans (i.e. a confusion of the Institution's internal institutional GEM work, and its external value proposition and product offering to its constituents and partners). Further contributing factors are likely to be that GEM cuts across ILO's policy and technical work and departments, as well as the fact that as an institution ILO tends to be stronger on technical expertise and competence than on corporate marketing and communication. Another reason might quite simply be complexity — ILO is active in a wide and complex range of areas that have gender dimensions, and structuring and framing this work and developing conceptual and communications-level clarity takes time.

This can also be seen in its articulation by ILO staff, which while naturally dependent in part on their role, expertise and perspective, is also without reference to an ILO-wide common framework. Some external feedback from the wider UN system also raised this issue of a perceived lack of a clear ILO narrative around GEM.

It is important to emphasize that this does not mean that ILO does not have specific areas of expertise, added-value and specific value-propositions. What is missing is how to take these different elements and

develop them into an overall framework from which ILO's narrative can be developed and articulated. Secondly, there is a lack of a clear strategy on ILO's trajectory for gender in programmatic work, in terms, for example, of the medium-term results and outcomes targeted, and the roadmap on how to get there. A framework for analysing its various gender-related activities, expert and corporate assets would be a good start, for example, by creating a typology of ILO areas of activity and expertise, possibly starting with a general typology of activities (e.g. standards, advocacy, research/through leadership, in-country projects, etc.). Then analysing ILO value proposition across various gender-related themes using, for example, a matrix approach.

Also, there does not seem to be a structured reflection and process for assessing GEM-related offers relative to other actors (e.g. other UN agencies), or in terms of innovation value for new product/offering development and how to use GEM to create additional funding opportunities. This is something that would significantly improve financial sustainability and address ILO resource constraints in taking GEM to the next level. Creating a GEM-focused process for assessing all ILO expertise, tools and approaches could possibly be an important initial step in working to strengthen ILO's GEM value proposition. For purely illustrative purposes, an example is given box 2 below from one expertise area of ENTERPRISE.

► **Box 2. ILO-wide Assessment of Corporate Experience and Assets as part of a Programmatic GEM Innovation and Product Development process – ENTERPRISE's LEONTIEF modelling experience**

As a purely illustrative example, in an ILO-wide process for assessing internal expertise, tools and experience as part of a process for GEM-related innovation and product development, it might be interesting to consider ILO ENTERPRISE's work with the Leontief model around modelling and analysis. As mentioned earlier, this model has been used by ENTERPRISE on a somewhat ad-hoc or on-demand basis, to work with specific countries or governments to carry out modelling as part of socio-economic development scenario planning or employment forecasting.

The model's capability to provide high accuracy levels in its prediction outputs could make it interesting to explore its use as part of an integrated offer in areas such as gender-inclusive prediction for specific interventions, for example, a women's entrepreneurship programme, or targeted support for certain categories of vulnerable women in the informal economy. ILO already has a number of interventions and models in areas around women entrepreneurship, cooperatives, etc., from past and current work from ENTERPRISE, and some integration and scaling could be considered as a possible reflection point, with a view to generating larger, high-visibility gender programmes. Regarding the scaling dimension, this is, of course, only one option, but where the Leontief model was part of a wider model with an income generation/revenue or wealth creation model, many other financing sources become possible as part of potential (reimbursable or mixed grant-reimbursable funding) funding sources.

But it is possible also that such a model could have potential application for other ILO "offers", for example, under EMPLOYMENT, in areas such as SKILLS. Tools or methodologies that provide greater predictability of outcome have value for governments, as they offer the possibility of greater reassurance with regard to investment of scarce policy resources. This is likely to become more pronounced, as the impact of COVID-19 and climate adaptation place increased pressure on public finances, and as governments see very varying results on a range of green recovery initiatives, with some meeting targets and others under-delivering. In this respect, models are needed with stronger forecasting capabilities and proven delivery capabilities (including proof of concept) and impact generation, in terms of socio-economic stimulus, economic growth and employment creation (and preservation).

Note: The Leontief model is an input-output model pioneered by Wassily Leontief, a former Nobel Prize winner in economics, and is a quantitative economic model that represents the interdependencies between different sectors of a national economy or different regional economies, used for varying purposes in economic planning and policy.

Again, it is important to emphasize that the above example of the Leontief model is purely for illustrative purposes, to show the value of ILO-wide strategic and programmatic reflection, and it is certainly unlikely to be the best example. Similarly, more staff energy and ideas need to be brought into this process outside of existing ILO product and tool offers, and systems to work proactively to support this. This is also linked to the need to show/position ILO as a distinct speaker in this area and should consider experience from other organizations. One of the support tools that is particularly relevant is creating a clear GEM-linkages and opportunities summary for each policy area, in giving guidance for strategy development, product development and also to guide staff. This mapping of GE linkages to policy areas is happening in ILO, but not in a standardized way, and was also an issue referred to during UN-system feedback, where it was considered, for example, that UNDP was more structured in doing this.

As an example, the World Bank's Gender Innovation Lab (GIL) might be one such experience to look at. For example, one of its relevant points might be linking monitoring of impact to regional-level knowledge generation and sharing to drive increased communication of gender impact. Similarly, some degree of gender innovation structure that has a significant level of network-based collaboration and is also decentralized in the regions could also contribute to strengthened dialogue between headquarters and ILO regions, as well as supporting region-appropriate GEM strategies. Similarly, it might help further progress work on impact monitoring as a performance and comparative advantage driver, and could link into other ILO corporate assets, such as i-EVAL Discovery, the ILO portal for accessing evaluation information.

3.5.4 Impact and positioning in the context of UN reform

UN reform places ongoing emphasis on effective and increased inter-agency collaboration at country level. Feedback from UN Women, even if limited in terms of consultation, raised issues such as the perceived lack of a clear framework in ILO on gender-related partnering as being one obstacle to increased collaboration. This included for example a perceived lack of clarity about ILO's medium-term objectives for Convention No. 190. There is also a perception that ILO is not being sufficiently active in UNCT-level discussions and assessments on UN work and performance on gender at the country level. This includes monitoring assessment of UN-SWAP data and the UNCT-SWAP Scorecard, which to some extent mirrors the evaluation findings suggesting that ILO could be using UN-SWAP to a greater extent for monitoring, learning and benchmarking.

The relatively unclear ILO narrative and strategy on GE, linked to similar weaknesses in the articulation and communication of its value proposition, is constraining ILO in communicating a powerful narrative and offer. In turn this lack of clarity on its value proposition, and within this its strengths and comparative position, is not as clearly articulated as it might be. This constrains in part ILO partnering efforts and positioning, as it requires clarity on where ILO wants to go, where it is strong and what partners can do to help it position itself optimally. In this regard, impact prospects are also constrained, and ILO is being held back in terms of its optimal positioning, both in the context of the UN reform and beyond the UN system.

3.5.5 ILO partnering

Key finding 19: The ILO has used partnerships in areas with a gender dimension to good effect. This has generated additional visibility and impact, although these instances tend to be more ad hoc in nature.

Global research publications have been a core strength of ILO, and not only leverages and showcases ILO's technical expertise, but they can also be valuable in supporting ILO positioning. An example is ILO work on the care economy,⁷⁶ where internal staff feedback and some external partner feedback confirmed the impact of the care economy report in creating significant visibility for ILO.

⁷⁶ ILO, *Care Work and Care Jobs for the Future of Decent Work*, 2018.

While global research reports are generating visibility and supporting corporate positioning of ILO, there may be scope to further strengthen impact. Some staff feedback, while acknowledging the value of such research and thought leadership, also raised: (i) the resource demands and cost of such research efforts; and (ii) ILO not always doing enough to leverage and follow through on such research and publication efforts. This was seen as a weakness with the first care report in 2018, where staff interviews considered that ILO had not extracted as much visibility and impact from the report as it might have (e.g. impact from more advocacy work on the back of the report), linked to corporate weaknesses in communication, and dissemination and advocacy, areas where ILO staff consider that ILO corporate strengths are well behind some other agencies, in particular UN Women.

As mentioned earlier, examples of partnering with a gender dimension exist, and will not be repeated here at length. EPIC has been discussed as a more recent and innovative initiative in terms of stakeholder mobilization and coalition building, from a part of ILO that has shown good capacity to innovate.

ILO stakeholder consultation has suggested a number of areas where ILO staff perceive ILO to be strong and weak, and this is a key part of the building of a clearer partnership strategy. As mentioned, this would need a clear typology of partner types, ILO needs, and linking to areas of wider ILO GEM strategy, such as how partners can also generate new funding for ILO and/or (other) ILO partners. It should be noted that this lack of a clear partnership strategy and framework has also been raised with respect to other aspects of partnering, such as Public Private Partnerships (PPPs), where an independent ILO evaluation found that ILO lacked an Office-wide strategy for using PPPs in support of its policy outcomes and the SDGs.⁷⁷

Some stakeholder feedback, on ILO and gender-related partnering, including UN system feedback, emphasized selected ILO strengths in specific core competence areas, but also cited ILO risk-averseness, some uneven staff capacity for mainstreaming gender, unclear partnership framework and weak accountability, slower decision-making and reaction (linked at times to ILO governance structure). At the same time, stakeholders emphasized the scope for more proactive partnering and funding opportunities in specific areas and that could be pursued. More generally, the lack of a clear ILO narrative and strategy around gender equality constrains the use of partnering to generate new opportunities and additional impact for ILO, where experiences such as ILO's collaboration with UN Women to achieve ratification of Convention No. 190 in Ecuador merit strategic reflection on the scope for broader collaboration to support ILO goals and improved work environments in other countries.

3.5.6 Sustainability in programmatic GEM

Key finding 20: ILO funding for gender equality and gender-responsive actions is increasing, but more can, and needs to be, done to mobilize funding in order to increase the rate of progress for achieving outcomes.

As seen in section 3.4, there was an overall increase in resource allocation to gender equality and gender-responsive actions between 2016 and 2021, with this coming mostly from XBDC, with the total allocated to GE&GR initiatives⁷⁸ representing a \$132.7 million XBDC in the 2016–17 biennium and \$273.3 million in 2018–19, or an increase from 32 to 61 per cent of the total ILO XBDC budget for this period. Whereas Outcome 6 received only 7 per cent of XBDC funds compared to other policy outcomes in 2020–21, gender equality and gender-responsive actions received over \$880 million XBDC, which represents 188 per cent of the total estimated XBDC budget,⁷⁹ as officially reported in the P&B for this period.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ ILO, [Independent Evaluation of ILO's Public-Private Partnerships 2008–18](#), ILO Evaluation Office, 2019.

⁷⁸ Inclusion of all relevant CPOs linked to POs with interventions with a gender marker of 2 or above

⁷⁹ Excluding regular budget resources

⁸⁰ It should be noted that this relates to resource allocation and expenditures on "gender equality and gender responsive" actions rather than GEM

At the programmatic level, the weaknesses in strategy, conceptual framework, value proposition, offer delivery and impact have had important adverse effects on financial sustainability, in that there is a lack of an overall GEM-related management framework to oversee development, delivery and innovation in ILO's GEM-related "offer/product offer". This also impacts on financial sustainability, in that the process does not have a mechanism where assessment can be made of how to increase the flow of external funding into GEM programmatic work in ILO, both from existing funding mechanisms and sources (e.g. similar funding mechanisms from existing donors, such as project-based funding) and new models/mechanisms and sources. Regarding GEM in the ILO institution, the explicit sustainability focus (for example, when an ILO AGPE can look to "exit" mainstreaming efforts in a specific area in institutional GEM is not sufficiently emphasized. It needs to be more explicitly factored into strategy-setting, with more strategic-level and management-level dialogue on GEM implementation, and more empowerment and ownership at staff level).

As far as financial sustainability is concerned, core ILO budgets are likely to remain limited with regard to their capacity to finance GEM in ILO programmatic work. Therefore, significant growth in XBDC resources is, to some extent, a positive aspect, as well as being a reminder that external funding partners will probably be decisive.

ILO does not set financial targets for the amount of external funding to be raised for gender-responsive work. However, as part of a medium-term strategy on the development of ILO's gender strategy and value proposition, the creation of a business plan with income targets would have the advantage of focusing on strengthening financial flows to ILO so that a significantly more ambitious gender programme could be delivered across ILO regions and countries.

Another point relates to type of financing. ILO does not track non-grant types of funding, whereas such funding sources could with blending finance models provide significant new perspectives, particularly in terms of in-region and in-country delivery programmes. For example, for women's business growth or entrepreneurship initiatives where reimbursable funding can drive part of the financing needs due to the model having shown proof of concept. While the non-grant funding may be less attractive to ILO itself, such models are highly attractive to donors (superior leverage prospects for grant funding contributions) and dedicated blended finance (EU blending facilities, African Development Bank, Asian Development Bank, etc.). They could be highly attractive (and potential game changers) for in-region and in-country partners, from ILO constituents (particularly employers' and workers' organizations, as part of the right programmatic support package), and other local partners. Closely linked to this is, given the lack of a comprehensive GEM strategy on financing, in particular on revenue generation across a range of GEM-related models and product offer, is a need to focus on including innovative funding sources and creating regional funding strategies and plans.

3.5.7 Impact and sustainability of institutional GEM efforts

Key finding 21: The ILO has built institutional gender equality and mainstreaming capacity to oversee a wide range of gender-related actions with impact and successes, but impact on the institution is constrained by challenges to sustained and mainstreamed gender responsive capacity development.

As seen in section 3.3. of the report, ILO's efforts on institutional GEM have seen it strengthen the Organization's GEM capacity and processes to oversee a wide range of gender-related actions with impact and successes

Going forward, missing or weak institutional linkages or anchoring need to be addressed. The findings suggest that the current strategic and operational management of GEM is not facilitating this, as management (both strategic and operational) of GEM in ILO needs to be strengthened. As mentioned above, there are currently systemic weaknesses, blockages of complex issues that require careful discussion and reflection across departments and functions. This missing level is currently depriving key actors, such as GEDI and HRD, from drawing attention to such strategic issues. Questions need answering on ILO's

direction. For example, does the Organization really want to achieve gender parity at senior staff level, what are the options/measures, what are the costs and benefits (financial, credibility/reputational, etc.), and what would the impact be on other core processes or policies (e.g. HRD/recruitment)? Dialogue and guidance/decisions are crucial here. In other words, current management support structures are constraining GEDI, HRD and many other actors and departments from making their best contribution, in terms of optimizing the sustained impact from work carried out under the APGEs (and work linked to the APGEs but not always captured in them).

