

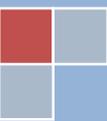
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Applying evaluative thinking
towards an effective ILO
contribution to the
implementation of the SDGs

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**International Labour Office
Evaluation Office**

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International Labour Office
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Abstract

The introduction of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) has meant that the ILO is having to look both inward and outward as it works to optimize its contribution to the SDGs through the Decent Work (DW) Agenda. It will not be ‘business as usual’ for ILO officials in going forward. But, there are many challenges to be faced with SDG implementation. Evaluative thinking, involving all ILO officials and not just Evaluators, offers a useful way to help identify where and how officials might make necessary interventions to deal directly with particular challenges. Coupled with a philosophy of adaptive management that would both recognize and alter course when change was needed, the approach aims to ensure the effective implementation of the SDGs.

1. Introduction

1. This Think Piece¹ draws on the results of an evaluative diagnostic² intended to identify the various ways that the ILO can contribute, either directly or indirectly, in the most optimal way to the sustainable development goals (SDGs) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
2. The paper presents a broad framework for identifying where and how ILO managers (and not simply trained evaluators) might employ evaluative thinking and adaptive management to support the effective implementation of the SDG in the DW agenda. In so doing, the paper points to key areas of need that might challenge ILO managers in implementing the SDGs and, for each, identifies a possible strategy or action steps and interventions that could be taken to support ILO’s contribution to the SDGs.
3. For ease of reference, section 2 provides a brief background on the various challenges that the ILO faces as it sets about to support the SDGs in a Decent Work (DW) context. Section 3 reflects on these challenges, identifying where along the SDG/DW implementation timeline they would be expected to occur and, at each point, identifies items that need to be addressed. Then, for each, the paper outlines specific activities reflective of evaluation practice and evaluative thinking that could be employed by ILO officials to deal with the respective area of challenge. The term “SDG/DW” used throughout the paper is referring to a generic connection, link or interface between the SDGs and the DW agenda, depending on context, role or link between the SDGs and the DW agenda in furthering their respective implementation.

¹ This Think Piece was prepared by Robert Lahey, an independent external consultant to the ILO who was the founding head of Canada’s Centre of Excellence for Evaluation and, over the past dozen years has served as an advisor to international agencies and governments on building results-based monitoring and evaluation capacity at program, organizational and national levels.

² The diagnostic was commissioned by ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL) over April-June 2016 and consisted of a desk review, consultations with international experts as well as on-site consultations with some 28 ILO officials in Geneva over April 11-15, 2016. An Internal ILO Evaluation Office paper on “Evaluation and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)- The Implications of the SDGs on ILO’s Results Framework – remarks from an evaluative perspective” was produced in June 2016 and used for internal advocacy and consultation purposes.

2. Background: ILO challenges and needs in contributing to the SDGs

A. *UN adoption of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development – Broad and ambitious goals and targets*

4. Like every UN agency, the ILO is having to determine where and how the implementation of the SDGs will impact its business. In essence, for ILO operations, this means:
 - A need to identify which of the 17 SDGs and associated 169 targets are relevant to the business of the ILO;
 - A determination of how ILO operations, both global and country-level, will be impacted;
 - Re-visiting the needs of national constituents, given increased expectations of SDG implementation; and
 - Recognition that new international partners/other UN agencies may be implicated in the SDG/DW Agenda and the contribution of DW to SDGs.

5. From a technical perspective, it also requires an assessment of the indicators that have been identified for each of the relevant targets and determination of whether new information needs to be collected as part of the monitoring process for management oversight, accountability and reporting purposes. Beyond the global indicator framework, more clarification is needed about the use of evaluation to provide a depth of information and analysis so that reporting and decision-making is truly ‘evidence-based’. **Chart 1** below outlines some of the broader considerations that the ILO must deal with in determining how best to contribute to the SDGs through the DW Agenda.

