FUND FOR EVALUATION IN EMPLOYMENT
Building evidence on labour market impacts in the Middle East and North Africa

Sixth Call

Application form available here

Application deadline: Monday, September 7th, 2015, 11:59pm CEST

Partners:
ABOUT THE FUND
The Fund for Evaluation in Employment is a joint initiative of the International Labour Organization (ILO) through its “Taqeem”1 and “Market systems development for decent work- ‘the lab’2” projects. It is supported by the following donor institutions:

- International Development Research Centre (IDRC)
- International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie)
- Silatech
- Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO)

Launched in 2010, the Fund aims to increase the evidence base on what works and why to improve labour market outcomes while strengthening the knowledge and skills of researchers and practitioners to rigorously assess the impact of their interventions. Based on this evidence, it aims to promote evidence-based learning and programme improvement, especially related to women and young people.

Since 2010, five requests for proposals have been issued, resulting in the initiation of fifteen impact evaluations and strengthening of twelve monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems.

In this year’s call for proposals, the Fund offers different types of support: technical assistance for the implementation of result-based monitoring practices and seed-funding for conducting impact evaluations. In order to enhance the range of applied approaches and methods for impact evaluation and improve the use of their results, it also promotes match-making activities that help to bridge the gap between research and practice.

THE STRATEGY
The Fund applies a results based measurement strategy that promotes the production of evaluation evidence that can be used to create better and more results based policies. Throughout this approach, there is an iterative cycle of capacity development, impact research and policy influence.

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1 See more here: http://www.ilo.org/taqeem
2 See more here: http://www.ilo.org/thelab
i. **Capacity development:** the Fund provides training, knowledge sharing and coaching to produce a critical mass of evaluation expertise amongst practitioners and researchers. During the period 2010-2015, the Fund carried out 17 evaluation and evidence workshops with nearly 1,000 participants.

ii. **Impact research:** high quality applied research with a focus on understanding “what works” in programming and policy. The Fund provides seed funding and technical assistance to both experimental and non-experimental approaches to measure the effects of labour market interventions.

iii. **Policy influence:** findings and recommendations from impact research are translated and transmitted to policy makers and practitioners with influence to use the evidence in programming and policy decisions.

In delivering its services, the Fund relies on a network of M&E and impact evaluation experts, firms, donors, and academic institutions represented by the Taqeeem Evaluation Council.

**WHAT DOES THE FUND OFFER AND TO WHOM?**

The Fund targets two types of organizations:

- **Implementing organizations:** public, non-governmental or private organizations with operations in one of the MENA countries and implementing interventions focused on improving labour market outcomes.

- **Research institutions:** based worldwide, but must be studying effects of employment and enterprise development interventions implemented in the MENA region.

Partnerships between international and local research organizations, as well as between researchers and implementers are particularly encouraged and the Fund offers match-making support in the context of its community of practice.

Both technical assistance and seed funding is offered. The technical assistance is mainly directed at the development and implementation of results-based monitoring and evaluation systems, as well as in some cases for the design of impact evaluations. Seed funding is available for the implementation of
impact evaluations. According to the stage of the proposal, both support types can be provided, building on each other in a complementary manner (see chart below).

**Chart: Overview of supported activities within the Fund**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Outputs</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
<th>Impacts</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Practice</strong></td>
<td><strong>Performance monitoring</strong></td>
<td><strong>Process/Outcome evaluation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Impact evaluation</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Research</strong></td>
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**Type 1 support:** Technical assistance

**Type 2 support:** Seed funding

(Combination of type 1 and 2 support, according to stage of proposal)

**Detail on type of support offered**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Financial Assistance</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Goal:</strong> generate more and better evidence on the impact of employment and enterprise interventions</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Project implementers</strong></td>
<td><strong>Researchers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A small cash grant of up to $5000 to cover the costs of technical assistance to strengthen an organization’s M&amp;E system, conduct data collection and/or to finalize a solid plan to conduct an impact evaluation. In the case of an impact evaluation design, this may include evaluability assessments, development of evaluation design (concept note), or the development of a full research proposal.</td>
<td>The Fund will provide seed funding to selected impact evaluations assessed as being ready for implementation. Up to a total of US$650,000 is available to fund 3-5 studies. This means in most cases projects will have to bring in co-funding to supplement the costs.</td>
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3 Selected evaluations will be considered for funding through 3ie’s Policy Window depending on funding availability. See more details in the “eligibility”-section.
Technical Assistance
Goal: improve result-based monitoring and evaluation practices

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The technical assistance covers up to US$ 20,000 of in-kind support per organization.