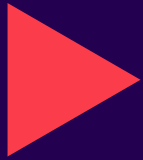
Similarly, there are sustainability shortcomings in terms of GEM institutionalization in core processes, where there are gaps/breaks in the institutionalized monitoring of the gender dimension once a project proposal receives funding and moves to the preparatory/inception phase and wider implementation phase. There is scope to further strengthen the proposal appraisal process, but a bigger short-term weakness is that the results from the proposal work assessment are not being sustained through the project cycle, for instance when downstream project cycle checking of gender is launched in mid-term and, particularly, at the final stage. EVAL evaluations, the margin/window for correcting gender weaknesses has in principle either been halved (at mid-term evaluation) or nearly completely closed (at final evaluation).

Key finding 22: The sustainability of gender equality and mainstreaming in the Organization is mixed. Some progress has been made in respect of its institutionalization, but sustainability needs to be built more explicitly into gender action planning and strategies to increase prospects for sustainability and to accelerate change.

Assessing sustainability in ILO GEM is a rather complex and multi-faceted task, covering a complex work effort in what is a relatively complicated institutional setting. Firstly, the volume of work carried out by ILO is significant and reflects a general staff level of engagement that is in itself a key “sustainability asset”. On the one hand, continuous progress has been made in mainstreaming GEM in core institutional processes, including in the HRD function and in core institutional processes linked to project appraisal and evaluation. In this respect, these are important positives in terms of sustainability.

On the other hand, sustainability is constrained by the lack of a sufficiently strategic GEM framework, of leadership, and of a systematic approach. While mainstreaming is a journey, and not an end point, there need to be milestones where optimal levels of mainstreaming have been attained, and GEM efforts inside ILO have some way to go. An example is the core project cycle path (starting from proposal assessment to project start, inception, implementation and evaluation), where the lack of a critical path analysis and weak strategic management means that ILO has not been reaping the full benefits from GEM efforts. Furthermore, while staff commitment is an asset, the pace of GEM and the lack of sufficiently robust accountability mechanisms (i.e. institutionalized incentives and sanctions/carrots and sticks) has also led to the perception that ILO is not sufficiently transforming words into actions, and that more leadership is required.

Importantly, institutional sustainability can be strengthened by creating more opportunities for staff to lead specific gender actions or projects in a more intrapreneurial way, through more invigorated networks and collaborative efforts around specific aspects of both institutional and programmatic GEM. An example would be the creation of a gender impact monitoring task team with a mandate to start collation of gender results (impacts could already be a start), using online tools. Linking this to knowledge and experience sharing, and identifying good practice, might also make it more effective, as the rationale and motivation base could be widened. Similarly, exploring such ideas by developing a community of practice for GEM would generate new energies and momentum. Institutional sustainability would also require more accountability at all levels, starting with ILO’s leadership and in all core processes, and a more seamless and systematic integration of GEM capacity development and support to staff in all areas.



4

Conclusions, lessons learned, emerging good practice



► 4. Conclusions, lessons learned, emerging good practice

4.1 Conclusions

The ILO's gender equality policy⁸¹ and action plans are relevant to its policy framework and results framework, including its SPs, related P&Bs and to the realization of the SDGs.

The ILO GEM strategy and approaches are coherent with ILO's internal framework and its DC programmes. ILO GEM efforts have increased the coherence between ILO's policies, plans and conventions. APGEs are fully aligned with the UN SWAP 2.0.

The ILO country programmes show a consistent, although varying, presence of gender-responsive results per policy outcome, though there is a lack of systematic monitoring and reporting on specific gender programme objectives. Support for programmatic GEM efforts is also uneven and assumptions on implementation pathways need to be reviewed. At the institutional level, while progress has been made to support gender mainstreaming in core institutional processes, more can be done.

The ILO's programmatic work is generating some gender-related impact and visibility in policy declarations and standards setting, and global knowledge and research publications. Gender-related impact is also being generated in country programmes and project work, although this is constrained by lack of systematic impact monitoring and data collation, as well as strategies and tools to optimize impact.

The lack of a clearly articulated GEM strategic framework and value proposition for programmatic outcomes that reflect ILO's distinctive features and current or potential comparative advantage is constraining innovation, staff contribution, and product development in GEM. This, in turn, is constraining impact prospects, a more systematic approach to partnering to increase impact, and sustainability (including financial sustainability via new GEM-related funding).

Sustainability in institutional GEM needs to be factored more explicitly into strategy-setting, with more strategic-level and management-level dialogue around GEM implementation, and more empowerment and ownership at staff level.

4.2 Lessons Learned

Lesson learned 1: More opportunity for ILO staff to contribute to ILO gender equality development and delivery, both in institutional GEM and in GE in programmatic work, and to bring more innovation and fun to same:

Current implementation structures do not sufficiently allow staff to make their best contribution, or finding ways to make this fun, with more focus on innovation, learning and knowledge sharing, and this was referenced in the 2016 external evaluation of APGE 2010–2015. There is a pressing need to gender equality should be *'l'affaire de tous et de toutes'* in ILO, and the staff and stakeholder consultation has emphasized the interest and commitment across ILO staff with regard to GE. However, current implementation structures do not sufficiently allow staff to "make their best contribution". Regarding the existing Gender Network, staff feedback for the most part was that it has become steadily more inactive, at least since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The efforts over the past two APGEs has seen increased awareness of GE and increased mainstreaming efforts. Building on this effort will require doing some things differently and doing new things. In GEDI, for example, there is a sense that while more resources at GEDI might help, this would at best be only part of

81 The ILO Policy on Gender Equality and Mainstreaming was announced in 1999 and shared in updated form with the senior management team in 2016

a solution. Other parts of the solution are offering greater systemic opportunity to staff to make their best contribution, by increased embedding of the GEM strategy in ILO institutional functioning, such as in ILO HR staff management, systems for incentives, performance management; a more distributed leadership across the Organization to allow staff at all levels to make leadership contributions, and to invigorate the process through increased team-based and network-based collaboration. The experience of ILO staff, in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic and mobility and social distancing restrictions by moving significant work online, is a useful point of reflection in what more ambition, greater staff empowerment and information and communication technologies (ICT) support could make possible, if applied to GEM strategy and efforts going forward. Linked to this is increased learning on when and how to use and mention gender in communications to stakeholders, and as GEDI has emphasized, not necessarily having it front and centre.

4.3 Emerging good practices

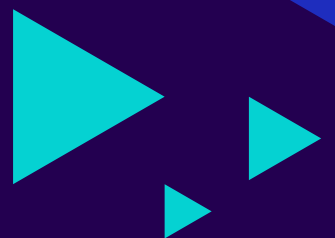
The relative success of INFOTEC in using GEM to build the gender balance and explore how this can lead to improving departmental business performance is, to some extent, a good practice in the making, where increased support to managers and staff can further contribute to this success. This is also an example of good practice where improved outcomes can be nurtured by a more gender-aware effort, without making the focus solely about gender, in a similar way that initiatives such as Better Work have done in ILO's programmatic work.

EPIC has been identified as a successful partnership that has delivered momentum and impact to ILO and partner efforts in the area of equal pay, with a strong gender dimension. Its contribution to raising visibility for this issue, and the visibility and positioning it has afforded ILO is, in itself, an emerging good practice, and one that could feed into ILO reflection on developing its GEM strategy, in particular with regard to areas such as value proposition, momentum and visibility, and positioning.



5

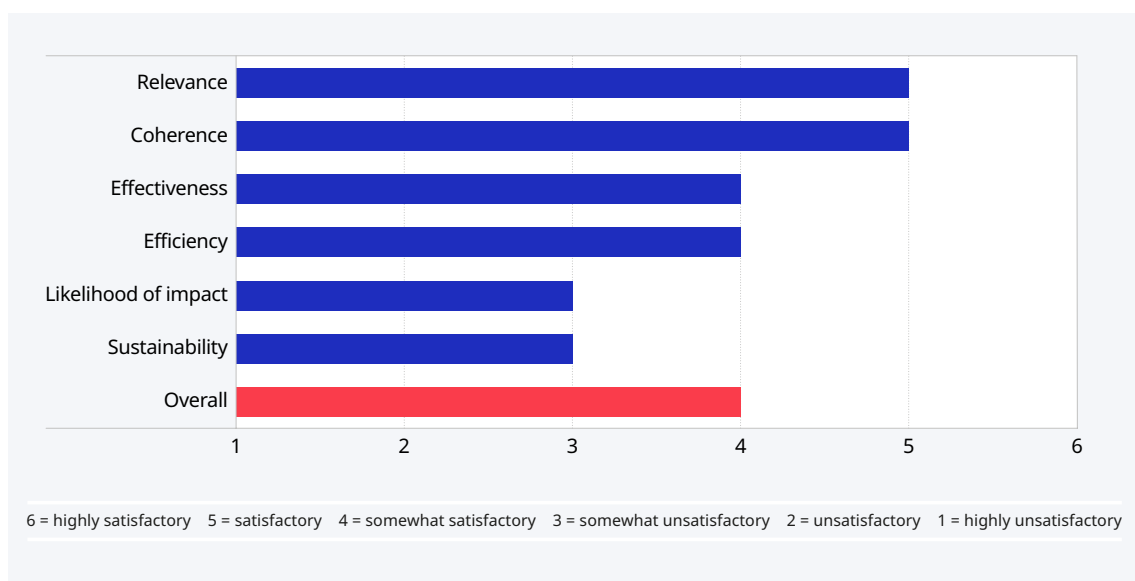
Overall assessment

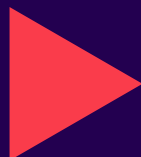


► 5. Overall assessment

A general assessment of the identified performance levels for ILO Gender Equality and Mainstreaming is presented in figure 18. The HLE Team's ratings have been validated against those of constituents and those provided by ILO staff in the distributed survey questionnaires. The responses from both the constituents and staff have been used for quantitative assessment in addition to being used throughout the report for qualitative verification of information gathered by the Evaluation Team

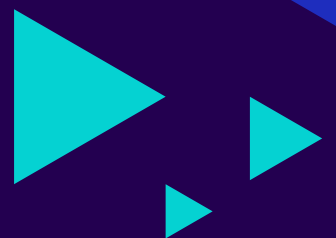
► **Figure 18. Evaluation of the ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts:
Ratings by criterion**





6

Recommendations



► 6. Recommendations

The recommendations are to be considered for inclusion in the new Action Plan on Gender Equality. Both groups of recommendations are complimentary.

6.1 Recommendations regarding gender equality and mainstreaming in ILO Programmes

Recommendation 1

Develop an ILO gender equality and mainstreaming value proposition to facilitate the ILO's strategic positioning and enhance the visibility and impact of its programmatic outcomes.

The value proposition on the added value and contribution of the ILO in respect of gender equality should include priorities for a medium-term time frame of five years and a portfolio of gender-responsive interventions within policy areas and for a typology of countries. It would also require mapping work conducted by partners, the documenting of the ILO's comparative advantage and the identification of modalities for tools, innovations, strategies and partnerships and for the use of statistics. Gender-specific and gender-responsive programmes could create new funding opportunities and increase the ILO's comparative advantage.

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

Detailed Recommendation: Detailed sub-actions within this recommendation should include:

- A clearer picture of where ILO wants to be in a medium-term timeframe of five years.
- Development of a clear typology of GEM areas of focus, and complemented by a matrix/set of key assessment criteria, to assist in assessing current and future/desired ILO value proposition strength in that area.
- Informal benchmarking of other actors' work, results and models in the area of GEM, both UN-system and outside.
- Rapid review and inventorying of ILO policy departments, to assess existing and potential ILO assets or sources of comparative advantage.
- Rapid review and inventorying of ILO regions' and countries' experience and models, with a view to creating models/model variants that can harness past experience and strength and respond to regional and country needs.
- A more pronounced product development, innovation development and management strategy, including more pronounced focus on ILO distinctiveness and positioning, and strengthened collaboration between headquarters and ILO regions (as a purely indicative example, creating an ILO gender innovation lab, with possible regional hubs, might be one axis for reflection).
- Developing gender-specific and gender-responsive programmes, that articulate a compelling and distinct narrative about ILO's programmatic work and gender equality, and that leverage ILO strengths and/or existing or potential areas of comparative advantage, such as to complement policy recommendations with a well-targeted, evidence-based advocacy and outreach strategy.

Recommendation 2

Develop a dedicated and comprehensive support programme for gender-responsive programmatic work to support constituents and enhance their capacity to achieve gender equality in the world of work.

This will require greater collaboration between ILO regions and headquarters to ensure region-relevant strategies and gender-responsive capacity development programmes to serve the needs of ILO constituents, including a focus on recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
ILO Senior Management (CABINET), DDG/P (policy departments), DDG/FOP (ILO regions), (DDG/MR), International Training Centre of the ILO, ACTRAV and ACT/EMP	High	Medium-term	Low

Detailed Recommendation: Detailed sub-actions within this recommendation should include:

- Greater dialogue between ILO regions and headquarters, to ensure that strategies take full account of regional and country situations and opportunities.
- Having a full suite of gender-responsive training programmes/models that can be used and adapted by ILO regions and countries to serve ILO's constituents demand for support.
- Training on Results Based Management and theory/theories of change (e.g. having a suite of GEM-focused theories of change tools that can be delivered by ILO regions).
- Linked to other recommendations – dedicated GEM-focused models and programmes on a range of areas linked to theories of change and how to build ILO and ILO constituents' positioning and influence, and including a key pandemic recovery focus on income-generation (or preservation), entrepreneurship and vulnerability reduction.

Recommendation 3

Strengthen the ILO's framework for partnering on gender equality.