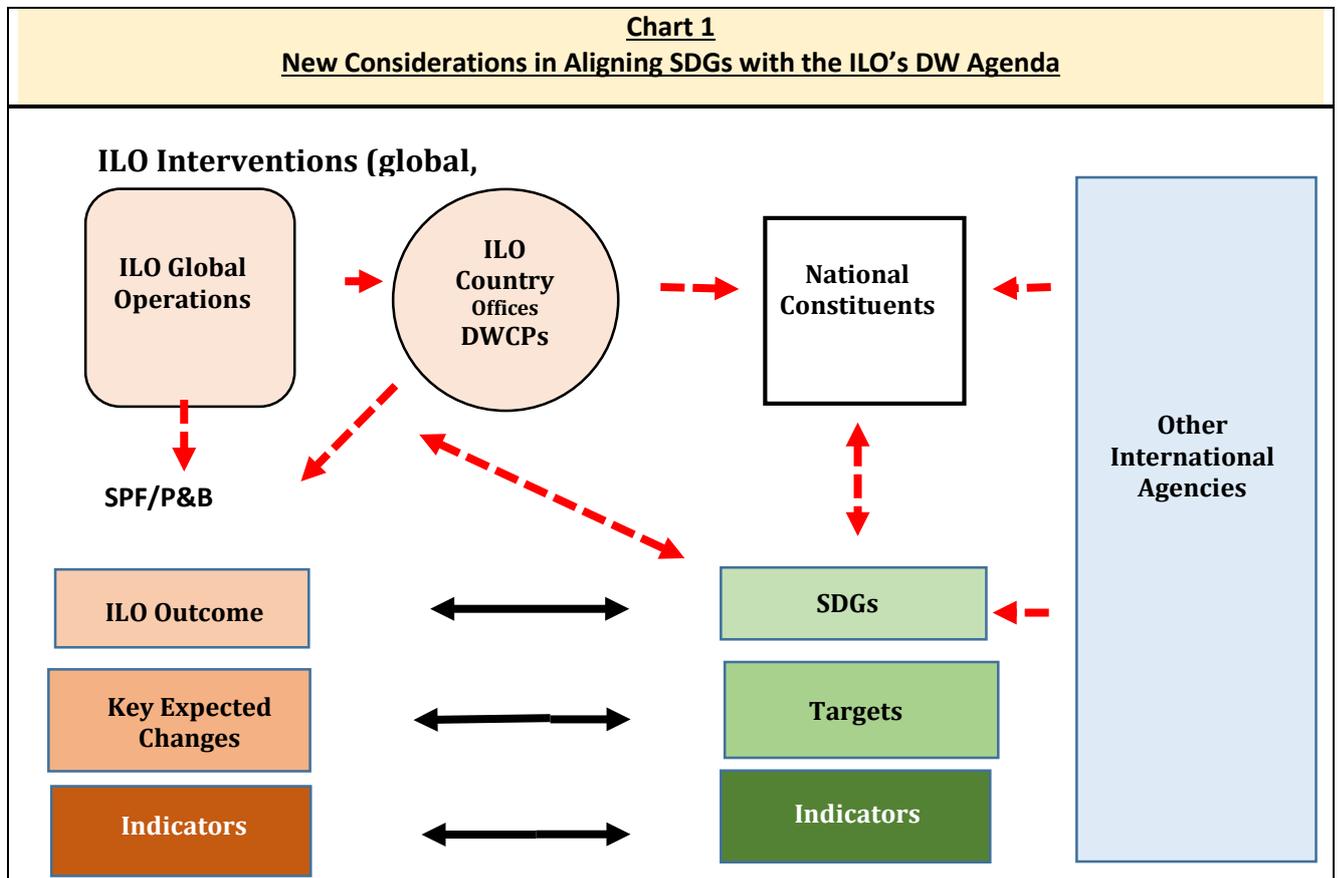
B. *Clarifying where and how the SDGs might affect the business of the ILO*

6. It is expected that SDG implementation will be an iterative process, as more experience is gained and feedback via monitoring and evaluation received from operations at HQ, regional and country levels³.

7. From an operational perspective, clarification on how the SDGs intersect with the business of the ILO and what impact this might have across all parts of the agency is critical. Such an analysis needs to make a determination of whether or not (and, if so, how) this will impact operational assumptions that underlie each of the ILO interventions – at both a global and country level.

³ The ‘ILO Implementation Plan’ for SDG implementation, issued on February 19, 2016, is described as a “first version”. See paragraphs 11-12.

8. Additionally, at a corporate level, the ILO will need to know how the SDGs relate to the ten ILO Policy Outcomes in the ILO's Biennial Programme and Budget. Preliminary evidence would suggest that the SDGs may broaden the 'reach' (or intended beneficiaries) of ILO expectations and, presumably, go beyond the traditional scope of ILO interventions in particular areas.⁴



C. A need to sort out the relationship between ILO Outcomes, SDG targets, indicators and data/information needed for monitoring, and what the ILO will be responsible for

9. It has been recognized by the group tasked with global indicator development, the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on SDG indicators (IAEG-SDGs), that: the indicators do not necessarily cover all aspects of the SDGs and the associated targets⁵; data for several SDG targets remain unavailable; targets are not always quantified; and, there is a need to address the capacity gaps in member States in order to better inform the measurement of SDG progress.

⁴ This would seem to be the case for how Policy Outcome 8 ('Unacceptable forms of work') may be mapped against the relevant SDG goals and targets # 8.7 and # 16.2.

⁵ For example, for ILO Policy Outcome (PO) 8, the one indicator identified as relevant to 'the world of work' (Indicator # 8.7.1) does not measure the full scope of SDG target 8.7, nor does it cover off the full scope of PO 8.

10. To address the issues of indicators, data needs and measurement strategy, including accountability for measurement and analysis, it would be important for the ILO to look at how this would work for each Policy Outcome, starting with a detailed examination of the business of the ILO and not simply looking at “the linking with specific SDG indicators”.
11. This will require a review of – and where they do not exist, development of – the ‘theories of change’⁶ at all levels of ILO intervention – global; country (DWCP); and level of programmes, policies and interventions. This amounts to a front-end analysis of SDG/DW connections so as to gain an understanding and agreement on interventions, their logic and why they are expected to work. In the process, this will also necessitate a review of the measures of ‘success’ that will now be reflective of a revised/updated theory of change for the SDG/DW integrated Agenda.
12. This is important to help ensure ILO managers have the capability to monitor their programmes for the purpose of ongoing and adaptive management and, that the ILO can make a determination that their interventions are having an impact and are contributing to SDG progress.

