

# HIGH-LEVEL EVALUATION (HLE) PROTOCOL FOR DWCP EVALUATION

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## INTRODUCTION

This Protocol describes the processes that should be followed when conducting High Level Evaluations (HLE) for Decent Work Country Programmes. The Protocol will provide country tripartite constituents with an understanding of how the HLE is to be carried out, how they will work with the HLE evaluation team and how they can provide support.

It is designed to guide Evaluators, from EVAL in the ILO, national evaluators from the country in which the evaluation is being undertaken, Country Programme staff, and international external evaluators, in working together to support HLEs.

### What are HLEs?

High Level Evaluations are governance level evaluations that aim to generate insights into organizational level performance within the context of the results-based management system. Findings from HLE contribute to high level decision making on policies and strategies, and accountability. Senior management and the Governing Body are involved in identifying priorities for HLE, determining the timing and intended uses of each evaluation. To this end a process of informal consultations including governments, through regional coordinators, and the secretariats of the Employers' and Workers' groups on the topics for high-level strategic evaluations and their terms of reference will be organized annually.

The Protocol contains six sections:

- **Context** - the ILOs approach to HLE in DWCP is noted.
- **Planning** - the purpose and areas for evaluation are identified and the TOR designed, and the Evaluation Team recruited.
- **Implementation** – the period in which the evaluation is carried out.
- **Analysis** - areas of consideration for the analysis.
- **Format** – the reporting headings and procedure.
- **Follow-up** - follow-up responsibilities.

## 1. CONTEXT

### 1.1 DECENT WORK COUNTRY PROGRAMMES

Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) have been established as the main vehicle for delivery of ILO support to countries. DWCPs have two basic objectives: i) to promote decent work as a key component of national development strategies; and ii) to organize ILO knowledge, instruments, advocacy and cooperation at the service of tripartite constituents in a results-based framework.

The DWCPs constitute the main implementation strategy for the operationalization of the ILO's decent work agenda in close coordination and collaboration with national tripartite constituents. It provides a blueprint to implement an integrated country programme that is relevant to national tripartite priorities with specific outcomes that link upward to the ILO strategic programme framework. The DWCP is the product of a tripartite participatory process that ensures relevance with the national decent work agenda and coherence with the [strategic pillars](#) listed below, as well as with gender equality and other crosscutting objectives integrated.

**Creating jobs** – an economy that generates opportunities for investment, entrepreneurship, skills development, job creation and sustainable livelihoods.

**Guaranteeing rights at work** – to obtain recognition and respect for the rights of workers. All workers, and in particular disadvantaged or poor workers, need representation, participation, and laws that work for their interests.

**Extending social protection** – to promote both inclusion and productivity by ensuring that women and men enjoy working conditions that are safe, allow adequate free time and rest, take into account family and social values, provide for adequate compensation in case of lost or reduced income and permit access to adequate healthcare.

**Promoting social dialogue** – involving strong and independent workers' and employers' organizations is central to increasing productivity, avoiding disputes at work, and building cohesive societies.

## 1.2 ILO PRINCIPLES FOR EVALUATION

The Office is committed to ensuring the credibility, impartiality and independence of evaluation at the ILO as mandated by the Governing Body documents: GB 294/PFA/8/4 November 2005, GB.310/PFA/4/1 (rev), and March 2011 and summarized in the ILO's policy guidelines for results-based evaluations, March 2012. To this end, the Office is supported by the following core principles:

- Adherence to international good practice. The ILO evaluation policy will be consistent with internationally accepted evaluation norms, standards and good practices, and will harmonize with the United Nations family in the context of results-based management (RBM) approaches. The Office will apply international good practices in the appropriate manner or seek to develop new guidelines, drawing lessons from existing evaluation experiences, norms and standards.
- Upholding the ILO mandate and mission. The ILO evaluation approach and methods will reflect our tripartite Organization and its focus on social justice, and its normative and technical mandate.
- Ensuring professionalism. Evaluations will be undertaken by qualified technical experts and evaluators. Both external and internal evaluators will adhere to the highest ethical and technical standards, apply methodological rigour and respond to Evaluation norms and standards existing within United Nations system organizations, the OECD/DAC evaluation principles, the evaluation policies of the international financial institutions and of the European Union. Regardless of their form or methodology, evaluation reports will provide critical assessment and an independent perspective, be issue-focused, informative, and propose actionable follow-up.
- Transparency and learning. Evaluations will be conducted using a transparent process and results made available to all parties concerned. Evaluation findings and recommendations will be disseminated to constituents, donors and other agencies concerned. Evaluations

carried out by the Office will enable the incorporation of findings into the ILO's decision-making process and support organizational learning.

- **Independence of process.** The ILO will ensure separation of evaluation responsibility from line management functions for policies, programmes and projects, and select evaluators according to agreed criteria to avoid any potential conflict of interest.

### 1.3 INVOLVING THE TRIPARTITE CONSTITUENTS

- The tripartite constituents comprise representatives from Member States Government bodies, Employees' Organisations and Employers' Organisations. This tripartite, working with the ILO, makes for a unique forum in which the governments and the social partners of the economy of its Member States can freely and openly debate and elaborate labour standards and policies.
- The tripartite constituents should be fully engaged with HLEs at the earliest opportunity: with clear information on how the process will be scheduled; how they will be involved; what will be their responsibilities; and, any agreements on the disclosure of information and confidentiality, as required.
- HLE Evaluation teams will work closely with the tripartite constituents.