A more structured framework (partnership management framework) for approaching gender-related collaboration should complement the ILO's value proposition in respect of gender equality in its programmatic work and in the UN system. This would build on the portfolio of interventions for typologies of countries mentioned in recommendation 1, and lead to a better matching of partnerships.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
ILO Senior Management (CABINET), DDG/P, DDG/FOP (Multilateral Cooperation Department(MULTILATERALS), PARDEV), DDG/MR	Medium	Long-term	Medium

Detailed Recommendation: Detailed sub-actions within this recommendation should include:

- Viewing desired progress and target-setting in a medium-term timeframe, and what scale of effort (and from whom) would be required.
- Creating a typology of ILO needs based on its policy goals, at the global, regional and country levels.

- Within this, place a particular focus on how partnering with ILO social partners can be further strengthened, for example, in areas of programme delivery in gender-focused/responsive entrepreneurship development programmes and income generation to reduce women's vulnerability.
- Development of a typology/categorization of different types of partnering (for example, some indicative examples of categories might include advocacy, thought leadership/research, marketing, ILO conventions support/ratification, capacity development, project/programme delivery, non-donor funding, etc.).
- Assessing how prospective partner candidates could help contribute to ILO policy goals and help generate increased results and impact.
- As an example, from the above process, assessing in how regions and how many countries ILO has needs related to convention support and/or ratification support, and whether UN agencies or others can support, contribute to, or lead a ratification push, as in the case of ILO's collaboration with UN Women to secure ratification of Convention No. 190 in Ecuador.

6.2 Recommendations regarding institutional and programme outcomes

Recommendation 4

Develop a more systemic, programme-based approach and delivery system for capacity development and training within the ILO relating to gender equality and mainstreaming.

This should include a comprehensive structuring of needs relating to gender equality and mainstreaming competencies, using a gender equality and mainstreaming capacity development framework that describes how capacity development will be managed, implemented and monitored; and how it will be institutionalized in core ILO processes and integrated in wider gender equality and mainstreaming tools and support, to facilitate impact optimization. Systematic gender audits based on past experience can help in this regard.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
ILO Senior Management (CABINET), DDG/P, (Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Branch (GEDI)), DDG/MR (Human Resources Development Department (HRD)), DDG/FOP (ILO regions) International Training Centre of the ILO, ACTRAV and ACT/EMP	High	Short-term (time frame for the formulation of the new action plan)	Low

Detailed Recommendation: Detailed sub-actions within this recommendation should include:

- A comprehensive structuring of GEM skills and competencies needs, broken down by role.
- A GEM capacity development framework that sets out how capacity development will be managed and implemented, as well as monitoring of effectiveness.
- Clear description of various roles (e.g. gender specialists, gender focal points and their needs).
- Description of how capacity development can be optimally institutionalized with core ILO processes (e.g. intersection points with HRD skills development, incentives for skills development, e.g. training credits, staff performance, etc).
- Clear development pathways for GEM-related understanding, skills and competencies, that allow ILO staff to see a training and skills development pathway that they can follow.
- Integration in wider GEM support and tools (see Recommendation 4).

- Embedding specific GEM training into core processes including, for example, specific GEM training modules for standardized on-boarding training and orientation for all ILO Staff, as part of mainstreaming ILO HRD requirements.

6.3 Recommendations regarding institutional gender equality and mainstreaming

Recommendation 5

Develop a medium-term strategy to mainstream gender equality in the ILO.

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

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
ILO Senior Management (CABINET), DDG/P (GEDI), DDG/MR, DDG/FOP (all departments; current and future custodians in the action plan)	High	Short-term (time frame for the formulation of the new action plan)	Low

Detailed Recommendation: Detailed sub-actions within this recommendation should include:

- Providing a clear strategy-setting process to structure and guide the discussion.
- Using external advisory input if/as deemed necessary as part of the strategy reflection and development, including taking account of experience in other UN agencies (e.g. through informal comparison and benchmarking).
- Setting out what could be achievable over a five-to-10-year period, and using this to “frame” target setting the internal institutional GEM action plan.
- Strengthening ILO leadership and embodiment of this change, strengthened accountability at ILO leadership levels (Governing Board, Senior Management Team, and possibly a Strategic Task force at ILO Management level).
- An operational management framework which can discuss key issues (e.g. where departments and HRD can bring strategic issues to the discussion table as part of the strategy setting) and take decisions.
 - Creating structures, practices in incentives to support organisational change, including:
 - empowering and mobilizing ILO staff energy and passion;
 - more GEM work through horizontal networks, including a reinvigorated gender network;
 - a systemic training and capacity development programme (see Recommendation 4).

Recommendation 6

Further develop gender equality and mainstreaming support processes and tools to mainstream gender equality within the ILO.

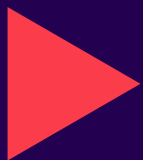
The new ILO action plan for gender equality should include strengthened gender equality and mainstreaming support processes and tools to institutionalize gender equality and mainstreaming, based on a systemic approach to gender equality and mainstreaming capacity development for ILO staff. Other elements are

a strengthened ILO Gender Network; more collaborative, team-based and project-based work; more opportunities for ILO staff to champion specific areas; and more knowledge-sharing on good practice and communication on success stories.

Responsible unit	Priority	Time implication	Resource implication
ILO Senior Management (CABINET), DDG/P (GEDI), DDG/MR, DDG/FOP (all departments; current and future custodians in the action plan)	High	Short-term (time frame for the formulation of the new action plan)	Low

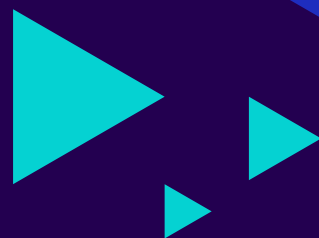
Detailed Recommendation: Detailed sub-actions within this recommendation should include:

- A programme-based, systemic approach to GEM capacity development.
- A strengthened gender network, with opportunities for ILO staff to champion specific areas (e.g. creating differing roles, such as gender volunteers).
- Working with HRD to identify practical incentives to recognize those who make contributions to advancing GEM (career development, management development, etc.).
- Strengthened cross-departmental dialogue and experience sharing.
- A standardized tool/process for dialoguing with departments to identify how they can advance GEM, and key staff needs in terms of knowledge or training.
- Systematic identification and sharing of emerging good practice and success stories.
- Ongoing dialogue with selected other UN agencies, and sharing of experience and good practice.



7

Office response



► 7. Office response

Recommendation 1

The Office is developing and will operationalize an Office-wide theory of change for gender equality anchored in the ILO's tripartite structure and normative mandate. The theory of change will be informed by in-country realities and the needs of constituents, the transformative agenda for gender equality outlined in the Centenary Declaration and the global call to action for a human-centred recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, as well as other relevant high-level policy documents and declarations approved by the Governing Body and the International Labour Conference.

Recommendation 2

The Office will continue and expand its efforts to support constituents in implementing gender-responsive programmes and strategies. A strengthened ILO Global Gender Network can serve as a catalyst and community of practice for the design of innovative projects, initiatives and interventions. To this end, the Office will enhance technical capacities in the field offices, and increase coordination across Policy Portfolio departments, between the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) and the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) and in the programming of the International Training Centre of the ILO.

Recommendation 3

Building on experiences and lessons learned from past and ongoing partnerships at the field and global levels, as well as from existing UN-related frameworks at the field level, the Office will continue to strengthen its strategic engagement with the UN and the wider multilateral system on gender equality. The above-mentioned Office-wide theory of change on gender equality will assist in providing a clear rationale for the further development of partnerships at the global, regional and country levels.

Recommendation 4

An Office-wide strategy for capacity development on gender equality and mainstreaming, as envisaged in the ILO action plan for gender equality, is currently under implementation. Plans for a more systemic approach to programme delivery are being pursued, as described in the programme and budget and the four-year Strategic Plan.

Recommendation 5

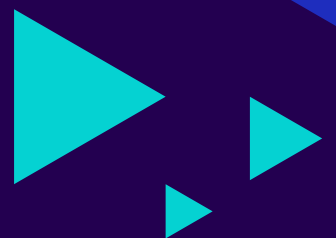
Better alignment and integration of the implementation of the action plan for gender equality with the implementation of the high-level strategic plan and programme and budget will provide the necessary strategic framework, while providing strengthened leadership and accountability for gender equality and mainstreaming. The Office will ensure this approach in the development of the next action plan for 2022–25.

Recommendation 6

The Office will ensure that the continued capacity development of staff, clear recognition of the roles of gender focal points and coordinators, up-to-date practical tools and guidance for programming and designing development cooperation projects, a strengthened ILO Global Gender Network, and increased sharing of experiences and lessons learned are fully incorporated in the action plan for 2022–25.



Annexes



► Annex 1: Reconstructed theory of change

The theory of change (ToC) assumes that there are logical flow connections from initial ILO policy frameworks and conventions, to GEM-specific strategies and action plans, to GEM work across the ILO institution and to work on ILO development cooperation programmes and work. Typically, theories of change will be built prior (*a priori*) to implementation of a programme or initiative, as a supportive planning tool that will help to identify needed preconditions, expected processes, etc. However, it is also rather useful to use a ToC *posteriori* to implementation, in order to analyse the used strategy and gather a detailed understanding of its process. Indeed, by identifying the processes that led to the outcomes and analysing the actual impacts versus the original goals, it will also enable the evaluation team to provide a set of recommendations and suggestions to strengthen the implementation of the ILO policy on gender equality and mainstreaming, identifying potential avoidance mechanisms for negative factors or replication tips for the most positive factors.

The ToC postulates that the gender strategy and Gender Action Plan builds on an analysis of the issues to be addressed. The needs analysis will feed into deliberation on what the required/desired further situation in ILO should look like, and clear target setting to reach this situation over a specified timeframe. Thus, the strategy would be based upon a clear elaboration of what the future gender equality situation should look like, with ILO's institutional set-up and in its development work around the world. It should include assessment of the expected channels, mechanisms, resources that would be used to mainstream GE, as well as likely (internal) institutional barriers, challenges or constraints that might need to be addressed, as well as ILO strengths that could be leveraged. Within this, a clear gap analysis would need to underlie the strategy elaborated.

It should be emphasized that a ToC does not exist for ILO GEM policy objectives and developing one is not only complex but also typically requires several iterations, and feedback loops from being observed “in action” as it is applied, and to be refined and improved as appropriate in the light of the experience of its application. In this respect, **the draft ToC set out below should be viewed as very much a work in progress** that will be revised during the course of the evaluation in the light of the evaluation findings.

The reconstruction of a ToC for the evaluation requires making several choices, for instance, the period of time under evaluation has included two different action plans (APs), an initial transitional Action Plan 2016–2017 and a second Action Plan 2018–2021. Given that AP 2016–2017 has been partially retained in the AP 2018–2021, the evaluation team considered that the basis for re-creating a ToC would be better covered by only using the AP 2018–2021. This is, however, as described below, a key part of the internal work in the results chain of an ILO GEM theory of change, with numerous internal institutional conditions required to ensure this movement from the internal dimension of GEM-related work effort to the external one.

ILO's development cooperation work in the ToC departs from the institutional policy mandates (ILO conventions, gender equality policy, Centenary Declaration and Women at Work Initiative, etc.) and programmatic outcomes in ILO's P&Bs, and from these to how gender equality and mainstreaming is reflected in ILO's Decent Country Work Programmes (DWCPs), and the ensuing actions under these DWCPs and their related results and impact.

For the **ILO Institutional dimension (institutional processes)**, in terms of **inputs/assumptions**, achieving gender equality would typically require a **stock-taking of what this would (is thought) to mean, and require, in terms of ILO (“the institution”)**. Each ILO department or function would need to consider how this would affect their department/function, and how (their/each department) could contribute to the goal of gender equality. This would ideally require an overall (ILO-wide) stock-taking across departments to understand what issues/procedures would need to be looked at and reviewed, the costs and benefits of advancing gender equality, and at least some level of prioritization of the issues to be addressed and steps to be taken. The process would also imply **providing effective guidance to ILO departments on how to think about progressing gender equality in their department and mainstreaming it in their work**. This guidance could be provided in numerous ways, including as a minimum some written guidance,

reflection questions and specific requests, but could also include examples from comparable departments/functions in other organizations (e.g. other UN agencies, other international organizations, national government ministries, private sector organizations). Such examples could be provided for numerous reasons, for instance to support reflection and brainstorming, or to provide solid guidance based on what was observed in a comparable department or function. For example, an ILO policy/thematic department might consider that useful comparisons might be restricted to other international organizations (and possible with a similar policy/thematic mandate), while core organizational support functions (human resources, budget, IT support, etc.) might consider a wider range of examples to be valid and useful, including from these functions in private sector companies.

Following on from this, guidance and support would be required to help departments formulate their own (sub-) Action Plan, and in understanding the costs, benefits, and possible/more effective ways to support the implementation of the actions prioritized. This would in turn imply internal consultation and discussion to build intra-department ownership of the actions agreed, as well as an understanding and framing of what expected benefits would flow from this work, in terms of creating buy-in from staff. Thus, key inputs required for gender equality/gender responsiveness in policies and programmes and successful mainstreaming would be: (i) a clear and convincing strategy; (ii) clear articulation of the rationale and benefits of mainstreaming GE; (iii) clear leadership from the senior leadership team; (iv) an estimate of the costs (direct and indirect) of the mainstreaming effort; (v) tracking of such costs; (vi) the expected support necessary for ILO departments, staff and constituencies; and (vii) a clear view on the resourcing requirements for GEM implementation at all levels. Another required output would be good, eye-catching and user-friendly materials and tools.

It would also be likely that guidance on departmental planning on gender equality and mainstreaming takes into account the balance across the three priority areas set out in ILO GEM Policy, specifically staffing, substance and structure, as well as some identification of what is required from departments by ILO's institutional policy (where, for example, gender parity entails specific overall targets) and how the parity, structure and substance take account of where the mix of benefits and costs lies with respect to these three priority areas.

With regard to progress in creating a gender-responsive institution and with GE mainstreaming across ILO, other assumptions/requirements would include: (i) progress on removing institutional constraints that slow or block progress on gender equality mainstreaming; (ii) flexibility to react to differing or changing needs; (iii) ensuring mainstreaming costs are kept reasonable/proportionate to benefits; and (iv) communicating and disseminating results, success/benefits, good practice and learning.