D. Many challenges at the country level – for the ILO, UN system and individual countries

13. It is widely recognized by development partners that there are several challenges that will be faced at the country level, given the assumptions and expectations that have been built into SDG implementation. It is assumed that country data will be sufficiently robust and timely as to be able to populate relevant SDG indicators. Also, that there will be sufficient country capacity for analysis and the conduct of country-led systematic ‘follow-up and review’/evaluation. The reality though is that, for many countries, one or both of these assumptions would not hold at this time.
14. Additional complexities/challenges may result from limited standardization across countries in their monitoring and evaluation regimes – indicators to monitor will be selected by the national government and evaluations will be voluntary. This could make rolling up to an aggregate regional or global level extremely difficult.
15. In order to support *sustainable* monitoring and evaluation capacity in countries, it is critical that UN agencies recall the ‘new paradigm’ associated with National Evaluation Capacity Development (NECD) – that is, supporting countries in the building of national monitoring and evaluation capacity for the primary purpose of country-led development. Simply working to develop a capacity to monitor a few SDG-related indicators will not be sufficient for the long-term. But, there is no ‘quick fix’, as international experience has

⁶ A Theory of Change is an important tool in an RBM management system, providing a structured framework that can serve many useful purposes for ILO managers in dealing with the SDGs in a Decent Work context.

shown that national monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity building is a long-term and iterative process.

16. In addition to the capacity challenges faced by many individual countries, ILO Country Offices also face many challenges associated with SDG implementation, largely due to lack of resources and potentially the unknown associated with the DW contribution to the SDGs. For monitoring purposes, if other UN agencies are taking the lead on indicator development, care will need to be taken to ensure that ILO-related indicators get developed.

E. A need to establish a suitable format and mechanisms for reporting on ILO's contribution to the SDGs

17. While UN-level mechanisms for monitoring and reporting are still being discussed, it has been determined that a high-level political forum will receive an annual progress report on the SDGs prepared in cooperation with the UN system, based on the global indicator framework⁷.
18. For the ILO (indeed, every agency) there is a need for two types of reporting: (i) reporting to demonstrate the contribution, impacts and effects of ILO interventions; and (ii) reporting to serve management-oriented needs - progress on implementation of the SDGs as per the ILO Implementation Plan. With the high priority being put on the 2030 Agenda, it will be important for every agency to be able to show where and how it has contributed to progress on the SDGs.
19. Attributing change to ILO interventions could though become more difficult as more international partners are implicated in the DW agenda, via the SDG entry point. Issues of agency contribution could easily become blurred and, at its worst, fear of 'mandate creep'. It will therefore be important for the ILO to be able to substantiate where, how and to what extent it has contributed to the SDGs.
20. To do this though, and be able to tell a compelling 'performance story', as noted above, more clarity and understanding is needed on the theory of change underlying ILO activities at all levels. Across the ILO, this would mean ensuring that consideration for the SDGs is incorporated into all aspects of major ILO interventions, at both the global and national levels. For some areas of the ILO, this would likely mean developing a theory of change that to this point has been very weak or has not existed.⁸

⁷ SDG 8 is expected to be up for review in 2019.

⁸ Several ILO evaluations have reported this, with the 2015 ILO Annual Evaluation Report recommending "The Office should strengthen its M&E and its internal system for reporting on the implementation of programmes and projects and make a strong theory of change a compulsory requirement at all levels of the ILO's RBM system".

21. Monitoring information would serve as a useful and important input to such a report, but for an assessment of 'contribution', more evaluative work would be needed, relying on both qualitative and quantitative information.

F. SDG focus on statistics and indicators is not enough – evaluative thinking is indispensable for understanding the complexity of the SDGs, their achievement and for making informed choices

22. While indicators are important to understanding progress being made on SDG implementation, they do not provide the depth to explain how or why change may have occurred and whether or not a particular intervention even contributed to that change. The broad evaluation community view the use of evaluation as a crucial ingredient for SDG success,⁹ however, to date, there has been limited use of the word 'evaluation' though considerable focus on how to measure progress using indicators.
23. There may be a need for dialogue between the UN Evaluation community and senior UN officials, at both the UN system level as well as within individual agencies to ensure the integration of evaluation initiatives into national, regional and global SDG feedback and review systems.
24. For the ILO, evaluative thinking will be particularly important to help inform officials on all aspects of SDG implementation, as well as to help guide management and decision-making:
- Clarifying how contributions to the SDGs through the DW Agenda will alter measures of 'success' for ILO initiatives (via theory of change analysis);
 - Ensuring monitoring systems have credible measures of success and are actually functioning (via evaluability assessments);
 - Providing early feedback and intelligence to managers on operational issues associated with a particular programme, policy or initiative – advice on possible corrective action (via formative evaluation);
 - Providing information at various points in the life cycle of an intervention on its effectiveness and 'lessons' that can help inform possible adjustments, as needed (via summative/effectiveness evaluation); and
 - Providing information on impact of particular intervention(s), along with a credible determination of the 'contribution' of ILO interventions towards that impact; and
 - Providing objective information and understanding to help answer 'why' targets are achieved or not achieved, and what can be done to improve the success of future initiatives – important for internal and external accountability and reporting.