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THE 2015 CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Thematic concentration
The evidence base demonstrating how to achieve positive labour market outcomes is growing, but the work has only just begun. Global reviews show that the evidence on the effectiveness of employment and entrepreneurship promotion programmes is still scarce and findings from completed impact evaluations are widely heterogeneous. In a global comparison, MENA is the region with the largest gap of evidence regarding the effectiveness of labour market interventions. This applies particularly for youth: the Youth Employment Inventory, a global repository of evidence on program outcomes of youth employment interventions, reveals only six impact evaluations for that region.4

Part of the solution to increasing the evidence base is to provide targeted support to labour market practitioners to explore the cause-and-effect relationship between interventions and outcomes of interest. Impact evaluations have become an important method to analyse if development projects are achieving their intended objectives and which causal mechanisms led to the respective findings. Successful and meaningful evaluations involve the participation of implementing organizations from the beginning to the end and must therefore go hand in hand with program implementation and design.

In order to ensure that programme implementation follows the established targets, and to identify potential barriers early on the way, an effective results-based progress-tracking through solid monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems is of crucial importance. This does not only serve the purpose of generating credibility and accountability towards partners and donors, but also helps organizations to practice internal learning and thereby to continuously improve their programmes.

4 [http://www.youth-employment-inventory.org](http://www.youth-employment-inventory.org) (as of 06/2015)
In 2015, the Fund focuses on the regions of the Middle East and North Africa. It aims to generate evidence on the following labour market interventions, with a specific focus on gender equality and/or youth employment outcomes.\(^5\)

1. **Training and skills development**: programmes that offer skills training in order to facilitate the transition into the labour market, improve the employability and/or enhance the productivity of their participants.

2. **Enterprise development**: particularly value chain development or market systems approaches to more and better job creation, e.g. facilitating access to goods and services, or improving the performance and growth of small and medium enterprises (SMEs).

3. **Employment services**: job counseling, job-search assistance and/or mentoring services, often complemented by job placements and technical or financial assistance.

4. **Subsidized public or private sector employment**: interventions aiming to reduce the labour cost for employers (e.g. through wage subsidies), as well as labour-intensive programmes or public works which provide short-term employment in infrastructure or social development and community projects.

**METHODOLOGIES**

The Fund encourages robust approaches to impact evaluation that demonstrate causality and attribution. In particular, evaluation designs that test different versions of an intervention (cross-cutting designs) are highly encouraged. In order to tackle the challenge of evaluating the impacts of complex interventions, and to understand the underlying reasons and causal mechanisms behind those findings, qualitative evaluation approaches are strongly recommended to be incorporated into the evaluation design (mixed methods). The methods should be carefully selected and combined according to the research questions and the learning needs of the initiative in question, in order to maximize the credibility and information value of the evaluation results.

With regard to monitoring and evaluation systems, the Fund promotes results-based approaches developed based on a clear theory of change. Assumptions related to the corresponding causal links, as well as risks and potential unintended outcomes should be taken in consideration. For further guidance on methodologies for impact evaluations and the set-up of results-based M&E systems see Annex II.

Given the focus of the 2015 call on gender-related labour market outcomes, applicants are highly encouraged to apply the Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI) in their impact evaluations, adapted to the according methodological design and research outcomes of interest.\(^6\)

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\(^5\) See examples of result chains and a selection of current evidence on the different intervention types in the annex.

\(^6\) The WEAI is a composite tool to measure the empowerment, agency, and inclusion of women in the agriculture sector. It measures the roles and extent of women’s engagement in the agriculture sector in five domains: (1) decisions about agricultural production, (2) access to and decision-making power over productive resources, (3) control over use of income, (4) leadership in the community, and (5) time use. It also measures women's empowerment relative to men within their households. See more detailed information here: [http://www.ifpri.org/publication/womens-empowerment-agriculture-index](http://www.ifpri.org/publication/womens-empowerment-agriculture-index)
ELIGIBILITY
The following will be eligible to apply and participate in the selection process:

1. Applicant
   Applicants can be based in any country in the world but the project proposed for evaluation must be in one of the countries of the League of Arab States.