For ILO policy mandate, objectives and programmatic outcomes dimension (policy and programmatic), at the level of the ILO institutional mandate, the starting point is policy declarations and mechanisms and programming that frame the task of creating a gender-responsive ILO work programme and mainstreaming GE in the implementation of this work. Key within this are the relevant ILO fundamental conventions that specifically address gender equality – Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100) and Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention, 1958 (No. 111), ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming policy of 1999, and the principles and rights enshrined in those conventions found in the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work and the Decent Work Agenda – and thus its goal of promoting equal opportunities for women and men to obtain decent work, in particular across its four strategic objectives: (i) promoting and realizing of standards and fundamental principles and rights at work; (ii) creating greater opportunities for men and women to secure decent employment and income; (iii) enhancing the coverage and effectiveness of social protection for all; and (iv) strengthening tripartism and social dialogue. Much more recently (in the evaluation's temporal scope), is the Centenary Declaration and its related Future of Work Centenary Initiative, plus actions emanating from this.

Further operationalization is given in the policy and enabling outcomes in the P&Bs during the evaluation period, specifically those for 2016–2017, 2018–2019 and 2020–2021, each one with its priorities, and specific objectives, and with differing treatment of GE – both as cross-cutting and as a specific policy outcome of gender equality and equal opportunities, and treatment for all in the world of work in the case of the 2020–2021 P&B.

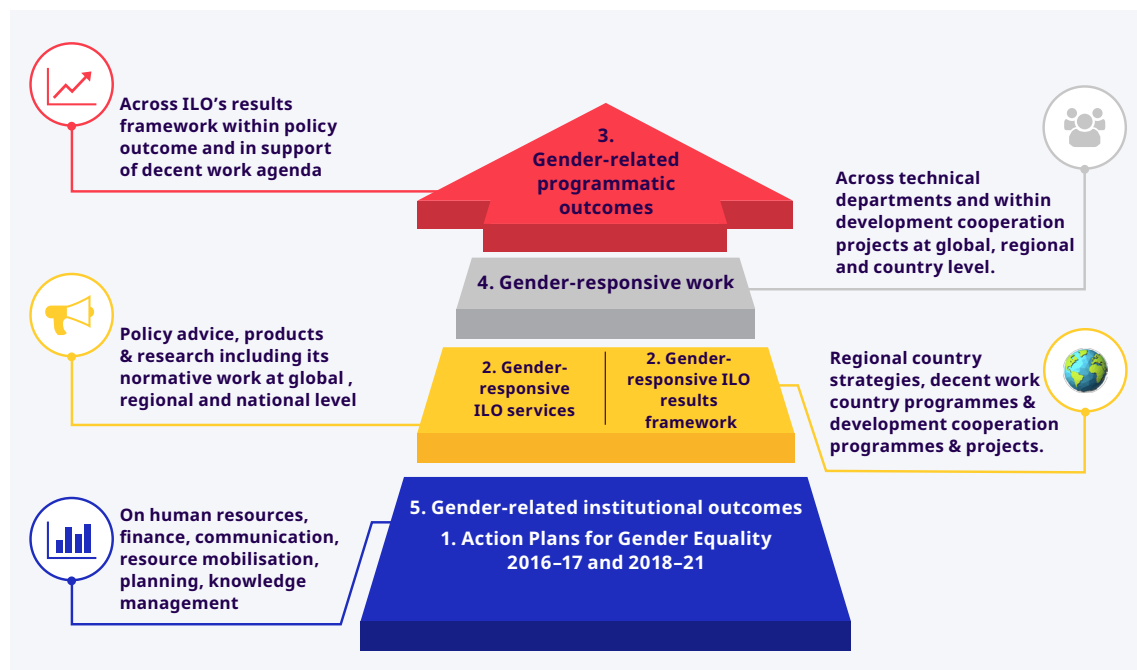
In terms of operationalization in the Decent Work Country Programmes, the ToC assumes that a clear linkage to the P&Bs is one requirement, along with guidance on GE-responsiveness, and guidance on comparing with other DWCPs in terms of assessing the quality and scale of the gender-responsiveness and specific GE/GEM actions foreseen. This in turn assumes appropriate feedback and institutional programming checks with ILO, both on the gender monitoring side and in the core programming process (PARDEV), as well as operationalized through a marker to track progress during implementation and reporting on performance.

This implied an effective (and efficient or timely) institutional process for implementing GEM and gender responsiveness in the ILO programming process, including, in particular, clear targets and a basis for monitoring implementation and the achievement of target results. This process is, by nature complex, requiring a credible and robust assessment of the ILO partner countries' country context, as well as a process for weighing up intervention options and deciding on what would appear to be the most promising. In parallel to all of the above, the degree of presence of gender in horizontal policies and initiatives – for example, in ILO institutional capacity development and knowledge development, management and sharing – is a further enabling input.

Furthermore, key required inputs would be appropriate prioritization of GEM in regional and country-specific strategies and DWCPs, and a clear analysis and strategy of gender-responsive DWCPs and how gender can be mainstreamed into DWCPs, including the rationale, resource/costs and opportunities and benefits, as well as the potential role of partners. This also implies that the DWCPs are able to effectively include gender considerations in organizing ILO's array of knowledge, advocacy and cooperation instruments and actions at the service of ILO's tripartite partners.

Required outputs would need to include: (i) good staff training on how to develop gender-aware programmes and projects (including concrete examples); (ii) the availability of guidance material and support; (iii) supportive institutional practices and requirements to ensure GEM is secured in DC programmes and projects. As alluded to above, outputs would also require a clear GEM strategy in programme and project launches/inception outputs, agreed results/impact indicators and an understanding of what ILO will contribute and what ILO's partners will contribute to the targeted success. A further result would be

► **Figure A.1.1 Components of ILO gender equality and mainstreaming**



effect communication and dissemination of results, success/benefits, good practice and learning, as well as effective feedback loop mechanisms, such as taking into account feedback from relevant evaluations (for example, the 2016 GAP evaluation, and relevant HLEs).

The ILO Gender Action Plans (Component 1 in figure A.1.1 above), along with the above-mentioned institutional factors and conditions (Component 5 in figure A.1.1), will in turn ensure gender-responsiveness in ILO's results framework, regional and country strategies, DWCPs, and DC programmes and projects (Component 2 in figure A.1.1). As a consequence, of gender mainstreaming at the results framework and regional and country strategies and DWCPs, ILO technical departments bring about gender-responsiveness in their work and within DC projects at global, regional and country level (Component 4 in figure A.1.1). This in turn makes it possible to achieve gender-related programmatic outcomes across ILO's results framework within policy outcomes and in support of DWA (Component 3 in figure A.1.1). In other words, this can be seen as internal GEM-related work preparing the ground to allow ILO technical departments and staff to ensure the external manifestation of this, i.e. gender equality and mainstreaming in ILO's programme-level outcomes.

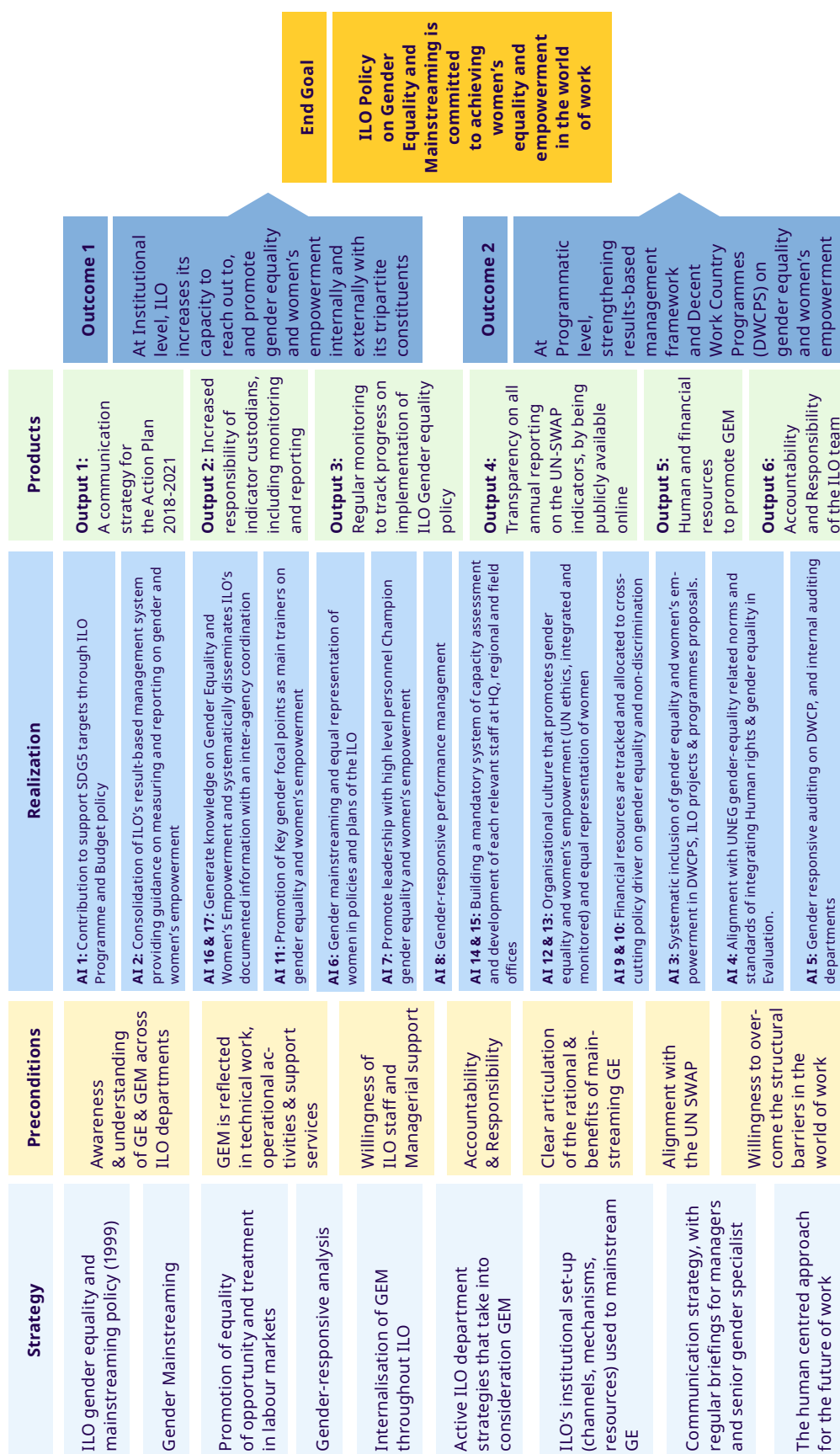
Some preliminary comments on the relations shown in this ToC reconstruction, are the good connection and coherence between the strategy and the realization. However, the link between the identified products and the realization does not appear to be directly related. The same appears to be case with regard to the link between the outputs and the outcomes in relation to the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment to the ILO tripartite constituents.

The following figures have been the reconstruction carried out by the Evaluation Team of the five different components that are involved in the ILO Gender Equality Mainstreaming Efforts 2016–2021.

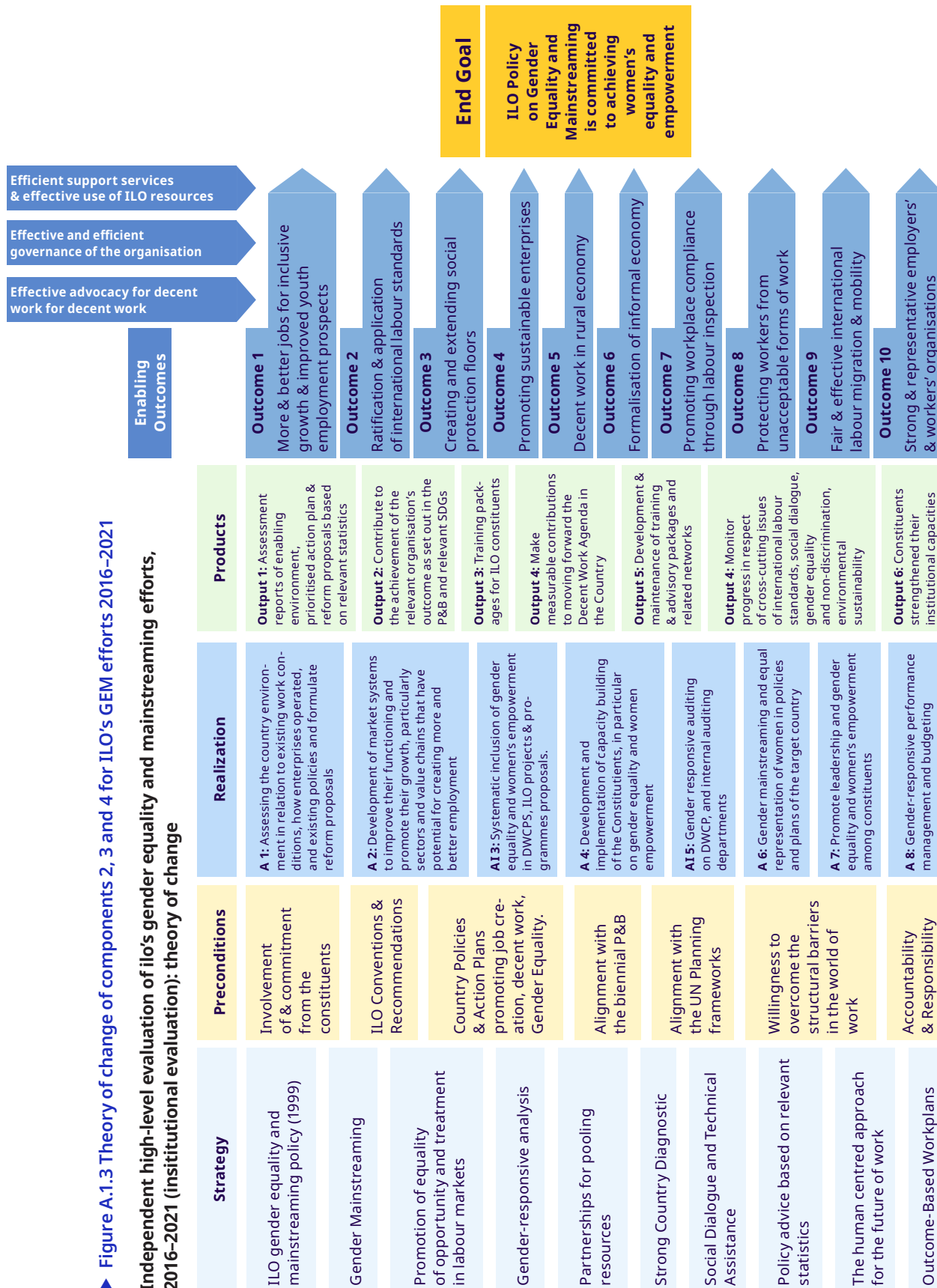
Each figure provides a ToC for specific components, thus figure A.1.2 below depicts the ToC for Component 1 (ILO Action Plans for Gender Equality) of this evaluation, figure A.1.3 below depicts the ToC for Component 2 (gender-responsive ILO results frameworks and services), 3 (gender-related programmatic outcomes) and 4, (gender-responsive work) and figure A.1.4 depicts the ToC of component 5 (Gender-related institutional outcomes) for ILO's GEM efforts 2016-21 .