⁹ See for example International Institute for Environment and Development, IIED (2016), 'Evaluation: a crucial ingredient for SDG success', IIED/EVALSDGs: April 2016; and UNEG (2016), 'Evaluation in the SDG era: lessons, challenges and opportunities for UNEG', April 18, 2016.

25. Without such evidence, too little attention will be focused at a national level on public sector development, accountability, learning and long-term and sustainable capacity building.

3. A Strategy for using evaluative thinking and adaptive management for supporting the effective implementation of the SDG/DW Agenda

G. 'SDG contribution' for the ILO

26. 'SDG contribution' for the ILO could be thought of as representing four broad goals for ILO management that unfold over time:
- (i) Understanding SDG relevance to the DW Agenda – At the outset, gaining an understanding and agreement on the appropriate elements of DW Agenda contribution to the SDGs; and, developing/identifying how ILO operations and delivery process at all levels need to be modified so as to reflect the new SDG/DW Agenda. Also, determining what this might mean in terms of how 'success' is measured.
 - (ii) Implementation of the new SDG/DW Agenda – With this understanding of SDG/DW coordination, developing further the ILO (SDG) Implementation Plan and then monitoring and evaluating its progress against planned milestones, with the recognition that feedback from this monitoring could and should be used to make adjustments to the ILO (SDG) Implementation Plan and associated strategies as needed; i.e. the ILO (SDG) Implementation Plan should be seen by managers as 'evergreen', so as to be able to take account of unexpected occurrences that might be observed either globally or at the country level.
 - (iii) Achievement of SDG Results – The intent of ILO interventions is the achievement of planned results, which would typically occur in various forms over time (immediate-, intermediate-, longer-term outcomes and impacts). Assurance that results are indeed achieved would come from various forms of systematic evaluation, all of which would provide information for ILO officials about the effectiveness of the SDG/DW Agenda in general and specific ILO interventions in particular. Indeed, this would serve as additional 'learning' and feedback that might alter the SDG Implementation Plan and its roll-out.
 - (iv) Recognition of ILO Contribution to the SDGs – As noted earlier, ILO, like every UN agency, needs to be able on an ongoing basis to demonstrate and report in a comprehensive and compelling fashion on its contribution to the SDGs. Early on in SDG implementation, reporting is likely limited to 'progress' on the SDG

Implementation Plan. From a management perspective this is important (particularly in the context of ‘adaptive management’), but over time there will likely be more pressure to demonstrate where and how the ILO has contributed to the SDGs. For this reason, early on ILO officials will want to clarify how it intends to ‘tell its performance story’ regarding its contribution to the SDGs.

H. ‘SDG/DW Implementation Timeline’

27. The four goals identified above are realized at different points along what might be considered the ‘SDG/DW Implementation Timeline’, a timeline that runs through to 2030. As noted in section 2 though, there are a number of challenges that will either delay or stand in the way of ILO achieving these goals.
28. **Chart 2** below (last page) graphically illustrates a simplified ‘SDG Implementation Timeline’ for the ILO, showing key points where intervention by ILO officials would address SDG challenges in support of achievement of the four goals. Eight points are identified along the timeline where ILO officials would be encouraged to initiate specific actions/interventions. Each correspond to areas of particular need facing the ILO in terms of its SDG implementation, but also areas where there is a role for evaluative thinking and adaptive management that could potentially offer useful support to SDG/DW implementation. The eight points where intervention is suggested are:
 - (i) Developing an understanding of the linkage between the SDGs and the DW Agenda;
 - (ii) Developing/reviewing/improving the strategy and plan for DW Agenda contribution to the SDGs;
 - (iii) Implementation of ILO activities and operations (global, regional, country-level) that contribute to the SDGs;
 - (iv) Monitoring SDG implementation for the ILO (global, regional, country-level);
 - (v) Reporting on SDG implementation – Both (i) progress against the ILO Plan and (ii) achievements of the SDG/DW Agenda;
 - (vi) Early evaluative feedback via formative evaluation – issues of implementation, lessons learned to date, adequacy of the performance measurement framework and system;
 - (vii) Mid-point evaluative feedback via summative evaluation – issues of effectiveness, lessons; and
 - (viii) Evaluative feedback on maturing SDG/DW Agenda via impact evaluation – impact and contribution of ILO interventions to the SDGs.

I. 'Points of Intervention/evaluative support along SDG/DW Implementation Timeline'

29. **Table 2** below provides a cross-walk showing which of the eight points of intervention and evaluative support would contribute to particular SDG-related goals.