#### Key considerations for involving national tripartite constituents

- ✓ National tripartite constituents (government, workers' and employers' organisations) are notified of the evaluation early in the process. This will increase ownership of the evaluation responsibilities and build mutual accountability for the results.
- ✓ Early notification will enable tripartite constituents to identify and appoint focal persons to assist the evaluation team.
- ✓ Sufficient notification will also allow time for tripartite constituents to ensure a clear understanding of the scope and purpose of the decent work country programme evaluation and ensure gender and technically balanced representation of key stakeholders from each constituent group.
- ✓ The exact timing of the evaluation will be a matter of discussion amongst the relevant parties taking into account country seasons, holidays, national development planning, financial year ends and cultural and social events as well as matters arising from the projects and programme cycles.

### 1.4 INVOLVING OTHER ILO STAKEHOLDERS AND BENEFICIARIES

Stakeholders are defined as internal ILO departments and units relevant to the DWCP being evaluated or external development partners such as: representatives of other UN Agencies; bilateral development partners; implementation agencies; and, relevant NGOs. Beneficiaries are those individuals and groups who gain ultimate benefit of the DWCP outputs and outcomes.

- A Senior Evaluation Officer should undertake a stakeholder analysis in relation to the DWCP based on the programme and project documentation; and in consultation with the country and regional offices.
- The stakeholder analysis should include both programme and project stakeholders national tripartite constituents and, to the extent possible, beneficiaries.
- Implications for the evaluation questions, the budget needs, expertise of consultants, background information, and methodological approach may be drawn from a stakeholder analysis.
- The engagement of stakeholders, national tripartite constituents and beneficiaries in evaluation can create transparency, knowledge, credibility, and ownership of the findings. Evaluation results have greater relevance to stakeholders and beneficiaries and recommendations are more likely to be followed up.

**Reference documents:** [ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation](#)

**Guidance Note 7:** [Stakeholder participation in ILO evaluations](#)

## 2. PLANNING

The planning and careful preparation of a HLE for a DWCP is crucial for good implementation and reporting. The time allocation for planning is much longer than for implementation so it is important to use that time well by preparing as much as possible before implementation. Good planning focuses on deciding, prior to implementation, about: what is to be done; when it will be done; who will be involved; and, how it will be carried out. The implementation will have limited time so as much as possible should be prepared in advance.

### 2.1 SELECTION OF A HIGH-LEVEL EVALUATION

- High Level Evaluations are chosen from a rolling three-year programme of work that will have been presented to the Governing Body (GB) and which is reviewed annually.
- Senior managers and members of GB, the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) and ILO Regional Office (RO) will be involved in identifying priorities for evaluations.
- Regional offices may also identify and suggest topics for independent evaluations as part of their work in supporting improvements in country offices.
- Evaluations can also be recommended based on their topical or background contribution to recurrent discussions or policy debates.
- Following the decision of the GB, the Director of the Evaluation Unit (EVAL) will assign the DWCP evaluation to one EVAL Senior Evaluation Officer who will develop:
  - a concept paper;
  - the evaluation terms of reference; and,
  - the composition of the evaluation team which will include an international independent evaluator, national independent evaluator, and research assistants.

## 2.2 DETERMINE THE PURPOSE AND SCOPE

A DWCP evaluation will cover the entire work of the ILO objectives stated in the planned DWCP priorities and outcomes for the specific country and time period being evaluated. How these objectives are linked and contribute to the objectives stated in each of the Strategic Outcomes of the ILO's Strategic Programme and Framework stated in the Programme and Budget (P&B) will also be included.

The EVAL Senior Evaluation Officer will further determine the purpose and scope of the evaluation in consultation with internal and external stakeholders, such as regional and country offices and tripartite constituents. The DWCP evaluation will include regional and national projects, partnerships and direct country office initiatives that fall within the stated priorities.

**Key questions for determining the purpose and scope are:**

- Why undertake an evaluation?
- Why at this specific time?
- What should the evaluation cover?

**How are the evaluation findings to be used?**

- Purpose to be considered may include:
- specific areas of concern with the programme components that need understanding;
- the context of the programme as part of a wider/regional programme being evaluated;
- as part of a normative cyclical evaluation such as the end of a funding or time period.

**Scope to be considered may include:**

- the period of time covered by the DWCP being evaluated;
- the geographical area covered by the DWCP;
- the DWCP priorities and outcomes;
- the national tripartite constituents' priorities and assessments;
- the assessment and observation of internal and external stakeholders as well as beneficiaries; and
- the DWCP implementation strategy and M&E plan, including those for the TC projects and technical assistance activities used as the means of action toward the achievement of the DWCP priority outcomes.

**Use** A description of how the findings are to be used, and by whom, will help in further preparation.

## 2.3 EVALUATION MANAGEMENT ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Senior Evaluation Officer from EVAL assigned to the DWCP evaluation will be responsible for: planning the evaluation, writing the Terms of References (TORs), identify the composition and skills needed in the evaluation team, manage the selection of the independent evaluation team members and also act as a leader of the evaluation team. The EVAL senior evaluation officer reports to and coordinates all evaluation matters with the EVAL Director who in turn notifies ILO Senior Management, country office and relevant tripartite constituents of the planned evaluation.