► Figure A.1.2 Theory of change Component 1 for ILO's GEM efforts 2016–21

Independent high-level evaluation of ilo's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts, 2016–2021 (insitutional evaluation): theory of change

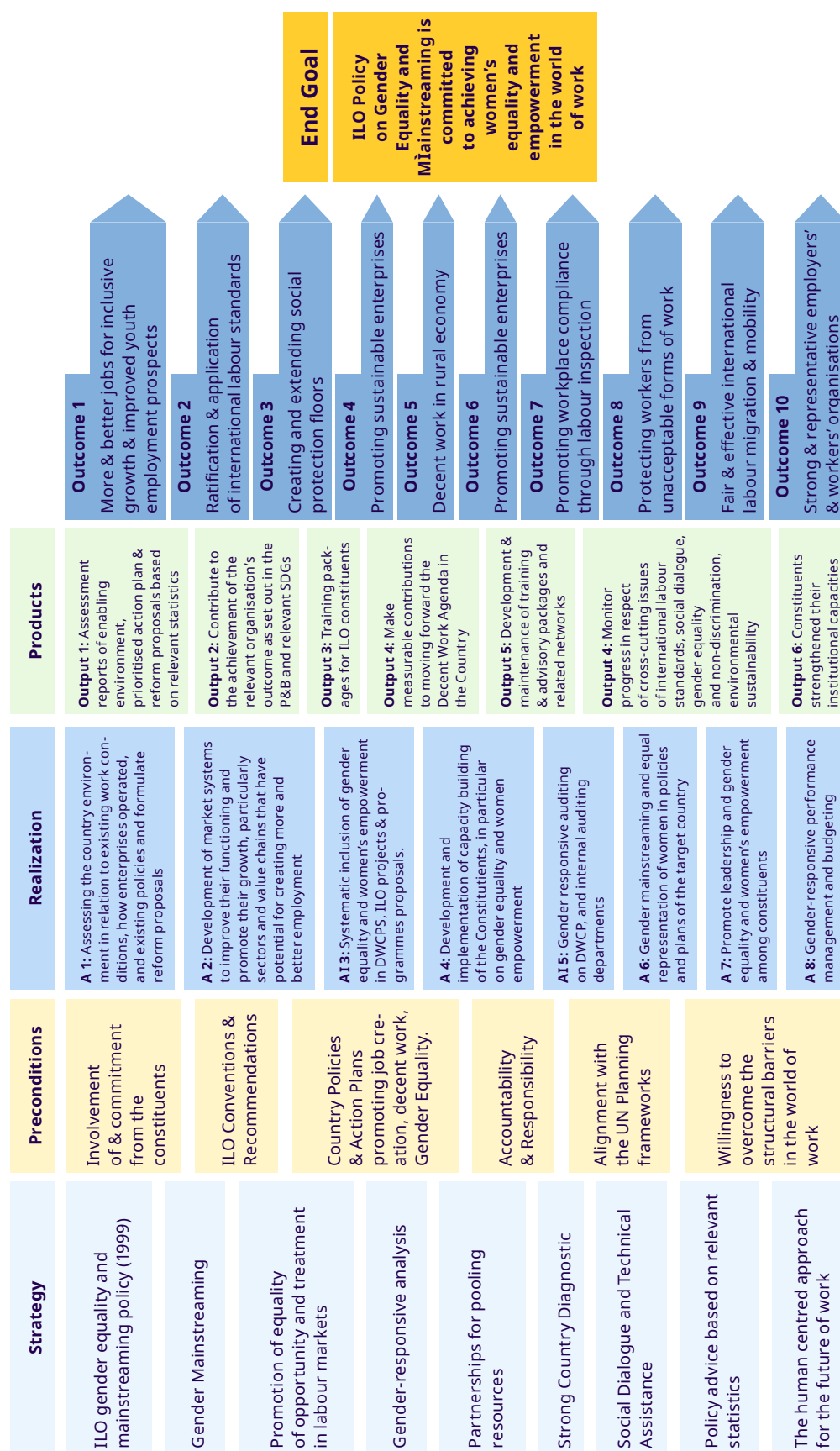


► **Figure A.1.3 Theory of change of components 2, 3 and 4 for ILO's GEM efforts 2016–2021**
Independent high-level evaluation of ilo's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts, 2016–2021 (insitutional evaluation): theory of change



► Figure A.1.4 Theory of change Component 5 for ILO's GEM efforts 2016–21

Independent high-level evaluation of ilo's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts, 2016–2021 (insitutional evaluation): theory of change



► Annex 2: Stakeholders consulted

Type and number of stakeholders consulted

Inception and field phase

Organization, department or office	Number of informants
ACT/EMP	1
ACTRAV	2
DCOMM	1
DDG/FOP	1
DDG/MR	1
DDG/P	2
EMPLOYMENT	7
EMPLAB	1
ENTERPRISE	5
EUROPE	3
EVAL	2
GEDI / WORKQUALITY	10
HRD	12
IAO	1
INFOTEC	4
IOE	2
ICT	2
ITUC	1
NORMES	3
PARDEV	4
PROGRAM	4
RELCONF	1
RESEARCH	2
SECTOR	2
STATISTICS	2
<i>Subtotal number of informants</i>	73
Total number of interviews	90

Other	Number of informants
ILO Africa	1
ILO Asia and Pacific	2
ILO Arab States	1
ILO Decent Work Team for South Asia	1
ILO Liaison Office to New York	2
ILO Member countries	4
ILO Office for Central America, Haiti, Panama and Dominican Republic	1
ILO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean	1
UN Women	1
<i>Subtotal number of informants</i>	<i>14</i>
Total number of informants	90

Location or region	Number of informants
Africa	2
Arab States	1
Asia and Pacific	5
Europe	2
Headquarters	73
Americas and the Caribbean	7
Total number of informants	90

Gender	Number of informants
Female	48
Male	42
Total number of informants	90

Inception phase

Organization, department or office	Number of informants
ACT/EMP	1
ACTRAV	2
DCOMM	1
DDG/FOP	1
DDG/MR	1
DDG/P	2
EMPLOYMENT	5
ENTERPRISE	1
EUROPE	3
EVAL	2
GEDI / WORKQUALITY	5
HRD	6
IAO	1
IOE	2
ICT	2
ITUC	1
NORMES	3
PARDEV	3
PROGRAM	2
RELCONF	2
RESEARCH	2
SECTOR	2
STATISTICS	2
<i>Subtotal of number of informants</i>	52
Total number of informants	52

Location or region	Number of informants
Asia and Pacific	1
Headquarters	51
Total number of informants	52

Gender	Number of informants
Female	26
Male	26
Total number of informants	52

Data collection phase

Organization, department or office	Number of informants
EMPLOYMENT	2
EMPLAB	1
ENTERPRISE	4
GEDI / WORKQUALITY	5
HRD	6
INFOTEC	3
PARDEV	1
PROGRAM	2
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>24</i>

Other	Number of informants
ILO Africa	1
ILO Asia and Pacific	2
ILO Arab States	1
ILO Decent Work Team for South Asia	1
ILO Liaison Office to New York	2
ILO Member Countries	4
ILO Office for Central America, Haiti, Panama and Dominican Republic	1
ILO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean	1
UN Women	1
<i>Subtotal</i>	<i>14</i>
Total number of informants during data collection phase	38

Location or region	Number of informants
Africa	2
Arab States	1
Asia and Pacific	4
Europe	2
Headquarters	22
Americas and the Caribbean	7
Total number of informants during data collection phase	38

Gender	Number of informants
Female	22
Male	16
Total number of informants during data collection phase	38

► Annex 3: Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference

Independent Evaluation:

ILO's Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Efforts

2016–2021

First initial outline: December 2020

First initial draft: January 2021

First draft for circulation: 10 February 2021

Draft for Request for Proposal: 12 February 2021

Final Draft: 18 March 2021

Introduction

1. Every year the ILO's Evaluation Office (EVAL) holds consultations to select topics for future high-level evaluations. The Governing Body then approves the selected topics. The selection of strategic evaluations customarily focuses on strategic outcomes but may also focus on institutional capacity issues. Institutional evaluations undertaken so far include development cooperation, the field structure, capacity building, public-private partnerships and research and knowledge management.
2. As scheduled in its rolling work plan endorsed by the GB the ILO's Evaluation Office (EVAL) is now preparing for an independent institutional evaluation of the ILO's Gender Equality and Mainstreaming (GEM) Efforts.
3. The ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality is one component of ILO's gender equality and mainstreaming efforts and its operationalization of the ILO policy on gender equality and mainstreaming is regularly discussed by the ILO Governing Body. The GB has requested a report in March 2022 on implementation results of the last phase of the Action Plan (2020-21), relevant findings of the evaluation of the current Action Plan 2018-21 and its main recommendations for the Action Plan 2022+, and the Office's proposed outline and approach of the next Action Plan.
4. This high-level evaluation will include the requested evaluation of the Action Plan 2018-21, covering also the previous Action Plan 2016-17 and with a scope that includes looking at GEM in the outcomes in ILO's programmes as a result of GEM efforts, including the Action Plans. ILO programme outcomes refer to policy and enabling outcomes in the Programme and Budgets for the period, outcomes of the "Women at Work" Centenary Initiative; and outcome of development cooperation programmes. The evaluation will look at both the institutional process for implementing GEM and how GEM (gender responsiveness) is integrated in ILO programming and enhances results in programmes of ILO for achieving policy outcomes.
5. An independent evaluation of the 2010-2015 Action Plans was carried out in 2016, managed by EVAL and informing the subsequent Action Plan. This evaluation is covering the current action plans from 2016 to 2021, looking at the three biennia that they cover.
6. The GB also requested that the subsequent Action Plan would include a view to a heightened strategic positioning of the ILO in the United Nations reform on GEM. An institutional evaluation of GEM

would provide important findings, lessons learned and recommendations that would help to inform this positioning.

7. The topic has been selected based on input from prior consultations in establishing the programme of work for high-level evaluations (HLEs) and reconfirmed by the GB in their approval of the rolling work plan in the Annual Evaluation Report 2019-2020.
8. The topic has never been evaluated before as a comprehensive institutional effort, that includes a detailed evaluation in the context of ILO's full results framework and the wider UN framework reflected in GEM results. It will meet the UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEEW) requirement of a corporate evaluation every eight years of gender equality.
9. It will be one of the first evaluations focusing on a theme established as a cutting policy driver in the ILO Programme and Budget for 2016-17 and for 2018-19, and fully embedded in the ILO's results framework of the Programme and Budget for 2020-. The Programme and Budget for 2020-21 also includes a dedicated outcome on gender equality and non-discrimination. As GEM covered as separate policy driver for most of the period, the evaluation can provide useful findings and organisational learning to support further and full integration and mainstreaming in ILO's results framework.

Background to the evaluation

10. This strategic high-level evaluation will take both a retrospective and a forward-looking approach. It will follow the standard OECD-DAC criteria for evaluations, and will have a specific focus to respond to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate, gender equality policy and other initiatives to promote gender-responsive services and products to Constituents, and contribution of the ILO to the relevant targets set in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The recommendations from the evaluation are expected to inform ILO's work on this important theme in the future.
11. This high-level evaluation will review the relevance, coherence, effectiveness and impact of ILO's GEM efforts at the strategic and organisational, cross-office level. The evaluation will also assess the efficiency and sustainability of ILO's GEM efforts within the limits of available data necessary to ensure a sound and accurate assessment of these two criteria.
12. The evaluation will be forward looking in assessing ILO's GEM efforts in view of the Decent Work Agenda, the ILO Centenary Declaration on the Future of Work, the 2030 Agenda, the ILO strategic framework and ongoing reform in the UN development system. Past and ongoing DWCPs, project evaluations and other reviews will constitute a key basis for the evaluation. The context and challenges posed by the Covid19 pandemic will be fully considered.
13. This will be the sixth institutional high-level evaluation EVAL undertakes following the evaluation of the ILO's Strategy for Technical Cooperation in 2015, the evaluation of the ILO's Field Operations and Structure in 2017, the evaluation of ILO's Capacity Development Efforts (all constituents) in 2018, evaluation of the ILO's Public Private Partnerships in 2019; and evaluation of ILO's Research and Knowledge Management Strategies and Approaches in 2020.