2. Eligible Countries
   The countries of the League of Arab States: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

3. Working Language
   The working language will be English and the application form and information will only be available in English; nevertheless, applicants may also submit their proposals in French.

4. Institutions
   The following types of institutions are eligible to apply for funding:
   - Governments
   - Academic institutions
   - Non-governmental organizations
   - Bilateral or multilateral agencies

5. Exclusion
   The Fund will not support the following types of organizations or interventions:
   - Private companies
   - Programmes promoting religious or ideological doctrine
   - Land, site acquisition or facilities construction projects
   - Individuals, either through scholarships or other forms of financial support
   - Political campaigns

6. Additional requirements for funding through 3ie’s Policy Window (non-fulfillment has no exclusionary effect on applications)
   Depending on funding availability, some evaluations will be considered for funding through 3ie’s Policy Window. To be eligible for this window, either the applicant or the corresponding implementing agency must be a member of 3ie at the time of grant signing. Furthermore, applicant teams must show substantive involvement of developing country experts in the evaluation. See more information about 3ie’s eligibility requirements here: http://www.3ieimpact.org/funding/policy-window/
SELECTION CRITERIA
Priority will be given to applications that demonstrate the following characteristics

1. **Innovativeness of project**
   Submissions that propose projects for evaluation with new and creative solutions to the enterprise and employment challenge will be given high marks. Innovative project ideas could include market-based approaches to development, linking young entrepreneurs to value chains, unique delivery models, environmental or technology based solutions and youth inclusive and gender-responsive ideas. Extra weight will be given to applications that demonstrate ability to reach disadvantaged populations, especially women and rural populations.

2. **Policy relevance and scalability of the intervention**
   In accordance with the three components of the Fund, the relevance of the intervention in its respective political context is of high importance. Submissions will be assessed according to their convincing demonstration of this relevance and should clearly articulate how the evaluation knowledge will be used to influence policy.

3. **Capacity and Investment in M&E / IE**
   Submissions that demonstrate at minimum some level of institutional investment, basic skills and experience in M&E and familiarity with key concepts (such as results chain/log frameworks, indicators, qualitative and quantitative data collection methods) will be recognized. Selected applicants must show proof of assured co-funding for the evaluation at the time that the grant agreement is signed. Experience using different types of IE designs would be desirable (see Annex II for a discussion of the Fund’s evaluation principles).

4. **Potential for knowledge generation and replication**
   The Fund seeks to identify organizations and projects with a strong commitment and the potential to generate new evidence in the field of youth employment, entrepreneurship and value chain development. Extra weight will be given to applications that provide evidence of effective implementation and also potential for replication of the project idea, by the implementing organization itself or other organizations in the field.

5. **Quality of collaborating project team**
   The professional and academic backgrounds and experiences of the team who will implement the evaluation plan will be taken into consideration, as well as their demonstrated motivation, dedication and interest in the topic of M&E / IE.

6. **Use of the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)**
   This applies also for proposals not related to the agricultural sector. The index can (and in most cases needs to) be shortened and adapted to the corresponding research design and outcomes of interest.
SELECTION PROCESS
Applicants will go through the following selection process:

1. Interested applicants will submit application forms with details about the project they intend to monitor and/or evaluate; the implementing organization, its M&E system and capacity and the envisioned team (see details on the application form in Annex I).

2. Eligible and qualified applicants will be shortlisted by a selection committee (they may also be invited for an interview).

3. Shortlisted organizations will be invited to the Evaluation Clinic and will present their evaluation plans in a working group (participation not mandatory and will depend on experience of evaluation team).

4. Shortlisted applicants may be asked to submit a detailed M&E plan or IE plan (where possible, accompanied by a cost-effectiveness analysis).

5. M&E/IE plans will be reviewed and rated by a selection committee formed by external evaluation experts to receive seed funding to conduct the IE (for those projects deemed ready for an IE).