Ensuring the integrity of the evaluation process will be the responsibility of EVAL and the designated Senior Evaluation Officer. The Office has issued directions and procedures for ensuring

transparency and independence of the evaluation function in line with international good practice. Among practices to be followed are: (i) separation of evaluation responsibility from line management functions for programmes and projects; (ii) limiting management influence over the terms of reference, scope of the evaluation, and selection of evaluators; (iii) transparency and clarity regarding the evaluation process; and (iv) involvement of constituents and others, as appropriate, in the planning and reporting processes. (See IGDS Numbers [8](#), [74](#), and [75](#))

**EVAL will be responsible for providing the following information to team members:**

- ✓ Governing Body Documents ([GB 294/PFA/8/4](#) Nov 2005, [GB.310/PFA/4/1 \(rev\)](#), Mar 2011 and summarized in the ILO's policy guidelines for results-based evaluations, Mar 2012.)
- ✓ Institutional Guidance Documents providing comprehensive and detailed statements, including principles, procedure and [guidelines](#), of the policy that the Director-General decided to follow with regard to the application of the relevant rules in respect to the ILO's evaluation function (IGDS Numbers [8](#), [74](#), and [75](#))
- ✓ [Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System](#) – UNEG
- ✓ [Quality Standards for Development Evaluation](#) – OECD

**The country office will be responsible for providing information, including:**

- ✓ Country Programme Proposal
- ✓ Relevant project documents – DWCP M&E and Implementation Plans, Country Programme Reviews or internal evaluations, and DWCP progress reports
- ✓ Monitoring and Evaluation reports on country and regional projects (i.e. project proposals, logic models, budgets and partnership arrangements) for the period planned for the HLE
- ✓ Relevant country development plans, strategies and priorities
- ✓ National Tripartite Constituents and DWCP stakeholder contacts
- ✓ Relevant DWCP summary evaluation reports including lessons learned
- ✓ Programme and Budget for the Biennium (current)

**Access to information, confidentiality and disclosure of evaluation result**

ILO Officials are expected to fully respect the confidential nature of draft evaluation reports and to strictly follow the guidelines set down for handling such documents. Managers are expected to facilitate the evaluation process and to ensure that it is not impeded in any way.

Within the agreed terms of reference for the evaluation, evaluators shall be independent and have sole responsibility for evaluations.

To carry out their functions effectively, evaluators may need to interview staff, and have access to all relevant Office documents. Staff at all levels is expected to cooperate fully with evaluators and to take all necessary steps to ensure timely access to requested information.

Final evaluation reports are disseminated in accordance with ILO policy on public information disclosure. In addition, all evaluation information is stored in a central repository of evaluation documentation to ensure transparency and accessibility.

*IGDS 75 (version1) 31 March 2009*



## 2.4 ASSESS THE EVALUABILITY

- The Senior Evaluation Officer will undertake an assessment of the evaluability of the proposed DWCP:
  - The DWCP proposal and the accompanying logic model should be reviewed
  - The ILO outcomes that contribute to the country programme priorities should be identified
  - The consistency of these priorities with the Member State's priorities and the UNDAF country priorities should be checked for alignment
  - Where individual projects have been based on specific identified problems; these should be identified
- Consider the potential for evaluating alignment at two levels:
  - Where the individual projects' outcomes can be aligned as a contribution to higher level objectives
  - Where DWCP priorities can be aligned with Member States and UNDAF priorities
    - Sufficient programme documentation should be in place to support an assessment of evaluability.
    - The original programme design document should be assessed to determine whether the hierarchy of objectives, indicators, baseline data, underlying assumptions and risk mitigation strategies have been established.
    - The Senior Evaluation Officer should establish to what extent the programme and projects' monitoring and evaluation systems are defined and have been used.
    - DWCP projects will have been subjected to monitoring and, depending on their individual project cycles, some evaluation.

**Reference documents:** [\*ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation\*](#)

**Guidance Note 11** – [\*Using the Evaluability Assessment Tool\*](#)

**Guidance Note 12** – [\*Dimensions of the Evaluability Instrument\*](#)

## 2.5 IDENTIFY LESSONS LEARNED FROM PREVIOUS EVALUATIONS

- The Senior Evaluation Officer will review lessons learned from previous DWCP evaluations and from DWCP Meta Evaluations by EVAL in relation to the proposed scope and rationale for the current evaluation. Consideration on how these affect the proposed evaluation should be formulated.
- Lessons learned from country project evaluations should be identified. These may influence the evaluation design and the evaluation questions, and may contribute to the preparation of the evaluators' Terms of Reference (TOR).

## 2.6 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Terms of Reference (TOR) is a key document in the evaluation and forms a substantive part of the contractual arrangements with external evaluators. The TOR presents the purpose, scope, and objectives of the evaluation; the methodology to be used; the resources and time allocated; reporting requirements; and any other expectations regarding the evaluation process and products. The EVAL Director, Senior Management and Tripartite Constituents and the evaluation team



carrying out the evaluation agree to the document. This document can alternatively be called “evaluation mandate”.

During the drafting of the TOR the EVAL Senior Evaluation Officer prepares and writes a draft TOR and consults with the ILO internal stakeholders (sector specialists and programme managers) at Head Quarters (HQ) Country and Regional Offices and with national tripartite constituents.

### 2.6.1 THE OUTLINE HEADINGS OF THE TOR:

- ✓ Introduction and rationale for evaluation
  - ✓ Past Cooperation and Lessons Learned
  - ✓ Brief background on project and context
  - ✓ Purpose, scope and clients of evaluation
  - ✓ Key evaluation questions
  - ✓ Methodology to be followed
  - ✓ Main outputs: inception report, draft and final reports
  - ✓ Management arrangements, work plan, formatting requirements and time frame
- There is a rating formula which can be used to assure quality of the TOR.
  - ‘Checklist 5: Preparing the evaluation report’ should be annexed to the TOR as essential information for evaluation team.
  - A clear description of the rating methodology should be provided with the TOR.
  - Sections 1-4 shall derive from the preliminary planning stages described above. Sections 5- 8 shall be developed when drafting the TORs. Below are some of the key elements to be considered when drafting these sections.