Background to ILO's Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Efforts

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

15. The policy also stresses the importance of ensuring that commitment to this goal is internalized throughout the ILO and is reflected in all technical work, operational activities and support services. All staff are accountable for mainstreaming gender in their own work, in order to support the constituents to promote gender equality. Implementation of the policy requires the unfailing commitment, participation and contribution of each staff member, while responsibility and accountability for success rests with senior managers, the regional director and programme managers – with the Director-General ultimately responsible for policy development and organizational performance on gender equality.
16. ILO Conventions and Recommendations (including the most recent [Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 \(No. 190\)](#) , and its accompanying Recommendation (No. 206)⁸²; Declarations such as the Centenary Declaration for the Future of Work (2019); and initiatives such as “Women at Work Initiative” set out the normative and policy framework for action on gender equality including through decent work country programmes and development cooperation.
17. ILO's results framework have included gender equality dimensions within policy outcomes on ILO's technical areas of work in the Programme and Budgets, operationalized through a marker to track progress during implementation and report on performance. The Programme and Budget 2020–21 includes a policy outcome on gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment for all in the world of work. GEM is integrated and covered under various thematic and organisational components of the ILO results framework and intended to be aligned with the Strategic Plans, Programme and Budgets (P&B) and institutional strategies such as the ILO-wide strategy on institutional capacity development and strategies on research, on knowledge and development cooperation.
18. The ILO policy on gender equality and mainstreaming identifies three priority areas for ILO's institutional mechanisms to mainstream gender:
 - staffing (parity between women and men)
 - substance (gender analysis and planning)
 - Structure (programming, implementation, monitoring and evaluation).
19. The ILO Action Plans for Gender Equality, which operationalize the 1999 policy, use a results-based approach with progress and gaps measured with targets for indicators, all of which are aligned with the UN-SWAP and finalized in consultation with the relevant custodians
20. The Action Plan 2018-21 has two main components with **UN-SWAP aligned categories** with performance indicators and custodians within the results areas in the categories that can be viewed as follows within the process and results focus of the:
 - **Enabling institutional mechanisms for gender equality in the Office** (*process*) ranging from reporting on gender-related results, evaluation, policy and planning, gender responsive auditing, leadership and gender responsive performance management, financial resource tracking and allocation, gender architecture, equal representation of women, organisational culture and capacity assessment and development, knowledge management and coherence between the elements
 - **Gender-related programmatic outcomes** (*results*) – gender-related SDG results and programmatic results on gender equality and women's empowerment
21. ILO is committed to the UN System-wide Action Plan (UN-SWAP) on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEEW) and in addition to regularly reporting to the ILO Governing Body, the Office also reports annually on implementation results to UN Women, which coordinates online reporting, and which publishes technical notes on indicators and their methodology. The ILO Action Plan is aligned with the latest version 2-0 of the UN-SWAP. The ILO Action Plan is not the only strategy for rendering ILO's work more gender-responsive, and it is part of a larger context of initiatives and efforts for which ILO must show progress. The ILO Action Plan is a central focus of the evaluation,

82 Other relevant conventions are [Maternity Protection Convention \(N° 183\)](#); [Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention \(N° 156\)](#); [Discrimination \(Employment and Occupation\) Convention \(N° 111\)](#); and [Equal Remuneration Convention \(N° 100\)](#)

since it is aligned with the organizational mandate and processes, its target audience are ILO staff and management, and its ultimate beneficiaries are the tripartite constituents.

22. In addition to UN-SWAP aligned indicator categories, the ILO Action Plan features “ILO unique” aspects such as the extent to which programmes incorporate outcomes with gender-specific results, strategic policy outcomes that incorporate gender equality and non-discrimination as mandatory success criteria, and gender-responsive DWCPs and development cooperation.
23. The Gender Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) Branch, which coordinates the ILO Action Plan, is located within the Conditions of Work and Equality Department (WORKQUALITY). The branch also coordinate the ILO Global Gender Network, made up of gender focal points and departmental gender coordinators to serve as , gender mainstreaming for the their units, departments or field offices. Some five field-based senior gender specialists are located in four of the five regions In the ILO Action Plan, custodians are responsible for meeting targets of indicators relevant to the custodians’ mandates. For example, concerning indicators on development cooperation, PARDEV is a custodian for these targets as well as some other HQ-based units – including GED – as well as (in the case of DC proposals) regional offices, field offices and headquarters units.
24. During the period under review, the ILO’s GEM efforts have been guided by a number of declarations, instruments, policies and strategies adopted by the International Labour Conference, the Governing Body and the Office in response to ILC and GB decisions. The following are some of the key ones:

Global Level governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► The Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work (1998) ► The ILO Declaration on Social Justice for a Fair Globalization adopted in June 2008 (the 2008 Declaration) and Office programme of work in response (and the 2016 Declaration on Social Justice) ► ILO Centenary Declaration on the Future of Work, 2019 ► Plans of Action for specific areas of work such as Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work ► Decent Work Agenda ► ILO’s Strategic Plans ► ILO’s Programme and Budget
Regional and Country level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCP) ► Regional Strategies, conclusions and declarations of ILO Regional and other meetings
ILO Policies and Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► ILO’s Technical/Development Cooperation Strategies ► Specific strategies on Research and Knowledge ► Relevant sectoral strategies
ILO Procedures and Manuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► Relevant Internal Governance Documents, particularly on decentralisation ► Relevant Financial and Programming procedures, manuals, guidelines ► Relevant manuals on Decent Work, Development Cooperation, Evaluation and related topics

25. GEM is integral to ILO’s work in many dimensions, at many levels and for many purposes. It is part of all levels of the ILO’s results framework (from Policy and enabling Outcomes, Country Programme Outcomes to global Products). Much of the GEM work is done through Development Cooperation gender-targeted projects. GEM elements are within many of the Policy outcomes in the ILO’s Programme and Budget and in the country programme outcomes in the DWCP as well as in the enabling outcomes on advocacy, governance and support services. GEM is linked to cross-cutting policy drivers (now markers) on international labour standards, social dialogue, non-discrimination, and of from 2018 just transition to environmental sustainability. Sectoral and thematic strategies have been formulated over the period with GEM elements and activities. Levels of intervention of GEM will be, depending on the focus, at the local, national, sub-regional, regional, interregional and global levels and intended to be based constituents’ needs and priorities. GEM involve constituents as part of promoting the decent work agenda and for the organisations specifically representing constituents, Employer’s and Worker’s organisations.
26. ILO is expected to deliver a substantial part of its GEM work through five regional offices, more than 40 country offices and as part of some of the over 600 programmes and projects in more than

100 countries. Decent Work Teams (DWT) with technical specialists are providing sub-regional technical support out of a number of locations. In some countries, National Coordinators are serving as ILO's focal point. The International Training Centre of the ILO in Turin provides capacity building support and training for constituents, including on knowledge management and innovation. In addition to ILO's regular advisory services related to its mission and normative work, development cooperation projects are implemented in countries with or without ILO permanent presence (ILO Office). Some of the countries are in fragile and post-crisis situations. Regional projects are implemented that work both at regional level and with activities in specific countries. Inter-regional and global projects will implement global and inter-regional activities that support the work of field structures as well as carry out activities in specific countries.

27. ILO as part of the UN System actively participates in the inter-agency work at the country, regional and global level, including One-UN and initial UN system work on the support to SDG. ILO works with regional organisations and other regional and country level partners in line with ILO mandate and purposes.
28. GEM is expected to be mainstreamed and reflected across thematic areas of work in ILO planning and results frameworks. At the country level, this largely concerns Decent Work Country Programmes. At the global level the Programme and Budget (P&B) provides the Office-wide results framework. Regular Outcome Based Work (OBW) planning exercises integrate the activities at the field level with the global results framework. Regular Budget (RB) and extra-budgetary funding from donors, either through Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA), earmarked country, regional or global funding, or in some cases, outcome based funding is used to support activities in the field.
29. The ILO Centenary Initiatives and the 2016 resolution on Advancing Social Justice through Decent Work, the 2030 Agenda, and the ILO Centenary Declaration on the future of work have or are setting the scene for ILO's future mandate. It is also in this context the evaluation of the ILO's GEM efforts needs to be seen as well to establish whether they adequately addresses current mandates and are strategically positioned to address upcoming challenges.

Reviews and evaluations of ILO's Gender equality and mainstreaming efforts

30. ILO's Gender Equality and Mainstreaming efforts have been reviewed and reported on specifically in the content of the ILO Action Plan. Mid-term reports on ILO Action Plan implementation are made to the Governing Body with quantifiable measurements of progress – or not – on targets rather than activities-focused reporting. Other reviews and reports of thematic and sectoral action plans and strategies have included some reporting on GEM. Progress on gender-responsive achievements are included in the ILO Programme Implementation Reports during the period through reporting on cross-cutting policy drivers for all policy outcomes. A paper concerning the ILO participatory gender audits was presented many years ago to the Governing Body. Development cooperation evaluations at the programme, thematic and project level has included GEM as part of addressing specific concerns and as the programme and project design and approach included it.
31. The [Independent thematic evaluation of ILO Action Plan for Gender Equality, 2010–15](#) from 2016 includes detailed descriptions and overviews of the past work of ILO on GEM and in particular the successive ILO Actions Plans.

Purpose, Scope, and Clients

32. This evaluation will cover the period 2016–2021 and look at the achievements and outcomes of ILO efforts to institutionally mainstream gender equality, as well at progress and gaps that have been measured by the ILO Action Plan. The evaluation will look at how gender equality and mainstreaming is or is not designed, implemented and used in support of ILO's policy and technical work.

33. The **purpose of the evaluation of ILO's Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Efforts** covering the period 2015-2021 is to:
- ▶ Review the **strategies, approaches, outcomes and achievements** related to GEM (summative and formative scope) with focus on the achievements, gaps and outcomes of mainstreaming gender equality into ILO products and services
 - ▶ Performance of ILO policy and technical work in operationalising its gender equality and mainstreaming policy
 - ▶ the extent to which development cooperation is gender-responsive
 - ▶ Provide detailed evaluation of the **Gender equality result areas in ILO strategic objectives and policy outcomes**, focusing on specific outcomes based on scoping of GEM in policy outcomes in the Programme and Budget during the period and providing examples of GEM efforts leading to specific policy outcome results, in particular in supporting gender responsive delivery of Decent Work Agenda
 - ▶ Review and document GEM **results of ILO's comparative advantage** and contribution to Gender Equality and Mainstreaming in the UN system and beyond using comparative advantage on international labour standards, tripartism and social dialogue, as well as gaps and ways to improve
 - ▶ Identify to the extent possible specific **cases and examples of results chains** in reaching gender responsive results in the work of ILO
 - ▶ Provide recommendations as part of the formative deliverable of the evaluation on how the **existing gender equality and mainstreaming efforts can be strengthened** building on the findings of the evaluation and on how future strategies should be designed and implemented, including ILO's strategic positioning in the context of UN reform
34. The **scope of the evaluation is organisation-wide** and defining the precise scope of this evaluation is imperative given its potential wide-ranging focus. Scope is likely to cover:
- ▶ Action Plan for Gender 2016–2017 and 2018–2021
 - ▶ The extent to which gender-responsiveness is formally, consistently and effectively integrated into
 - ▶ ILO's results framework, regional and country strategies, decent work country programmes, and development cooperation programmes and projects
 - ▶ ILO's services such as policy advice, products and research including its normative work at global, regional and national level
 - ▶ Gender related programmatic outcomes across ILO's results framework within policy outcomes and in support of decent work agenda
 - ▶ Gender-responsive work across technical departments and within development cooperation projects at global, regional and country level
 - ▶ ILO work on GEM in the UN system and with other key global, regional and national partners
 - ▶ Others to be defined as part of scoping, identifying work on gender and with the Action Plans for Gender as the framework for the evaluation, covering also institutional dimensions such as human resources, finance, communication, resource mobilisation, planning, knowledge management
35. The key dimensions of the evaluation's scope are to be further defined through the scoping exercise to lead to a suitable conceptual and analytical framework for assessing the role and results of ILO's GEM efforts, using the action plan as the core. The analytical framework is intended to be a major outcome of the evaluation to be considered for use in future assessment of the results and use of GEM in ILO.
36. The scope should take due consideration of the different levels at which GEM is designed and implemented within ILO, from global, regional to country level; and within the ILO results framework and as an integral part of development cooperation activities. The specific evaluation questions will come from this analytical framework with due consideration to be given to the standard OECD/DAC Evaluation

Criteria; as well as relevant Conventions, Protocols and Recommendations from GB and ILC discussions and decisions contained in these

37. The purpose of HLEs is generally to provide insight into the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the ILO's strategy, programme approach, and interventions (actions) (summative). It is also intended to be forward looking and provide findings, lessons learned, and emerging good practices for improved decision-making within the context of the next P&B and strategic framework (formative). The HLE will consider all efforts of the Office in supporting the achievement of results from GEM efforts. The evaluation report will be discussed in the October-November 2021 GB session together with the Office's response to the evaluation report; elements of the findings and recommendations are planned to be presented to the March 2022 Session of the GB in a paper about the Action Plan, as already described.
38. The evaluation will address key current issues and concerns of the Governing Body and the Organisation from an evaluative perspective based on the objectives, purposes and role of GEM in ILO. Suitable recommendations for enhancing the relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability and impact of the ILO's GEM efforts in ILO will be made. *Apart from addressing performance issues, recommendations should also be forward-looking, with an emphasis on ways to improve and enhance the implementation of GEM efforts and approaches, and aiming at achieving realistic added value to the ILO's objectives as laid out in the Strategic Planning, Programme and Budget documents, Decent Work Country Programmes and Development Cooperation Strategy.* Regional perspectives and dimensions in this respect will be explored as well.
39. The team of evaluators is expected to carry out a thorough scoping and consultation process as a first phase, leading to an inception report with an evaluation plan for the implementation of a global institutional level evaluation as the second phase. The scoping and consultation process is particularly relevant given the wide range of research and knowledge building and use throughout ILO, both at global, regional, country level and within regular work, programme and project modalities. The scoping phase will require expertise related to gender mainstreaming across an institution, understanding of the ILO and its mandate, and gender-responsive programmatic work that is results-based as well as evaluation expertise. As part of the initial scoping exercise, the evaluation inception report will consider the variety of GEM efforts at relevant levels and dimensions including in the context of decentralisation, field operations, technical and policy support, technical cooperation as well as the concept of development cooperation. This will be included in the conceptual and analytical framework for assessing the role and results of GEM, based on the Action Plan but with further emphasis on the SDG results and programmatic results. Availability of information will also be checked to ensure a sound assessment. Main findings and conclusions from the synthesis review of project evaluation reports on GEM activities and outcomes will complement the evaluation research.
40. The principal 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, as well as Directors and staff at both headquarters and of field offices, including those with some leadership roles in GEM. It should also serve as a source of information for ILO donors, partners and policy makers.