Table 2 Relevant Points of Intervention where Evaluative Thinking and Adaptive Management would support ILO Goals regarding SDG Implementation	
ILO Goals related to SDG/DW Implementation	Relevant Points of Intervention and Evaluative Support (Ref. Chart 2)
(i) Understanding SDG association with DW Agenda	1
(ii) Implementation of the new SDG/DW Agenda	2 3 4 6 7 8
(iii) Achievement of SDG Results	6 7 8
(iv) Recognition of ILO Contribution to SDGs	2 4 5 6 7 8

J. 'Nature of evaluative support to challenges faced by ILO in SDG/DW Implementation'

30. The nature of the intervention suggested for each of the eight points along the SDG/DW timeline (as shown in Chart 2) is outlined in **Table 3** below. Each represents an identification of particular support in face of known or expected challenges to the ILO's SDG/DW implementation. Taken together, these eight points would represent a concerted shift towards *evaluative thinking and adaptive management*. What this would imply for ILO officials would be a greater need to recognize and embrace the 'learning' aspect of monitoring and evaluating ILO interventions; and then be prepared to adopt an approach to governance and management whereby the learning and feedback (i.e. evidence-informed learning) would be expected to adjust strategies and actions, as needed. In an RBM world, this may not be considered revolutionary, though it is a recognition that systematic planning cannot likely anticipate all scenarios that might impact "success" of an intervention. But, through evaluative thinking and learning via the mechanisms available, officials can deal with unforeseen challenges, making adjustments to strategies and plans before too much time or money has been spent. It does though imply that the organization make a concerted effort at various points to review and adjust, as needed, strategies, plans and interventions. The complexities introduced by the SDGs suggest that there may be more 'learning by doing', particularly in the early years for SDG implementation. As such, this learning component and the ability to adjust in a timely fashion could be quite important from an operational perspective.

4. Conclusion

31. While there are traditional mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation, the strategy being recommended here puts the onus on *all* ILO officials (and not simply the trained Evaluators) to employ evaluative thinking and adaptive management as a means to navigate the uncertain world associated with the implementation of the SDGs. Evaluators would still be expected to deliver systematic evaluation studies, but they may also be called upon to play a non-traditional role in support of evaluative thinking, particularly in the early years of SDG implementation. This would only be successful though if all ILO officials embraced the culture reflective of evaluative thinking and adaptive management.

Table 3	
Mechanisms incorporating Evaluative Thinking and Adaptive Management to Support SDG Implementation, by Stage of the SDG Implementation Timeline	
Challenges facing ILO – Action Needed re SDG Implementation	Role for Evaluative Thinking and Adaptive Management to Support SDG Implementation
STAGE 1: Understanding the linkage between the SDGs and DW Agenda	
<p>1.1 Review (and develop, as needed) <u>theory of change</u> at all levels of ILO intervention – global; country (DWCP); and, level of programmes, policies & interventions. Focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification/agreement of alignment of SDG targets with particular ILO intervention • Clarification/agreement on operational implications of such alignment – in particular, implications for programme/policy ‘reach’; design; and, delivery process; • Identification of new international partners that may now be implicated in ‘success’ of relevant SDG • Identification of new assumptions regarding the ‘enabling environment’ that may now be relevant to ‘success’ of SDG/DW Agenda 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Guidance Document, possible checklists and provision of seminar on approach to reviewing and re-developing the ‘theory of change’ in an integrated SDG/DW Agenda. • Provision of workshops with ILO Policy Outcome leads (and other relevant ILO officials) to develop ILO-level theory of change pathways that incorporate the relevant SDGs • Development of a small number of specific cases (for example, one Flagship Programme; 1 or 2 Country offices) as a demonstration of approach needed to map out a revised theory of change reflective of the integrated SDG/DW Agenda – i.e. cases to share with and inform other parts of the ILO
<p>1.2 Review the <u>measures of ‘success’</u> that will be reflective of revised/updated theory of change for</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of cost-effective performance measurement strategies - ensuring that a measurement strategy includes, not only the monitoring of indicators, but the conduct of ad hoc surveys and