### 2.6.2 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The ILO evaluation questions are developed as part of the TORs and should reflect ILO evaluation policy and international norms and standards and shall be guided by the following evaluation criteria: relevance; efficiency; effectiveness; impact and sustainability. While these criteria should always be applied evaluators are at liberty to add additional criteria, if appropriate. Consideration should be given to including the criteria of ‘coherence’ as it provides a framework for addressing higher level evaluation questions. The framework for the questions is:

- ✓ Are we doing the right thing?
  - ✓ Are we doing it right?
  - ✓ Are there better ways of achieving the results?
- The focus of HLE questions should be on the ‘how’ and ‘why’ of the accumulated strategic influence of a number of projects and other interventions’ results; the influence on tripartite constituents and relevant government bodies; operational circumstances; and, the ‘so what’ questions on the difference made or likelihood of doing so.
  - It is a requirement in ILO that evaluation questions are posed in such a way that information in relation to gender criteria can be disaggregated.
  - Questions relating to cross cutting issues should be integral, as much as possible. Social justice and environment might be considered for all evaluations in addition to those areas related to the specific subject of the projects and DWCP.
  - Questions in relation to the DWCP outcomes and priorities should be formulated under the DAC criteria headings.

### 2.6.3 METHODOLOGY TO BE FOLLOWED

- The methodology is developed in line with the evaluation approach chosen. The methodology includes specification and justification of the evaluation design and the techniques for data collection and analysis. The selected methodology answers the evaluation questions using credible evidence. A clear distinction is made between the different result levels (intervention logic containing a means-to-end hierarchy stating input, output, outcome, impact).
- Indicators for measuring achievement of the objectives are validated according to generally accepted criteria such as SMART or more precisely: quantity (how many/much?); time (by when?); target group (who?); and, quality (how good?). Alternatively intermediate steps such as milestones can be used to chart progress of an objective over time.
- When analyzing data it should be disaggregated to clarify any differences between sexes and disadvantaged groups.
- The TORs should describe evaluation techniques (i.e. desk reviews of DWCP and project documents, interviews with national tripartite constituents and key stakeholders, field visits and statistical analysis, if required) the evaluation team will use to answer the evaluation questions.
- The TORs should also specify the scope of the field in-country missions, clearly identifying those to be included (i.e. ILO Country Office and tripartite constituents at the national, state and local levels).
- The TORs shall also indicate the types of briefings and workshops to be organized to discuss and transmit preliminary and final findings to all tripartite constituents, ILO staff and key stakeholders.

#### Presenting of evaluation findings

- At the conclusion of the field mission, a stakeholder briefing shall be conducted with National tripartite constituents representatives, Country Office Management, Sector and Programme Specialists and project managers to present the evaluation team's initial impressions and preliminary findings.
- Upon completion of the final draft report, a workshop with national tripartite constituents, ILO Regional and Country Management, Decent Work Country Team Specialists, Project Managers and key stakeholders will be undertaken.

### 2.6.4 MAIN OUTPUTS: INCEPTION REPORT, DRAFT AND FINAL REPORT

The TOR shall clearly describe the main outputs with a realistic timetable that meets the established deadlines for documents to be presented to the GB.

### 2.6.5 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS, WORK PLAN, FORMATTING REQUIREMENTS AND TIME FRAME

The TOR must clearly describe the management arrangements. EVAL is responsible for:

- ✓ The evaluation governance structure to safeguard credibility, inclusiveness, and transparency.
- ✓ The evaluation coordination/management which organizes the evaluation process and is responsible for day-to-day administration. Depending on the size and complexity of the evaluation, these functions may be combined or separate.

The draft TOR is circulated for comment, within a specified time period, to:

- ✓ Senior management, Regional and Country Directors, Tripartite constituents and DWTs.
- ✓ Project or programme manager and key staff.
- ✓ Global, regional and/or national constituents, as appropriate.
- ✓ Technical support at headquarters.
- ✓ Technical specialist operating in the field.

This provides the opportunity to work together in creating a common understanding of the purpose and scope of the evaluation, the management of the evaluation process and identify shared responsibilities. This would clarify expectations and ensure ownership and evaluation results and follow-up on recommendations.

#### Process for approving TOR

- ✓ The EVAL Senior Evaluation Officer circulates a draft of the TOR among ILO internal stakeholders for feedback and incorporates comments into the final draft TOR, as appropriate, and passes the TOR to the Director of EVAL for final approval.
- ✓ The EVAL Director shares the final draft of the TOR with ILO Senior Management, Regional Director, Country Director and Representatives of the Tripartite Constituent Groups.
- ✓ The approved TOR is sent to the same group of stakeholders who participated in commenting on the draft.

**Guidance Note 3** - [Evaluation Lessons Learned and Emerging Good Practices](#)

**Guidance Note 7:** [Stakeholder participation in ILO evaluations](#)

**Checklist 1-** [Writing the TOR](#)

**Checklist 2 -** [Rating the TOR](#)

**Checklist 5 -** [Preparing the evaluation report](#)

### 2.7 BUDGET FOR DWCP HIGH LEVEL EVALUATION

- DWCP evaluations are financed from EVAL's regular budget which covers: (i) contractual costs and travel of independent evaluators (one international and one national), research

assistants, and (ii) travel expenses for the EVAL Senior Evaluation Officer. Regional Offices are expected to cover costs related to logistical support for the evaluation team during the evaluation mission and national constituents' workshop.

- The EVAL Director will decide on the actual budget required by each High Level Evaluation, taking into account the scope and complexity of the evaluation. The Senior Evaluation Officer will be responsible for proper management of the evaluation budgets.

## 2.8 EVALUATION TEAM

In accordance with internationally accepted practices, independent evaluation involve a mix of external consultants and an internal Senior Evaluation Officer from EVAL who are independent from any link to the specific programme being evaluated. In this way, the Office will be able to make judicious use of its institutional memory of previous evaluations and provide valuable insights to the evaluation work based on knowledge of the ILO context and its normative and tripartite dimensions.