Suggested Key Evaluation Questions

41. Given the potential expansive scope and focus of such an evaluation and to ensure it addresses key current issues and concerns of the Organisation from an evaluative perspective, the evaluation will need to start with an initial scoping exercise with key stakeholders. Additional consultations will be necessary to identify additional specific evaluation questions.
42. The evaluation questions are centred on (i) relevance (e.g. "fit for purpose"), coherence and validity design of the GEM efforts; (ii) effectiveness and efficiency, and (iii) impact and sustainability of ILO's GEM efforts. The enabling environment – including support and embracing of gender-responsive work by managers -- within ILO for effective and relevant GEM should be a key dimension in the evaluation

questions, including the institutional framework and strategies for facilitating the development and implementation of GEM.

43. Given the circumstances brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Evaluation Office has prepared a Protocol to collect evidence on ILO's COVID-19 response measures and key evaluative questions have been developed for project and programme evaluations. These questions will be adapted for inclusion in this high level evaluation to the extent it is feasible for projects which began in 2020 and for the overall strategic context since 2020.
44. The following are some initial overall evaluation questions to be addressed at strategic institutional level and normally included in institutional evaluations, to be adjusted and expanded on as part of the scoping, particularly with the specificity required for a feasible evaluation:

Relevance:	Are GEM efforts in ILO relevant and contributing to:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ► ILO results framework, mandates and policies, ► the needs, demands, capacities of constituents, ► The achievement of SDGs? ► Country strategies and UNDAFs/UNCFs?
	Are GEM strategies and approaches relevant for the global, technical and sectoral policies and agendas?
	Are GEM outcomes addressing constituents' needs and their policy knowledge requirements? How are GEM efforts building institutional capacity of institutions?
	Are GEM activities and outcomes relevant to the strategies and outcomes of development cooperation projects at the relevant levels? Is development cooperation gender-responsive? How do development cooperation projects incorporate GEM in their outcomes, outputs and activities?
	What are the comparative advantage of ILO's approach to GEM based on findings from the evaluation? Is ILO showing required leadership in this area, especially in the context of UN reform, to constituents and within the multilateral system?
	How well does the ILO Action Plans for Gender Equality 2016-2017 and 2018-2021 operationalize the 1999 Gender equality policy?
Coherence	To what extent are the ILO Action Plans for Gender Equality 2016-2017 and 2018-2021 aligned with the Transitional Strategic Plan 2016-2017 and the Strategic Plan 2018-2021, its three corresponding biennial programme and budgets, and with the UN SWAP?
	Do ILO policies, results framework, thematic/sectoral strategies, action plans and other relevant frameworks reflect GEM policies and aims?
	Are GEM efforts coherent with the other elements of strategies and outcomes in development cooperation projects? Are GEM strategies, as aligned with our results framework and policies, included in development projects?
	How will indicative activities (for the enabling institutional mechanisms) and strategies (for programmatic outcomes) lead to the intended results? Is there required coherence between the mechanism and outcomes?
	How has GEM been effectively integrated in the policy outcomes of ILO and how the evolving approach to including GEM results and outcomes in ILO results frameworks affected realised results?
	Are there coherence and complementary efforts between the areas of cross-cutting policy drivers? Is inter-sectorality considered and are synergies realised? Are these considered as key structural factors and addressed as such?
	How appropriate and useful are the Action Plans 2016-17 and 2018-2021 for i) staffing, substance and structure (considered the enabling institutional mechanisms for gender equality in the Office both HQ and at field offices), and (ii) gender-responsive programmatic outcomes?
Effectiveness	To what extent are the ILO Action Plans for Gender Equality 2016-2017 and 2018-2021 aligned with the Transitional Strategic Plan 2016-2017 and the Strategic Plan 2018-2021, its three corresponding biennial programme and budgets, and with the UN SWAP?
	Did GEM efforts contribute effectively in setting global, regional and national agendas and influencing policy?
	What are the major results / achievements of GEM in ILO? And how are these determined?

	Did GEM serve as a strategic tool for increasing the outreach and credibility of ILO?
	To what extent have the ILO Action Plans for Gender Equality 2016-2017 and 2018-21 been an effective instrument to help ensure gender equality and mainstreaming across each of the policy outcomes of ILO? Did it result in more gender responsive technical cooperation and Decent Work Country Programmes?
	What role did different funding mechanisms, such as RBSA, play, if any in supporting ILO's GEM efforts in a strategic manner?
Efficiency	<p>Were the right strategic partners identified and engaged with to promote GEM and to collaborate with? Were these partnerships appropriate to deliver more effectively to constituents?</p> <p>Is the management of the GEM strategies and approaches effective and efficient?</p> <p>Is ILO monitoring, evaluating and reporting on the results and impact of GEM efforts so it enhances future efforts?</p> <p>Are resources for GEM sufficient and being used in the most efficient manner? How economically are resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time etc.) converted to results? Do the results justify the cost?</p> <p>Are there benefits/trade-offs to the shift in emphasis from project-based funding to broader programme framework such as RBSA, outcome-based funding, flagships programme? To what extent has the goal of GEM systematically been included in partnerships with donors and others?</p>
Likelihood of Impact	<p>What is the documented quality and added value of the GEM efforts to ILO, constituents and other partners and stakeholders at international, regional and country level?</p> <p>What is the impact of GEM strategies and approaches in influencing and effecting policy agenda at different levels?</p> <p>What are the tripartite constituents' perceived benefits from the ILO Action Plans for Gender Equality 2015-16 and 2018-21 (differentiated by groups)? What evidence exists of constituents benefiting from the Action Plan?</p> <p>What actions are required for achieving long-term gender-responsive impact?</p>
Sustainability	<p>Were the GEM efforts between 2015 and 2021 sustainable? Institutionally and for constituents?</p> <p>Are the GEM efforts integrated in ILO's results framework in a manner that leads to sustainability of gender responsible results? Do ILO results frameworks integrate GEM in sustainable manner?</p>
Other	<p>Are the Action Plans 2016-17 and 2018-21 adequately including ILO-specific results areas such as gender responsiveness within Decent Work Country Programmes and development cooperation projects?</p> <p>Has ILO addressed GEM aspects as best possible in the Covid19 response at all levels and throughout the institution and how can its contribution be strengthened towards the post-COVID 19 situation?</p>

45. The scoping will identify a final set of evaluation questions to be included in the inception report based on the conceptual and analytical framework). Annex I also provides some more detailed proposed evaluation questions that are normally considered for high-level institutional evaluations in ILO.

Methodology and Approach

46. This evaluation will be based upon the ILO's evaluation policy and procedures, which adhere to international standards and best practices, articulated in the OECD/DAC Principles and the Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the United Nations System approved by the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) in June 2016. More specifically the evaluation will be conducted in accordance with [EVAL Protocol No 1: High-level Evaluation Protocol for Strategy and Policy Evaluations](#).
47. The evaluation is being carried out in the middle of a pandemic caused by the Covid-19 virus. The pandemic, which led to the cancellation of the 338th Session ILO's Governing Body scheduled for March 2020 and International Labour Conference (ILC) scheduled for June 2020 and a virtual Governing Body session in November 2020, is likely to have serious implications for data collection for this HLE. International travel by the evaluation team may be difficult, if not impossible. While the field missions were planned for May-June 2021, and it may be premature to draw conclusions on their feasibility at this stage, the scoping phase is likely to consider and propose alternative methodologies for the data

collection, should the need arise. This could include use of national or regional consultants as part of the team for data collection or more extensive use of video-conferencing technology and other forms of online and virtual approaches building on EVAL's guidance note "**COVID-19: Conducting evaluations under challenging conditions.**"

48. A review of literature and examples of evaluations and reviews, including from other parts of the UN system will inform the evaluation, in particular the scoping. This lead to a proposed conceptual and analytical framework, with the Action Plan at core, as the basis for a specific evaluation framework with purpose, scope, possible evaluation questions and outline of methodology. Theory of Change approaches should be used as appropriate.
49. The evaluation team with relevant expertise, and preferably documented knowledge of the ILO, will work with EVAL to carry out this scoping exercise to identify the key scope and focus of the evaluation.
50. The scoping will be based on a review of literature and examples of evaluations and reviews of GEM for similar organisations; reviews of GEM efforts in ILO and relevant past reviews in ILO, definition of scoping questions and processes and carrying out the scoping process. Relevant consultations with internal and external stakeholders is foreseen, including through visits (if feasible) at Geneva HQ and interviews by telephone and Skype, Microsoft Teams or Zoom.
51. Stakeholders and key informants to be interviewed are likely to include those identified as liaisons within the primary responsible units and within GED, for specific results areas and targets of the "enabling institutional mechanisms for gender equality"; those identified as having "roles and responsibilities for enhancing gender equality in ILO work" by the Action Plans 2016-17 and 2018-21; field-based ILO staff including Senior Gender Specialists and key stakeholders outside the Office including tripartite constituents, Governing Body members, implementing partners, and UN WOMEN.
52. Based on the outcome of the scoping exercise the team of evaluators is expected to further develop a conceptual and analytical framework and operational plan for applying the methodology for a global institutional level evaluation.
53. A synthesis review of project evaluation reports is intended to be carried out by a separate external contractor as part of the evaluation research and as an input for this high-level evaluation. The results are to be used by the team as a source of information in the drawing findings and conclusions, in particular on the analysis of the extent to which DC programmes and projects are gender-responsive. This will cover a sample of development cooperation projects considered to include a particular focus or component on GEM; projects implemented specifically on GEM with GED as responsible unit or technical backstopping; and random projects across a on a range of policy outcomes and regions. Results from the systematic quality assessment of development cooperation projects in ILO will be used in the selection of projects. The precise scope will be determined based on the conceptual and analytical framework and with input from the evaluation team to ensure that the synthesis review can be relevant for the specific final identified focus and scope of the evaluation and the identified evaluation questions. The Qualitative content analysis can support the process through the content analysis software ((NVivo) available at EVAL.
54. The operational plan will provide a basis for the visits or alternative remote, virtual and electronic ways of covering all levels from headquarters to regional offices to country offices. Currently the intention is to cover up to maximum 10 different locations assessing from a GEM perspective typical ILO services and products. These will be visited or consulted virtually as possible and with required depth. The evaluation is expected to be a global institutional evaluation with strong evidence and examples from actual efforts including those focused on GEM.
55. A suitable qualified evaluation team with gender balance and expertise on RBM, gender equality and mainstreaming, and the ILO mandate, will carry out the evaluation with key deliverables being: inception report, field visits and data collection, draft and final report, a summary presentation and an executive summary, which will serve as a basis for preparing a Governing Body document on the evaluation.

56. The evaluation team will have experience in evaluation of GEM at the institutional, global and strategic level with preferably experience with evaluation for UN agencies and/or in the multilateral context. Thorough understanding of the unique mandate and role of GEM in the UN system and in similar organisations is required. The team should include technical expertise and experience on GEM at both institutional and programme/project level and at global and country level. Familiarity with ILO's normative work and tripartite structure is preferable. EVAL as the independent evaluation function will be a team member of the evaluation.
57. The inception report and evaluation framework will be built on the results framework in the Action Plan and expanded as appropriate to provide for a deeper coverage of programmatic results and strategic positioning. Use of a Theory of Change approach is required to demonstrate linked results and outcomes at different levels. The inception report will also include a work plan with distribution of responsibility within the team, including for locations or case studies to be covered and report preparation. The evaluation framework will for each evaluation questions finally included, identify the proposed data collection method to be used, such as type of stakeholders, method and mean of interview, and source of data. An assessment is to be included of the reliability of the proposed methods in providing sufficient evidence and substantiation to credibly address the evaluation questions.
58. The team composition should include sufficient team members to cover the required scope of work. A detailed work plan with scope of work, level of efforts and distribution of responsibilities of each team member will be part of the inception report. The evaluation team will ensure one approach in line with required independence and quality standards and per the agreed evaluation framework presented in the inception report.
59. The evaluation team is encouraged to look at the methodologies used by other independent evaluations of GEM in other UN Agencies, but should develop its own approach -based on the core norms and standards of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) - to reflect the particularities of ILO's technical/development cooperation system, its tripartite governance structure, its Decent Work Agenda, its membership of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the context of the Agenda 2030. In drawing conclusions and recommendations, the evaluation team is also expected to review as relevant the comparable results of the GEM efforts of peer UN organizations as potential benchmark.
60. The methodology should give strong consideration to dimensions such as ILO's normative work and social dialogue, such as expressed in the crosscutting policy drivers in place during the period: international labour standards, social dialogue, and gender and non-discrimination; and just transition to environmental sustainability. These dimensions should be considered as crosscutting concerns throughout the methodology, deliverables and final report of the evaluation.
61. As an evaluation focused on GEM, the evaluation indicators, methodology and data gathering technique should take full consideration of gender responsiveness. The evaluators should review data and information that is disaggregated by sex and gender and involve both men and women in the consultation, evaluation analysis and evaluation team. The team should use gender-inclusive methodologies in order to ensure that all views and perspectives, especially of women, are gathered and represented. All this information should be accurately included in the inception report and final evaluation report.
62. The details of the methodology will be elaborated by the selected team of evaluators on the basis of the Terms of Reference (TORs) and the inception report, which are subject to EVAL's approval. It is expected that the evaluation team will apply mixed methods, which draw on both quantitative and qualitative evidence and involve multiple means of analysis.
63. The mixed methods include but are not limited to:
 - Desk review of relevant documents, including evaluation reports, ILO strategic and programming documents, reports and meta-studies on funds and programs etc.;
 - Reviewing evidence of follow up to relevant evaluation recommendations and use of lessons learned by ILO management;

- ▶ Interviewing key stakeholders, which should reflect a diversity of backgrounds inside the Office, according to sector, technical unit, regions and country situations, and representing both
 - ▶ Interviewing stakeholders outside the Office, including Governing Body members, tripartite partners, members of multilateral and bilateral partners;
 - ▶ Conducting online surveys and other methodologies to obtain feedback and/or information from constituents and other key stakeholders; and
 - ▶ Field focus using hybrid online and face-to-face approaches as feasible to cover five regional offices including 10 field locations as part of further developing country case studies reflecting a sample of typical GEM efforts
64. The evaluation team may add additional criteria. The inception report should present a detailed evaluation approach and a range of methodologies.
65. It is expected that the report within identified results areas, will cover quantifiable progress - or not – on gender-related outcomes, indicators and/or strategies and activities based on available information; whether corresponding strategies and indicative activities were successfully launched or completed; good practices and challenges in implementing these result areas and short analytical assessment of progress and difficulties in implementation

Summary rating

66. A summary rating shall be expressed by the independent evaluation team for the six evaluation criteria and the respective questions agreed on in the inception report based on the questions above⁸³. The evaluation shall use a six-point scale ranging from “highly satisfactory,” “satisfactory,” “somewhat satisfactory,” “somewhat unsatisfactory,” “unsatisfactory,” and “highly unsatisfactory.”