Timeline for selection process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages of the process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Launch of request for applications</td>
<td>1 July 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Deadline to receive applications</td>
<td>7 September 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Screening and shortlisting of applications by ILO</td>
<td>30 September 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Selection of shortlisted proposals by selection committee and feedback to applicants</td>
<td>15 October 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Consultations during Evaluation Clinic (optional)</td>
<td>20 October 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Based on feedback and consultations: Submission of detailed M&amp;E/impact evaluation plans</td>
<td>01 November 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Final selection of supported proposals by selection committee</td>
<td>15 November 2015</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The selected initiatives will be presented in the next ILO Evidence Symposium, to be held in 2016. The symposium will bring together policy makers and practitioners with researchers to present and discuss the evidence base for “what works” in increasing the employment and productivity of youth in the Middle East and North Africa regions.

All applications must be submitted using the online application form: [https://fs17.formsite.com/youth/rfp2015/index.html](https://fs17.formsite.com/youth/rfp2015/index.html)
For questions related to the Fund and the application, please write to:

Youth Employment Programme
International Labour Organization
taqeem@ilo.org (Subject: “2015 Fund for Evaluation”)
4, route des Morillons
CH-1211 Genève 22
Switzerland
Annex I: Exemplary result chains for different types of active labour market programmes (ALMP)

Training and skills development interventions

- **Outcomes**
  - Increased employability
  - Increased probability of employment
  - Increased ability to retain job/longer job duration
  - Increased earnings or consumption
  - Reduced time to find job/shorter unemployment duration
  - Increase in number of hours worked
  - Better quality of employment (contract type, number of hours worked)
  - **Increased business performance (efficiency, profits, investments, output of entrepreneurs)**

- **Outputs**
  - Improved technical competencies in a specific trade
  - Improved management skills
  - Improved understanding of business mechanisms
  - Improved financial literacy
  - Improved reading and writing skills
  - Improved mathematical skills

- **Activities**
  - Provision of skills training (e.g. distance or classroom training)
  - Placement in workplace training (e.g. internships, on-the-job training schemes)
  - Placement in apprenticeship schemes
  - Provision of financial incentives to young apprentices and employers providing apprenticeship training

- **Type of intervention/support**
  - Technical skills training
  - Business skills training
  - Literacy or numeracy skills training
  - Behavioural, life skills or soft skills training
Enterprise development and entrepreneurship interventions

Outcomes

- Increased business investment, performance and competitiveness (e.g. efficiency, output, profits, sales, number of employees, investments, business survival)
- Additional businesses started

Outputs

- Improved management skills (e.g. accounting practice, stocks management, investments)
- Improved understanding of business mechanisms
- Improved financial literacy/behaviour
- Increased knowledge of business laws and regulations
- Improved knowledge of business possibilities
- Reduced risk/uncertainty in starting a business
- Increased knowledge of markets and networks
- Increased access to business networks and supply chains
- Increased access to adequate financial services
- Lower costs for finance
- Higher probability of obtaining a loan, insurance or savings
- Beneficiaries possess sufficient capital to start a business
- Increased incentives (lower barriers) to start own business/franchise

Activities

- Deliver advice/mentoring (e.g. assessment of business plans)
- Support business networks
- Provide technology necessary for value chain inclusion
- Provide credit to young entrepreneurs
- Match entrepreneurs with credit agencies
- Provide grants to young entrepreneurs
- Match participants with franchisees
- Intermediate between franchisees and potential franchisees
- Distribute information about franchising
- Assist in setting up franchise business
- Support existing franchisees

Type of intervention/support

- Business advisory services
- Access to markets and value chains
- Credit or access to credit
- Grants (monetary or in-kind)
- Microfranchising
Employment services

Outcomes
- Increased labour market participation
- Increased probability of employment
- Increase in hours worked
- Reduced time to find job/shorter unemployment duration
- Increased ability to retain job/longer job duration
- Better quality of employment (contract type, hours worked)
- Increased earnings or consumption

Outputs
- Improved matching of job seekers and employers
  - Improved job search skills
    - Participants better informed about the labour market
    - More informed decisions about investment in education
  - Increased intensity, motivation and efficiency of job search
- Greater ability to find and accept jobs (e.g., enhanced mobility)

Activities
- Provide job placement services used by unemployed
  - Provide job-search advice to unemployed
  - Market disadvantaged jobseekers to employers
  - Match unemployed with job vacancies
- Provide career and personal development advice
  - Provide job-search advice or training
  - Ensure active and efficient job-search
- Provide credit or grants/stipends connected to job-search and job-acceptance (e.g., transport, child-care)