### Key elements to consider in selection of evaluation team members

- ✓ DWCP evaluation teams comprise of the (EVAL), an independent national evaluator and an independent international evaluator who work with the national tripartite constitutions and the regional office.
- ✓ Team members shall not have previous or current involvement – or offers of prospective employment – in the ILO programme or projects being evaluated or personal links to the people involved in managing the programme/projects (not a family member, friend or close former colleague).
- ✓ The evaluation team should respect human rights and gender equality in all its dealings at all levels.
- ✓ All HLE teams should seek a gender-balanced composition.
- ✓ The team should have the technical, regional, linguistic and professional expertise to perform the necessary evaluation tasks.
- ✓ The search for consultants should be an open process, with several candidates being considered from a shortlist, against the criteria included in the TOR.
- ✓ The Senior Evaluation Officer is responsible for issuing an open and widely disseminated call for expressions of interest and develops a short list based on pre-established consultants ranking criteria.
- ✓ The decision on the selection of independent evaluators is made by EVAL

The members of the evaluation team possess a mix of evaluative skills and thematic knowledge. Gender balance is considered and the team includes professionals from partner countries or regions concerned. A transparent and open procurement procedure is used for selecting the evaluation team.

**Guidance Note 4:** [Integrating gender equality in monitoring and evaluation of projects](#)

**Guidance Note 5:** [Using the ILO/IPEC consultant database](#)

**Guidance Note 6:** [Identifying, selecting and managing evaluation consultants](#)

**Checklist 3:** [Writing the inception report](#) and **Checklist 5:** [Preparing the evaluation report](#)

## 2.9 SCOPING MISSION, ESTABLISHING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- EVAL will have sufficient time to induct tripartite constituents in the evaluation approach and processes and to arrange the schedule of work.
- Consideration should be given to identifying, and offering, any suitable short training courses on Results-based evaluation to tripartite constituents and staff from the country and regional offices prior to starting the evaluation.

## 3. IMPLEMENTATION

The DWCP high level evaluation is undertaken in country by an evaluation team within a defined number of days. The team will be supported by the regional office. The country office staff will be expected to prepare all the relevant documentation prior to the evaluation team's arrival in country and whenever possible should conduct a Country Programme Review somewhere mid-point in the implementation of the DWCP. The evaluation will take into account all means of action used in the achievement of the DWCP Outcomes (i.e. technical advice services, TC projects, RBSA activities aimed at supporting country programme outcomes (CPOs).

### To-do Checklist for evaluation team

- ✓ The evaluation team will meet with Country Office Staff and Tripartite Constituents and establish the evaluation working arrangements.
- ✓ The evaluation team will arrange for a joint meeting/workshop for tripartite constituents and country office staff to induct them in how the evaluation is to be implemented and the schedule of work.
- ✓ The evaluation team, with the tripartite constituents and country office, will arrange the involvement of other stakeholders and beneficiaries and make the necessary arrangements.

The HLE establishes the coherence of the results of individual projects and other CO initiatives' results and their impact on stakeholders to implement best practice and policy for decent work. Individual projects rarely achieve impact and sustainability, therefore coherence of a number of projects focused on the same high level objectives is of crucial concern to HLE evaluations.

**Reference documents:** [ILO Decent Work Country Programme: A Guidebook](#) (version 3)  
[ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation](#)

**Guidance Note 1:** [Monitoring and Evaluation of Decent Work Country Programme](#)

## 3.1 INCEPTION REPORT

- The inception report is listed as an output in the TOR and its acceptance by ILO will constitute an agreement to proceed with the evaluation. The evaluation team should use the preparation of the inception report to test the evaluation focus and methods, the evaluation questions, the assessment criteria, that there is a balance between quantitative and qualitative data collection, and that there is sufficient rigour in the approaches to analysis.

- The team should also check that the methods will draw on both subjective and objective sources of data to provide a balanced and insightful report. This is the opportunity for the evaluation team to suggest revisions, if required, and prepare a detailed work plan based on the TOR.
- The inception report is prepared by the evaluation team at the very beginning of the in-country mission and sent to EVAL at HQ. The EVAL Director is responsible for reviewing and responding to the inception report and finally agreeing with its content. This triggers the final preparation and permits the evaluation team to undertake the evaluation.

**Checklist 3:** [\*Writing the Inception Report\*](#)

### 3.2 EVALUATION START-UP

- The data collected must answer all the questions detailed in the TOR, cross cutting issues are expected to be included and if any revisions to the questions were made these are documented.
- The data to be collected during an evaluation and the selection of data collection methods depends on several factors, including:
  - the evidence needed to best answer the evaluation questions;
  - data availability and location;
  - what is most appropriate to generate useful findings and address the evaluation criteria;
  - the feasibility of data collection based on time and resource availability, and the local context;
  - location and accessibility to stakeholders.
- To strengthen the credibility and usefulness of evaluation results, a mix of data sources collected through multiple methods is advised. A combination of methods will establish data accuracy and facilitate its interpretation. This use of mixed methods and data from mixed sources is called triangulation and defined by the OECD/DAC as “the use of three or more theories, sources or types of information, or types of analysis to verify and substantiate an assessment”.

### 3.3 DOCUMENTARY EVIDENCE

- Documentation is an important data source; EVAL and regional and country offices should prepare these, as much as possible, prior to the evaluation team’s arrival in country.
- Document sources for examination will include:
  - the programme design document and logic model (results framework);
  - programme monitoring and evaluation reports, the performance analysis of individual projects undertaken regularly as an internal country programme review;
  - the country programme reviews which will have examined recent performance against stated outcomes, determined what has been achieved, and whether strategies being used are efficient and effective;
  - individual project M&E reports; and,
  - other relevant national and UN policy and strategy documents.