<p>the SDG/DW integrated Agenda – needed at all levels. Focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised/updated theory of change introduces potentially new indicators, data needs and issues for monitoring and eventual evaluation. Clarification/agreement on each of these is critical early on. Measurement strategy that is feasible, cost-effective & assigns responsibility/accountability for timely delivery of needed data & analysis 	<p>eventual evaluations. Also, the use of qualitative as well as quantitative indicators to measure ‘performance’</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development of Guidance Document and provision of seminar on indicator development –possible sources for ongoing assessment of indicators and measurement strategies associated with ILO programmes, policies and initiatives Consultation with relevant United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) members who might be implicated in the SDG/DW Agenda to clarify and, as needed, coordinate indicator development and any associated monitoring and evaluation activities
<p>1.3 Clarify the <u>format/approach to reporting on ‘performance’</u> in implementing the SDG/DW Agenda.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ILO will want to clarify how it intends to ‘tell its Performance Story’ regarding its contribution to the SDG/DW Agenda. This needs to be more than simply measuring and reporting on a couple of indicators. A compelling ‘Performance Story’ about ILO contribution likely requires both global-level data as well as specific examples of ‘contribution’, relying on both qualitative and quantitative information to demonstrate where and how ILO has contributed to the SDGs The format for such a “Performance Report’ ought to be mapped out in advance and planned, with expectations for various source material and data to inform such a document. Clear roles and responsibilities need to be assigned, at both global and country levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and possibly adjust the format for the “ILO Performance Report”, while also planning for populating it with targeted information and source material, including data/information from ongoing monitoring and ILO evaluations and reviews, likely the critical source material for such a Report. Drafting of a ‘straw man’ report as a mechanism to gain clarity and agreement about report format and content. Conduct, as part of its development, a formal internal vetting process of early versions of the ILO Performance Report (to potentially include external reviewers). Since such a Performance Report would draw on both qualitative and quantitative information, the intent would be to ensure its credibility. Draw on the work and experience being gained in other UN agencies that might have application to the ILO’s development of their own SDG Performance Report. This could be done through UNEG.
<p>STAGE 2: Strategy and Plan for linking the SDGs and DW Agenda</p>	
<p>2.1 Refine <u>strategy for ILO Implementation of the SDGs</u>. A broad strategy has been put in place, serving as the basis for the ILO Implementation Plan. It recognizes that, particularly in the early years, monitoring and review are important elements of this strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To monitor progress of SDG implementation To assess ILO’s own capacities “to regularly compile, support & provide global estimations for such an array of statistical indicators...both at the central and field levels” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct a ‘diagnostic’ exploring ILO ‘readiness’ to implement, monitor and eventually evaluate the SDGs. This work could help advise ILO management on some of the technical aspects concerning SDG implementation that could have an immediate impact in terms of some of the strategic and implementation decisions and a longer-term impact associated with the monitoring, evaluation and reporting on ILO performance and contribution to the SDGs. Recognize the utility of evaluation as a key contributor to the ‘learning’ associated with the monitoring/review/evaluation aspects of SDG implementation in the ILO. These all represent ‘feedback mechanisms’ that yield objective information on ‘progress’ of SDG implementation - information of a formative nature that can be particularly useful for ILO management to make adjustments, as needed.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “To be ready to play a significant role in the UN’s annual follow-up and review of progress towards the 2030 goals and targets” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider using systematic evaluation, to clarify “progress” on ILO implementation of the SDGs (according to its own Implementation Plan). • Clarify the suitable metrics and performance elements needed to report on ILO contribution to SDG goals and targets. • Review, share and adapt some of the experience of other UN agencies in terms of their approach to monitoring progress of the SDGs and ‘lessons’ to be gained from the experience of other agencies.
STAGE 3. ILO Activities supporting SDG Implementation	
<p>3.1 The <u>key focus of Agenda 2030 is the ‘country’ level</u>, for both implementation of the SDGs & the monitoring & systematic follow-up & review. Challenges/limitations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumes adequate capacity exists within the ILO Country Office as well as within the country itself. • Significant challenges at the front-end, associated with: implementation of the SDGs, being able to monitor & report on progress, & capacity issues in carrying out country-led evaluation • ‘Country context’ will create unique situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider identifying 2 or 3 country cases/‘pilots’ (or, a country within each Region) where special efforts would be made to work directly with the Country Office from early on to address each of these challenges and, in so doing, to assess and document ‘lessons’ that would have application to other Country Offices. • Conduct front-end ‘Needs Analysis’ associated with SDG implementation in the ILO, including monitoring and evaluation capacity at the country level – focus on the selected Case Countries. • Review the ‘theory of change’ using the Case Country examples to determine where and how SDGs have been built into the DWCP – ensuring adequate detailing of indicators, information sources and performance measurement strategy • Create guidance for Country Programme Reviews (CPR) to ensure that all issues relevant to SDG implementation and measuring ILO ‘contribution’ to the SDGs are built within the CPR process • Disseminate formal Guidance document and advice to all SDG ‘pilots’ to ensure that a systematic assessment is carried out that addresses all key issues, as well as reporting back in a common format, for purposes of ‘learning’ from cross-case comparisons.
<p>3.2 Agenda 2030 notes that ‘systematic follow-up & review’ will be ‘voluntary & country-led’. For many countries, this will require <u>national-level monitoring and evaluation (M&E) capacity assessment and development of plans to build M&E capacity, addressing:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weak results-oriented monitoring capability • Little/no capability for systematic Evaluation & analysis • Insufficient credible data 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct country-level M&E ‘readiness assessments’ that will provide the necessary diagnostic to identify capacity gaps and strategy for building a sustainable monitoring and evaluation capacity • Draft and disseminate formal Guidance Document and support to Country Offices (COs) and others in a role that they might play in facilitating the conduct of country-specific M&E Readiness Assessments; assessment of adequacy of country-level M&E capacity building; and development of national M&E capacity development plans • Provide oversight and/or support to Country Offices in advising on the adequacy of country-level monitoring and evaluation capability • Collaborate, through UNEG, on national-level M&E capacity assessment and development of relevant agenda to support national-level monitoring and evaluation capacity building
<p>3.3 In <u>supporting and training the tripartite constituents of the ILO</u>, it is important to note that national level M&E systems are generally led by one of a Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Planning or the Office of the President/Prime Minister. Generally speaking, Ministries of Labour are not prime movers or participants in the development of M&E systems, nor are they</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support and training for ILO social partners to become more involved in national evaluation systems to enhance their capacity to conduct independent evaluations of their progress towards the SDGs • Provide guidance documents targeted at Country Offices and others on identifying elements associated with national monitoring and evaluation capacity building, along with ‘tips’ on how to