Type of intervention support
- Job placement/intermediation services
- Job counselling/job search assistance/mentoring
- Financial assistance for job search
Subsidized employment

Outcomes

- Increased probability of (formal, well-regulated) employment beyond the programme duration
- Reduced time to find job/shorter unemployment duration
- Increased ability to retain a job/longer job-duration
- Better quality of employment (contract type, hours worked, salary)
- Increased earnings or consumption

Outputs

- More positive attitudes towards employment/increased incentives to apply or to work
- Development of a work ethic and work habits
- Increased technical skills and work experience
- Incentives to continue education
- Participant regain labour market contact/integrate jobseekers into networks
- Improved sense of social participation and opportunities
- Improved social skills

Activities

- Linking beneficiaries to subsidized employment in private enterprises
- Matching unemployed to financed public works in infrastructure development projects
- Matching unemployed to financed public work in community and services projects

Type of intervention/support

- Intermediation
- Public works in infrastructure development projects
- Social development/community works and services projects
Annex II: Selected references on methodological guidance and existing evidence

Methodological guidance


Cross-cutting evidence


Skills training programmes

- Groh, M., Krishnan, N., McKenzie, D., & Vishwanath, T. (2012). Soft skills or hard cash? The impact of training and wage subsidy programs on female youth employment in Jordan. The Impact of Training and Wage Subsidy Programs on Female Youth Employment in Jordan (July 1,


Enterprise development interventions:


Employment services:


- Osman, A. (2014). Occupational choice under credit and information constraints. Link: https://b3eda0643a390084a0b3e5a405bfeb77566311b2.googledrive.com/host/0B_P10kKQeC7raUNCOWNkQ05YOUU/Occupational_Choice_Under_Credit_and_Information_Constraints.pdf

Subsidized public or private sector employment:
ANNEX III: THE FUND'S EVALUATION PRINCIPLES

Definitions:

Impact evaluation (IE) assesses the changes that can be attributed to a particular intervention, such as a project, programme or policy. In contrast to outcome monitoring, which tracks and examines whether targets have been achieved, an IE is structured to answer the question: how would participants’ well-being have changed if the intervention had not been undertaken? This involves a counterfactual analysis, that is, “a comparison between what actually happened and what would have happened in the absence of the intervention.”

Cost benefit analysis involves weighing the total expected costs against the total expected benefits of one or more actions in order to gauge the efficiency of the intervention.

Evaluation Design:

• A range of methodological options exist to build a counterfactual. These options include both experimental and quasi experimental designs. Further information is provided at http://go.worldbank.org/7Mj4NUSKE10.

• The most interesting IEs provide both qualitative and quantitative evidence (i.e. use a mixed method approach to data collection). Qualitative data collection techniques include focus groups and key informant interviews.

• The basis of a quality IE revolves around four key inputs: (1) a logical results chain that connects inputs to outcomes and specifies indicators for measurement, (2) a clearly defined evaluation question which serves as the research hypothesis, (3) an appropriate strategy for identifying the counterfactual and (4) appropriate techniques for collecting robust data. The four key inputs will serve as the basis for the learning agenda and the development of the evaluation plans during the Evaluation Clinics.

Costs:

Experience suggests that the costs of conducting IEs can be high. The initial design and data collection make up for the lion share of an evaluation budget, where data collection costs can easily reach 80% of the total evaluation budget. The Fund for Evaluation in Youth Employment seeks to provide technical and financial support so that also organizations with smaller budgets can produce evidence of what works. Good quality IEs can also be designed and kick-started with smaller budgets since additional fundraising is more likely to be successful when a good design is in place.

Communicating results:

• As important to the production of new evidence, how evaluations will communicate the results of their evaluation should be clearly addressed. This should include dissemination via events, workshop, and websites. It is also envisioned that each completed evaluation will produce “a brief”, which is a simple, easy to read report on the major outcomes, challenges, and lessons learned from the evaluation.
• Engaging policy makers is an important part of dissemination. Project teams should make attempts to involve policy and government stakeholders in conducting evaluations thereby ensuring an “authorizing environment” has been created.
CONTACT

Youth Employment Programme
International Labour Organization
4 route des Morillons
CH-1211 Genève 22
Switzerland
Website: www.ilo.org/taqeem
Email: taqeem@ilo.org