- The actual achievements against the planned targets and objectives noted in the project documents should be analysed and assessed for variance. The evaluation team should also analyse the realization of assumptions and the mitigation of risk.
- The document review will support an assessment under the DAC criteria headings of relevance, efficiency and effectiveness in relation to the delivery of output services. The achievement of outcomes and movement towards impact and sustainability against the logic modal plans are reported on.
- The document review will inform the evaluation team of alignment across and between the DWCP, UN and country policies and strategies, and will guide analysis of coherence.
- The documents reviewed by the evaluation team should be listed in the evaluation report.

### 3.4 PRIMARY DATA AND SECONDARY DATA

**Primary data** for the DWCP evaluation is the information the evaluation team observes, is collected directly from stakeholders, and/or beneficiaries about their first-hand experience with the intervention. This data will inform the DAC criteria questions under the headings of relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability.

- This data is collected through surveys, meetings, focus group discussions, interviews or other methods that involve direct contact with the respondents. Deeper understanding of observed changes and the factors that contributed to change can, and where necessary should, be facilitated.
- A key focus is on the realization of policy, strategy or action by stakeholders as outcome consequences of the results of the DWCP's delivered output services.
- The DWCP results framework and projects' logic models provide important basic data against which causal planned and actual relationships can be analysed.
- Names of respondents and their organisations should be listed in the evaluation report.

**Secondary data** is data that has been collected by the ILO, other individuals or agencies for purposes other than those of the evaluation. It may consist of documentary evidence that has direct relevance for the purposes of the evaluation: nationally and internationally published reports; economic indicators; project or programme plans; evaluations and other records; country strategic plans; and research reports. A record of all secondary data sources used should be listed in the evaluation report.

**Checklist 4:** [Validating methodologies](#)

### 3.5 DATA QUALITY

- In some cases, the evaluation may be limited by the absence of baseline data, e.g. the description and documentation of the specific situation in the area targeted for change prior to the ILO intervention.
- In other cases, there may be a lack of data relative to the evolution of outcomes for a comparison group, which could make an assessment of the effectiveness of interventions and the identification of causal links particularly difficult.



- The evaluation team is required to record data sources and show evidence trails as supporting documentation for the final evaluation report.
- Where baseline surveys and studies have not been undertaken or are not of the required quality, the evaluation team should identify how data should be collected in order to secure a reasonable proxy for the assessment of initial conditions.
- A clear distinction is made between the levels of objectives in the logic model, means to end hierarchies, and the related stakeholders and beneficiaries targeted at each level. Different methods of data collection are therefore likely to be used and each should be critically validated according the indicators and sources of evidence.

**Checklist 4:** [Validating methodologies](#)

## 4. ANALYSIS

DWCP are integrated programmes and as such work in influencing government and employers' and employees' organisations to adapt best practice and policy. It is very difficult to attribute credit to the ILOs work alone.

Within RBM the theory of change hierarchy provides a framework within which to analyse each level of objectives (output, outcome, impact and sustainability) both separately and accumulatively. Did each objective succeed? Did the accumulation of objectives succeed? Were there gaps that caused weakness or were there too many objectives that overwhelmed the intervention? Did the objectives solve the problem and/or achieve the stated outcome and is the outcome leading to impact?

The analysis should also identify unintended results, either positive or negative, that future programmes can learn from.

### 4.1 DATA ANALYSIS

The evaluation team will undertake the analysis of the data collected, and as a team be responsible for the conclusions drawn. If, however, there is a dissenting voice this should be noted in the evaluation report and recorded. The evaluation team should:

- ✓ analyse the actual achievements against the planned targets and objectives and assess variance, if any, between them;
- ✓ identify and analyse assumptions to inform on the programme design subsequent management of the implementation and the achievement of objectives;
- ✓ include the analysis of the realization, or otherwise, of the assumptions against which objectives in the logic models will have been made and the mitigation of risk designed;
- ✓ assess relevance, efficiency and effectiveness in relation to the delivery of services;
- ✓ determine the achievement of outputs against the logic model;
- ✓ try to determine the likely achievements of outcome (when stakeholders make change as a result of services they receive from the DWCP);

- ✓ assess coherence between, and across projects and other interventions within DWCP, in relation to strategic and policy outcome level objectives;
  - ✓ assess, as far as possible, the impact, or likely impact, the DWCP is or is likely to make in the near future; and,
  - ✓ assess the level of mainstreaming of outcomes in partner organisations, whether as policy or practice, to determine likely sustainability of achievements.
- DWCP evaluation analysis should use quantitative analysis to assess the projects' results and qualitative analysis to focus on the higher level programme strategy.
  - Assumptions provide a rich source of explanation of why an intervention objective succeeded or failed, and supplies evidence for lessons learned.
  - All data, documents, statistics, interview answers and observations should be kept and made available for inspection.

## 4.2 TRIANGULATION OF DATA

- Triangulation overcomes the evaluation bias that comes from single information sources, the use of single methods or single observations.
- Triangulation helps validate evaluation findings and relates to whether the findings of the evaluation are true and certain. "True" in the sense of your findings accurately reflecting the real situation and "certain" in the sense of your findings being backed by evidence.
- Three or more sources of data are used to triangulate data analysis for a single objective. At the higher level objectives (outcomes and impact) the more sources of data that can be used to analyse the results the stronger is the evidence of conclusions and attribution.

## 4.3 RATINGS IN EVALUATION

Each DWCP Outcome shall be rated based on evaluation criteria and related questions. In ILO rating uses the DAC criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, impact and sustainability. Although rating is not an exact science it can be used to help the evaluation team conclude on their evaluation findings and provide a 'sounding board' against which readers of evaluation reports can compare their understanding and interpretation. Ratings should complement evaluation findings to the highest degree possible.