<p>generally considered to be first adopters or pilots when M&E systems are being introduced.</p>	<p>strengthen national Evaluation Systems. The capacity building could take many forms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaborate, through UNEG, on national-level M&E capacity building with other UN agencies that may be implicated in the SDG/DW Agenda
<p><u>3.4 Capacity building to support SDG implementation in Country Offices (CO)</u> - Quite apart from the Country cases or ‘pilots’, all ILO Country Offices will be facing challenges and needing support insofar as SDG implementation is concerned.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Regional Evaluation Officers could potentially play a support role on the M&E front. EVAL though would likely want to develop Provide a guidance package and ‘training/orientation’ to the Regional Evaluation Officers and COs, to ensure that a comprehensive set of messages was being delivered insofar as SDG monitoring and evaluation was concerned. <p>Some elements suggested for the Country Cases could be incorporated here for follow-through by the Evaluation Officer in the Region – For example, conduct of a front-end ‘Needs Analysis’ associated with SDG implementation, monitoring and evaluation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Country Office Director to ensure that the evaluation of the DW agenda is a part of national review process.
<p>STAGE 4. Monitoring SDG Implementation for the ILO</p>	
<p><u>4.1 Monitoring progress of SDG implementation in the ILO</u>, particularly in the early years, has been recognized by ILO senior management as an important element in moving forward on the SDGs¹⁰. This would be particularly so at the country level. Monitoring is one form of ‘feedback tool’ that can help advise ILO management on a number of operational issues associated with the integrated SDG/DW Agenda:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> some of the technical aspects concerning SDG implementation within the ILO progress in meeting milestones according to the ILO Implementation Plan a potential need to make adjustments to the ILO Implementation Strategy or Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and provide guidance and advice on what indicators and issues/aspects of SDG implementation to monitor, the most cost-effective way to carry out the monitoring activities, format for reporting, as well as logistical issues associated with the monitoring, analysis and reporting on ILO implementation of the SDGs. Such guidance is important, given the need to monitor at a global, regional and country level and a need for consistency across countries/regions and over time. Provide ‘hands-on’ assistance in the first round of monitoring/reporting to help ensure that the exercise serves as a ‘learning’ one and not merely one of accountability; i.e. meeting milestones within the planned timeframe. A ‘straw man’ report/template could be developed to serve to guide the monitoring exercise in its early implementation in the ILO.
<p><u>4.2 The ILO Implementation Plan (paragraph 97)</u> notes that “The ILO should be ready to play a significant role in the <u>UN’s annual follow-up and review of progress</u> towards the 2030 goals and targets”. While this has not yet been well-defined, it is imperative for the ILO to be an active participant for purposes of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Helping define what is actually being monitored and evaluated re SDG ‘progress’ so that the DW Agenda is a part of the national review process of the SDGs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This relates to item 1.3 above, that is, clarifying a format and information sources for performance measurement/monitoring of SDG implementation and ILO contribution to progress on relevant SDGs. Ensure appropriate monitoring of high-level discussions concerning the global-level reviews, the regional reviews and the national-level reviews, some 22 of which were expected to be initiated in July 2016, as little is still known of the ‘follow-up and review’ process. Provide guidance to country cases/pilots on approach to performance measurement associated with the SDG/DW Agenda, using the tools of both monitoring and evaluation. This could come in various forms (Guidance document, training, ‘train-the-trainer’ sessions). Collaborate UN system-wide with other Evaluation Units in UNEG (in general) and with those agencies implicated in SDG/DW (in particular),

¹⁰ ILO Implementation Plan, Version 1.0 (19.2.16), para. 11-12.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participating in the monitoring, review and analysis per se so that DW Agenda and ILO contribution to the SDGs does not become marginalized in the annual UN review and reporting 	<p>to gain agreement and standardization on the measurement of 'progress'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proactively work with the UN system mechanisms and, in particular UNEG community, if necessary, to lobby for the inclusion of systematic evaluation as part of the SDG 'follow-up and review' process.
STAGE 5. Reporting on SDG Implementation (Note that there are two forms of reporting)	
<p>5.1 <u>Reporting in relation to achievements of the SDG/DW Agenda</u> that would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Link as input to the UN system's annual reporting on SDG progress Reporting on achievements as per the 'theory of change', that would draw on monitoring and evaluation information to illustrate and demonstrate ILO contribution at a global and country levels. For internal as well as external audiences, for governance purposes (accountability and learning) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This relates to items 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 and 4.2 above, on ways to help ensure ILO would have an ability to tell its SDG 'performance story'. For example, ensuring an elaboration of the 'theory of change' and clarifying ILO 'pathways' at all levels; working to ensure sufficient and relevant monitoring and evaluation at national/country levels to help inform any ILO global report. Pilot formats and process for reporting at the global, regional and country levels as well as the assessment of content and eventual determination of an appropriate 'SDG Performance Report' for the ILO. This could likely involve a few iterations over the first few years of SDG implementation. Work with other relevant UN agencies that might be implicated in SDG/DW activities – and using the forum of UNEG - working towards a standardized approach to reporting on 'performance'. Draw on the work and experience being gained in other UN agencies that might have application to the ILO's development of their own SDG Performance Report.
<p>5.2 <u>Reporting in relation to the ILO (SDG) Implementation Plan</u>, seeks to provide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual reports to ILO management on how well ILO operations (globally, regionally and country-level) are meeting the milestones of the SGD/DW Plan devised by ILO management Operational intelligence and 'lessons learned' that serves as important feedback to determine whether or not there is a need to make adjustments to the SDG/DW Strategy and/or Implementation Plan. This form of reporting relates to item 2.1 and item 4.1 above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop early on draft formats of initial versions of the reports used to gauge progress of the ILO (SDG) Implementation Plan Provide guidance to country cases/pilots on reporting at a country level – for example, via a checklist and advice, as needed Conduct assessment of early versions (say Year 1 and 2) of the ILO's annual Progress Report on SDG Implementation Consult with other UNEG members to seek to identify models used in other agencies that might have application for the ILO's own monitoring and reporting.
STAGE 6. Formative Evaluation of SDG/DW – Evaluability Assessments	
<p>6.1 There are several reasons why a <u>formative (implementation) evaluation</u> is important, particularly with new initiatives, such as the</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct formative/implementation evaluation of selected country cases or 'pilots'. This should be carried out in Year 2 or 3 of SDG implementation, say 2018. Linked to evaluation of DWCP.