Highly satisfactory	when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that ILO performance related to criterion has produced outcomes which go beyond expectation, expressed specific comparative advantages and added value, produced best practices
Satisfactory:	when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that the objectives have been mostly attained and the expected level of performance can be considered coherent with the expectations of the national tripartite constituents, beneficiaries and of the ILO itself
Somewhat satisfactory	when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that the objectives have been partially attained and there that expected level of performance could be for the most part considered coherent with the expectations of the national tripartite constituents, beneficiaries and of the ILO itself ;
Somewhat unsatisfactory	when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that the objectives have been partially attained and the level of performance show minor shortcoming and are not fully considered acceptable in the view of the ILO national tripartite constituents, partners and beneficiaries;
Unsatisfactory	when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that the objectives have not been attained and the level of performance show major shortcoming and are not fully considered acceptable in the view of the ILO national tripartite constituents, partners and beneficiaries;
Highly unsatisfactory	when the findings related to the evaluation criterion show that expected results have not been attained, and there have been important shortcomings, and the resources have not been utilized effectively and/or efficiently

⁸³ Independent evaluations in the ILO are conducted by independent and external evaluators. The final project ratings are produced by these external evaluators as an outcome of the evaluation process. These ratings are based on actual programme data, interaction with beneficiaries and stakeholders as well as on project performance documents (which include self-assessed ratings).

Main Outputs/Deliverables/Timeframe

67. The proposed time frame for this evaluation is from March 2021 to September 2021 in accordance with the following tentative schedule:

Tentative Schedule: Institutional Evaluation of ILO's Gender Equality and Mainstreaming Efforts			
Dates	Tasks	Responsible	Outputs/ Deliverable
Dec. 2019 to March 2021	Initial concept paper scoping and preparation; identification of key parameters; kick-off meeting with key primary stakeholders; calls for expression of interest; preparation of draft TORs	EVAL	Concept note; presentation to key primary stakeholders for the scoping
Second half of March/ First half of April 2021	Contracting and preparation	EVAL	
April 2021	Initial Skype ⁸⁴ call with team; Scoping visit to Geneva or series of Skype calls with Geneva; desk review	Evaluation team	Initial brief scoping report outline
First half of May 2021	Inception report and evaluation framework	Evaluation team (as decided by external evaluation team)	Inception Report
May – June 2021 with parallel visits/calls	Consultation and interviews (via Skype or in person) in Geneva and in the five regional office locations, with up to 10 visits to or detailed coverage of countries in the region; field visits/coverage to be concurrent by members of the team covering both English, French and Spanish	Full team as allocated within team; provisions for one member per region	Country case study notes (as required and as per evaluation framework);
May-June 2021	Synthesis review of Development cooperation projects related to GEM	EVAL working with separate external contractor based on defined scope and research questions from GEM evaluation team	Report of synthesis review focusing on presentation findings and analysis in structured form
May-June 2021	Survey of constituents, ILO staff and partners in GEM (To be designed as part of the inception report (or as soon as possible after that)	Surveys to be administered through EVAL dedicated electronic survey facility	Analysis to be done by evaluation team and ready for the first draft preparation step
First half of July 2021	Preparation of initial draft	As decided by team	First full draft
Second half of July 2021	Review of first draft and comments by key stakeholders	Key stakeholders	Consolidated comments (by EVAL)
Second half of July 2021	Preparation of Executive Summary as priority to serve as basis for GB Summary Paper; with key findings, conclusions and recommendations (basis for Office response to report to be included in GB summary and final report)	As decided by team	Executive Summary of 3000 words to serve as core of GB summary paper)
First half of August 2021	Preparation of second draft	As decided by team	Second and final draft (including Executive Summary of 3000 words to serve as core of GB summary paper)
Second half of August 2021	First half of August: Presentation of second draft to key stakeholders in Geneva by team leader; adjustment of second draft if needed	Team leader	Power point presentation of key points
Second half of August 2021	Final adjustment of second and final draft; possible input to GB summary paper to be prepared by the ILO	Team leader	Final version ready as input for GB document
Sep./Oct. 2021	Editing and printing of final report	EVAL	Final version printed and on posted on-line; Quick Facts, PowerPoint Presentation and possibly short video produced

84 Skype is shorthand for online calls that can use Skype, Microsoft Teams or Zoom

Management and Responsibilities

68. EVAL will take the lead role for funding, tendering, contracting, and implementation management. The Director of the EVAL will oversee the evaluation process and participate together with selected officials of EVAL as members of the coordinating team. A Senior Evaluation Officer will serve as the evaluation task manager and as member of the evaluation team. Relevant guidelines and protocols for the evaluation will be provided by EVAL as part of ILO Policy Guidelines on Evaluation.
69. The leading external evaluator will provide technical leadership and is responsible for the team as whole carrying out the following:
 - Drafting the inception report, producing the draft reports and presenting a final report;
 - Providing any technical and methodological advice necessary for this evaluation within the team;
 - Ensuring the quality of data (validity, reliability, consistency and accuracy) throughout the analytical and reporting phases.
 - Coordinating the external evaluation team, ensuring the evaluation is conducted as per TORs, including following ILO EVAL guidelines, methodology and formatting requirements; and
 - Producing reliable, triangulated findings that are linked to the evaluation questions and presenting useful and insightful conclusions and recommendations according to international standards.
70. EVAL will provide support to the evaluation team by providing documentation support and facilitate access to information, key informants and other sources relevant for the evaluation. Such support includes identification of similar type of evaluations, list of key stakeholders, list and abstracts of key documents and guidance on GEM related documents.

Quality assurance

71. The ILO senior evaluation officer assigned to this evaluation will provide overall quality assurance and support on all key outputs.

Qualifications of the Evaluators

72. This evaluation includes a broad range of questions and will require a range of skills within but also beyond labour issues, development cooperation and organisational reviews. This evaluation will be managed by EVAL and conducted by a team of independent and external evaluators with the following competency mix:
 - Prior knowledge of the ILO's roles and activities, and solid understanding of role of gender equality and mainstreaming in a normative, standard setting multi-lateral organisations and an organisation with strong international development cooperation and funding (essential);
 - Demonstrated executive-level management experience in reviewing and advising complex organizational structures, preferably in the field of labour issues and/or development/technical cooperation;
 - Sound understanding of the concepts and issues related to the institutionalisation and implementation of gender equality and mainstreaming, including from evaluation and organisational assessments gender equality and mainstreaming
 - Adequate contextual knowledge of the UN, including SDGs, and proven past work on strategy evaluations for UN agencies;
 - Familiarity with ILO's normative work, tripartite structure and other cross cutting policy drivers;
 - Expertise in qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods and an understanding of issues related to validity and reliability;

- ▶ Familiarity with relevant UNEG guidance, such as the UN evaluation norms and standards, and particularly guidance on integrating gender and human rights;
 - ▶ At least 10 years' experience in evaluation policies, strategies, country programmes, organizational structures and effectiveness; organisational reviews, including specifically on gender equality and mainstreaming
 - ▶ Experience in evaluation of gender equality and mainstreaming, with past work on strategy evaluations for UN agencies and/or multilateral context.
 - ▶ Documented experience in result-based management and UN reform;
 - ▶ No relevant bias related to ILO, or work experience with ILO in the last five ten years;
 - ▶ Regional experience as required
 - ▶ Fluency in English, spoken and written (essential); as a team sufficient knowledge of two other ILO official language French and Spanish is required for field visits/calls (local translation and support can be provided if needed).
73. All team members should have proven ability to work with others in the development and timely delivery of high-quality deliverables.

Selection of Team

74. Based on initial concept note and primarily stakeholder consultations, specifications for a call for expression of interest was developed and a call launched. Using an established two reviewer rating system, a shortlist of candidates with attention to gender parity that have expressed interest has been asked to provide a detailed proposal based on the TORs, developed with further initial internal scoping. Each received proposal will be assessed against established criteria developed on the basis of the TORs. Using this documented analysis and considering availability, the team is selected. Throughout EVAL allocates great importance to relevant technical skills including ability to deal with the complex and wide range field of gender equality and mainstreaming and the specifics of the UN system and the ILO, which in itself limits the pool of possible candidates. Principles of best value to the ILO, with price and other factors considered are applied.

Evaluator's Code of Conduct and Ethical Considerations

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

Strategy for Evaluation Use

76. Efforts will be made to keep relevant identified entities in the ILO both at HQ, the regions and in the field informed about the major steps of the evaluation process. Focal points have been identified within key entities in the ILO, in particular the Policy Portfolio where the entity on Gender Equality and Discrimination is located, but focal points will also be identified with the Bureau for Workers Activities (ACTRAV), Bureau for Employers activities (ACTEMP), and the Field Operations and Partnership Portfolio, where regional and country level development cooperation is carried out that includes gender equality and mainstreaming work, Key outputs will be circulated for comments.

77. The following products are expected to enhance the use of the evaluation findings and conclusions by developing different products for different audiences:

- ▶ GB executive summary document for the GB 2020 discussion
- ▶ The full report available in limited hard copy and electronically available on the EVAL website and
- ▶ Key findings or table of contents presented with hyperlinks for readers to read sections of the report.
- ▶ USB keys with e-copy of the report for dissemination to partners.
- ▶ A PowerPoint presentation or visual summary of the report will be prepared for EVALs website and for presentations on the evaluation.
- ▶ EVAL Quick Facts on the High Level Evaluation to be prepared.
- ▶ A short video on the key findings and recommendations

Important Guidance for Reference

[Protocol 1: Policy outcomes and institutional evaluations \(HLEs\), revised version, Nov 2019](#)

[Adapting evaluation methods to the ILO's normative and tripartite mandate](#)

[Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation](#)

[Implications of COVID-19 on evaluations in the ILO](#)

[Protocol on collective evaluation evidence on ILOs COVID-19 response measures through project and programme evaluations](#)

Annex I: Some Standard Proposed Evaluation Questions Per Evaluation Criteria for Institutional Evaluations

Assessment Criteria	Questions to be addressed
Relevance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ To what extent do GEM efforts in ILO reflect the established priorities and outcomes of the 2008 Declaration on Social Justice and subsequent 2016 declaration; and looking forward the Centenary Declaration of 2019? ▶ How well do the GEM efforts in ILO align with the Transitional Strategic Plan 2016-17, Strategic Plan 2018-21, related P&Bs and DWCPs as well as UN global (SDGs) and country strategies (SDGs, UNDAFs, UNCFs)? ▶ What means are there to ensure continuing relevance vis-à-vis changing needs and new developments?
Coherence & Validity of Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What are the baseline conditions for GEM efforts in ILO 2015-2021? ▶ Are the intended objectives and outcomes of GEM properly responding to the perceived needs and situation globally and on the ground and how are these needs identified? To which extent is any Theory of Change (ToC) informed by needs and interests of diverse groups of stakeholders through consultations? ▶ Do GEM in ILO support the objectives and outcomes of the ILO's strategy programme framework, strategic plans and related strategies and policies? Do they support the priorities, objectives and the principal means of action for achieving Decent Work outcomes within the P&Bs and SPFs? ▶ To which extent is the ToC aligned with the international/national/regional standards and principles on Human Rights and Gender Equality (HRGE) and how it contributes to their implementation? ▶ Are there appropriate and useful set of indicators to effectively assess the results, relevance and outcomes of GEM? Can these indicators be measurable and traceable? Can these indicators be comparable to those that aim to measure similar outcomes within the UN system?
Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ What results have been achieved and/or what progress has been made in assuring that GEM in ILO contribute towards the Decent Work outcomes within the PB and SPF framework during the review period? To which extent expected results address HRGE? To which extent have GEM targeted HRGE as crosscutting learning components, whenever relevant? ▶ How are GEM coordinated within the Office and with other intergovernmental bodies? Have GEM supported cooperation with other UN organizations? Are there any differences in effectiveness noticeable on these aspects between specific levels and nature of GEM? ▶ Are GEM supporting ILOs' result-based framework at all levels? ▶ What are the particular issues, component or action that contribute to the various dimensions of the effectiveness of GEM in ILO?
Efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Are resources for GEM being used in the most efficient manner? How economically are resources and inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) converted to results? Have resources been allocated strategically to make most use of GEM in line with priorities and focus? Do the results of GEM justify the costs? Has there been an adequate resource investment to integrate labour rights/International Labour Standards (ILS)? ▶ How have GEM supported the achievements at the field, in particular of Technical Cooperation/Development Cooperation activities? ▶ Are there any differences in efficiency noticeable depending on specific levels and nature GEM in a given country?
Likelihood of Impact & Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Can any observed changes and results be causally linked to the role of the GEM? Did the changes result from appropriate GEM strategies and approaches? Are there impact assessments that can support attribution of results to the nature and support of GEM? And if not, what other evidence is there? ▶ What are the tripartite constituents' perceived benefits from GEM (differentiated by groups)? ▶ Is it likely that the GEM strategies and approaches are durable and can be maintained and/or adjusted in response to changing context? Are there any differences noticeable depending on specific levels and nature of GEM in a given country, within a specific thematic area or at a global level? ▶ What actions and conditions are required for achieving broader, long-term outcome and impact of ILO's GEM efforts? ▶ Have target groups for GEM efforts benefited from a long-term realization of Labour Rights, Gender and Equality (LRGE)? Have interventions worked towards developing an enabling environment for real change on LRGE? Have they worked towards policy changes conducive to LRGE?
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ How have the issues identified in past reviews of GEM been addressed in reforms, changes and action related to GEM? ▶ Can any contextual factors and pre-conditions be identified that will be core to continued assessment of the contribution of GEM? ▶ To what extent do managers in ILO visibly support gender mainstreaming including through adequate human and financial resources made available, or not? ▶ What are the key issues and recommendations for ILO to consider in any future review and possible adjustment of GEM efforts in ILO?