- The DAC criteria are used as the cross cutting criteria for performance rating of DWCP.
- In addition, sector specific criteria, for certain programmes, can be used.
- The ILO provides a clear approach to rating using the DAC criteria.
- Rating criteria can also be applied in relation to the specific evaluation questions.
- Response categories with six values to allow for differentiation, i.e. in a range from of 'highly

unsatisfactory’ to ‘highly satisfactory’ are used for performance based rating.

- The scale of measure used by ILO is ordinal, where the score is ranked, but without percentage of amount between the different levels of value.

**Guidance Note 8:** [\*Ratings in Evaluation\*](#)

## 5. WRITING THE EVALUATION REPORT

### 5.1 FORMAT

The DWCP Evaluation report should be brief (around 40 pages, with supporting data and analysis contained in annexes). The document itself should have nine major chapters: the first chapter should include a brief executive summary; chapter two and three should deal with diagnosis and programming; the fourth describe the methodological approach; the fifth include an analysis of the programme implementation; the sixth chapter present the results and ratings for each Outcome of the programme; the seventh present key findings and conclusions; the eighth recommendations (a maximum of ten) that have direct links to findings and are actionable within a realistic timeframe and the ninth chapter describes the lessons learned and evolving good practice.

A draft and a final version of each evaluation report must be prepared. The draft version provides stakeholders with an opportunity to give feedback prior to the preparation of the final evaluation report. All officials are expected to fully respect the confidential nature of draft evaluation reports and to strictly follow the guidelines set for handling such documents.

- The individual structure of each evaluation report will be dependent on the nature of the evaluation focus and content, however, certain elements should be addressed in every report.
- Reports should meet the ILO evaluation quality standards which are consistent with, and conform to, the UNEG norms and standards. ILO uses a standard format for evaluation reports:
  - ✓ Cover page with key intervention and evaluation data
  - ✓ 1 Executive Summary
  - ✓ 2 Brief background on the project and its logic
  - ✓ 3 Purpose, scope and clients of evaluation
  - ✓ 4 Methodology
  - ✓ 5 Review of implementation
  - ✓ 6 Presentation of findings on project performance, organized by evaluation criteria
  - ✓ 7 Conclusions
  - ✓ 8 Recommendations
  - ✓ 9 Lessons learned and good practices
  - ✓ Annexes
  - ✓ TOR, questionnaires, list of respondents, etc.

## 5.2 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Conclusions and recommendations summarize and communicate the most important evaluation findings. The evaluation team should develop conclusions and recommendations as a team.
- Conclusions are to tie together the various issues covered in the body of the report and to make comments upon the meaning of all of it. They should be a logical ending to what has been previously discussed and should not introduce any new information but should reinforce the evidence in the report and make an impact on the reader.
- Recommendations are “proposals aimed at enhancing the effectiveness, quality, or efficiency of a development intervention; at redesigning the objectives; and/or at the reallocation of resources.” (OECD/DAC 2002).
- Recommendations should be linked to the conclusions, be clear, concise, actionable, and time-bound. These concise statements are also used in the Executive Summary of the evaluation and should therefore been written as standalone statements.
- Consideration should be given to a limited number of recommendations in order to create focus for the GB and actionable by the relevant ILO focal points. There should be no more than 10 recommendations.
- The categorization of recommendations into headings helps the reader place them in terms of their interests and influence. Consideration should be given to categorizing recommendations in terms of: (i) the ILO policy and operational practice; (ii) the DWCP design, content and structure; and organizational effectiveness in the support of the design and implementation of the DWCP.

## 5.3 LESSONS LEARNED

- ILO places emphasis on lessons learned by placing them at the end of an evaluation and at the beginning of a DWCP programme design and evaluation. This cycle is a key function of evaluation and promotes learning as the key purpose of evaluation.
- Lessons learned are not the same as conclusions and must be treated differently. Conclusions, focus on the findings and results of the programme interventions – how well did the programme do at achieving its objectives?
- Lessons learned emerge when consideration is placed upon the way the programme has been designed, implemented, monitored and evaluated, the techniques, methods and approaches used - did we do it right and are we doing the right thing?
- These observations from programme experience can be translated into relevant knowledge by establishing clear causal factors and effects. They contribute to reducing or eliminating deficiencies or building and strengthening good practices.

## Key Steps for the Implementation of the DWCP Evaluation

- All DWCP Evaluations should be initiated with a round of consultations between EVAL, ILO Senior Management, Regional and Country officials. These consultations should introduce the evaluation team, clarify objectives and identify persons to be interviewed, define responsibilities of participants in the process, and identify topics for the in-depth results assessment.
- Review the TOR: the scope, methodology, questions and stakeholders to confirm or make revisions to elements of the TOR as necessary.
- The evaluation team prepares an operational evaluation plan, known as the inception report, which should be based on the TOR, and include suggested revisions to the evaluation plan, if required.
- The evaluation questions established in the TOR, and any revisions as detailed in the inception report, determine the methodology for the evaluation.
- Through the respective Country Office Director, the national tripartite constituents of the DWCP being evaluated will be asked to identify a focal person for each constituent group to support the evaluation process and develop the group's evaluative perspective on the ILO's DWCP.
- The evaluation is undertaken according to the plan: documents are reviewed and data is collected.
- The executive summary should be prepared as a standalone summary document and therefore evaluators are expected to pay attention to making it both comprehensive and short, not more than 5 pages in length.
- EVAL staff and independent international and national consultants will conduct the research needed to draft sections Chapters 1 – 4 of the evaluation. The ILO's country office will work with the evaluation team to provide data on both execution and results, providing the basic data on project objectives and the results obtained towards the achievement of the DWCP Outcomes and Priorities. EVAL will review this data and use it as the primary source material for Chapters 5 and 6 of the DWCP Evaluation.
- The fifth chapter examines DWCP results achieved for the Priorities and Outcomes agreed on by the tripartite constituents. Here the focus is on outcomes rather than outputs. Results will be examined from three different perspectives: project results, programme results and programme impact.
- Statistical results of projects should be displayed in a matrix or graphs with minimum written descriptions, consideration of separating the individual programme, or projects', description from the body of the evaluation report should be an option
- Separating the many individual projects' description from the body of the evaluation report should be an option, the results of projects can instead be aggregated, if possible, providing references for detail descriptions either as annexes or as separate project documents. The emphasis of HLE should be orientated towards analytical understanding and less towards project descriptions
- Conclusions and recommendations will be based on the analysis and data presented in the report.
- Evaluative judgments are always subjective, but to keep subjectivity to a minimum, headquarters and country offices key stakeholders, and country officials will be asked to react to these findings and recommendations.
- Management's reflection on lessons learned shall be included in the final report and GB Summary, and should be drafted so as to serve as the basis for further dialogue of the subsequent decent work country programme.
- Recommendations are best ordered in terms of low, medium or high priority.
- It may be appropriate to include recommendations based on the lessons learned. If this is the case the recommendations should be clearly categorized as such.
- Responsibility for follow-up action and timelines should be indicated where appropriate.
- Conclusions and recommendations are strengthened if the reader can clearly relate them to the evaluation report narrative, and can link them to evidence supported in the report.

- It is the insight lessons learned offer and how they can be reused by ILO in the future, rather than their number that is important.
- Trivial or obvious insights should not be included as they only ‘muddy the water’.
- It is of upmost importance if the same lesson learned is repeatedly being noted: this should be well supported when writing the final evaluation report.
- ‘Emerging good practice’ is when a lesson learned shows proven and sustainable benefits and is determined by the evaluation team to be replicable in other DWCP programmes. Emerging good practice should be distinguished from lessons learned in the report.
- EVAL has responsibility for the recording and follow-up of lessons learned; in addition the Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) is responsible for promoting institutional follow-up on lessons learned.

**Guidance Note 3:** [Evaluation lessons learned](#) **Checklist 5:** [Preparing the evaluation report](#)

#### 5.4 WORKSHOP TO REVIEW PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- Before finalizing the draft report the team communicates the preliminary findings to the tripartite constituents, partners and other stakeholders in a workshop in-country.
- The draft evaluation report findings are presented and discussed. The tripartite constituents are invited to prepare and submit a joint statement of their views in response. This statement will be included in the draft report.

#### 5.5 FINALIZING THE DRAFT REPORT

- This first draft should seek agreement among all Stakeholders both at HQ and the county office regarding matters of fact and are invited to make written comments on factual errors or omissions and invited to comment on the lessons learned presented in the first draft report. Individual comments may be sent to the Senior Evaluation Officer who will then present them to the evaluation team to take any required actions prior to finalizing the final report.
- The main outputs of the national workshop with constituents and key stakeholders are: (i) a tripartite statement on the evaluation findings, conclusions and recommendations, and (ii) management’s response and follow-up plan for the evaluation recommendations.
- On returning from conducting the national constituents’ and stakeholders workshop, the evaluation team finalizes the first draft report. It is circulated to key ILO stakeholders and the county office. In the *ILO policy guidelines for results-based evaluation* there is a clear procedure for approving the evaluation as shown in page 42.

#### 5.6 COMMUNICATING FINDINGS, DISSEMINATING THE FINAL REPORT

- The communication of the final report will be managed by EVAL which is responsible for its dissemination within ILO and to the main stakeholders in country. There may also be a need for the report to be disseminated to specific groups in the country or region.

- A plan for communicating the evaluation report should be put in place to define who may need to receive the information. EVAL should consult the stakeholder analysis undertaken at the beginning of the HLE for information on who else might receive copies of the evolution report.

## 6. FOLLOW UP

- The Evaluation Unit (EVAL) is responsible for managing the evaluation function and ensuring that the evaluation policy is competently implemented. The structure and modalities of operation of the EVAL are designed to protect its functional independence.
- The EVAL is responsible for the systematic monitoring of follow-up to evaluation recommendations that have been accepted by management and reporting on follow-up to the Governing Body. EVAL will maintain an updated follow-up matrix for each HLE and call for updates once a year until recommendations have been declared as completed.
- The Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) is responsible for advising the Director-General on the adequacy of follow-up to evaluation recommendations. The EAC reviews each follow-up date and passes judgment on the adequacy of Management's follow-up report.
- Regional Directors and Executive Directors are responsible for ensuring that the principles supporting the evaluation function are applied for all evaluations falling within their domain.
- Directors and programme managers are responsible for ensuring compliance with Office policies calling for regular self-evaluation of programmes and projects.
- Effective follow-up of evaluation reports requires the active engagement of the relevant parts of the Office and may also require the involvement of ILO constituents and other partners.

### EVALUATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- ✓ The Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC) is an internal committee that provides a mechanism to oversee the use, implementation, and follow up to lessons learned and recommendations resulting from ILO evaluation activities
- ✓ The EAC also functions as a forum for internal dialogue on the implementation of the ILO evaluation policy and strategy and, in particular, ensures that evaluations are credible and conducted in an impartial and independent way
- ✓ It may discuss the draft plan for independent evaluations and provide its recommendations to the Director-General or EVAL, as appropriate
- ✓ The EAC verifies that all independent evaluation reports are disclosed according to the ILO Policy on public information disclosure
- ✓ EVAL is responsible for reviewing the follow up on the recommendations with support from EAC
- ✓ EVAL will inform the appropriate ILO department/Country Office of recommendations and lessons learned that they can implement; and monitor progress and report to EAC