<p>implementation of the SDG/DW Agenda. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management needs to know early on in the life of an initiative critical issues impacting performance that may require adjustments to operational delivery • Where monitoring data can inform on progress on particular indicators, an evaluation or some form of systematic survey or study is needed to help understand such issues as: How well the initiative is being implemented; whether delivery is cost-effective; why certain results are/are not being achieved; etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a guidance document and checklists, illuminating issues and relevant methods, reporting format, etc. - could serve as a template for broader application of implementation evaluations. • Potentially carry out implementation evaluations as 'self-evaluations', assuming that there was sufficient oversight provided by ILO Evaluation Office. • Ensure a periodic review of formative evaluation by EVAL - for reasons of 'quality control' - if self-evaluation became the norm. • Collaborate, as appropriate, with other relevant agencies that, in the context of UN system-wide efforts and in particular through UNEG, might be implicated in SDG/DW activities. • Conduct, as appropriate synthesis reviews and meta evaluation of the formative evaluations.
<p>6.2 An <u>evaluability assessment</u> early on in the life of an initiative, provides management with several pieces of critical information important both for short-term and longer-term needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The adequacy of indicators, measurement strategies and mechanisms put in place to track SDG/DW progress. This has immediate implications for the ability of ILO officials to manage their initiatives and report back on SDG progress/performance to serve relevant country, regional and/or global reporting requirements. • In assessing issues reflective of the 'theory of change', an evaluability assessment is an important measure to help ensure that a future evaluation would be capable of measuring the effectiveness and contribution of the ILO initiative to SDG progress. <p>In spite of considerable efforts (and gains) by the ILO to improve its approach to RBM, there continue to be problems with monitoring and evaluation approaches for ILO projects and programmes. Much of this originates with an incomplete articulation of the 'theory of change' at the development stage.¹¹ The introduction of the SDGs only compounds the need to clarify 'pathways'.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This relates to items 1.1 and 1.2 above, where there is a provision of guidance on developing 'theory of change' via documents, possible workshops, seminars and potentially direct work with managers in a small number of specific cases. • Develop guidance documents on evaluability assessment based on the considerable catalogue of material currently residing with ILO Evaluation Office – to be adapted as necessary to specific SDG-related initiatives • Conduct evaluability assessments at the time of conduct of a formative evaluation, to avoid excessive burden. • Carry out evaluability assessments to determine the ability of the ILO to assess its contribution to the SDGs at a country and global level (in addition to project, programme and policy levels) – important since there will be a need to report on SDG progress and performance at a national and global level • Work with one or two country cases (as identified above) could incorporate review in the context of an evaluability assessment to assess the ability for future assessment of the contribution of Country Programs to the SDGs.

¹¹ Lahey, Robert (2015), 'Common issues affecting monitoring and evaluation of large ILO projects. Strategies to address them', *i-eval* THINK Piece no. 9, International Labour Office: November 2015.

STAGE 7. Effectiveness Evaluation of SDG/DW Implementation

7.1 With aspirational goals of the SDGs, their achievement may require the full 15-year period (or more); i.e. impacts may not be observed and measured for many years. That said, important information is needed, long before 2030, on the effectiveness of interventions (as well as their relevance, efficiency and sustainability). This can be gained through 'effectiveness evaluation' that uses the theory of change as the basis for evaluating how successful an intervention is in meeting expected results., relying on both qualitative and quantitative information.

This will serve as important (more in-depth) feedback to inform ILO management on any adjustments that may need to be made in terms of ILO interventions at a country, regional or global level.

- Conduct in say year 5 (2021) a comprehensive evaluation of the ILO's implementation of the SDG/DW Agenda, addressing issues of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability. The scope of such an evaluation would need to be developed and also include other SDG-related issues such as 'partnerships', etc. The intent would be to provide ILO management with more insight into operational implications of the SDG/DW Agenda, achievements to date and point out any adjustments that may be needed in the ILO Implementation Strategy/Plan or specific operations at the country, regional and global levels.
- Such an evaluation could serve as a development/learning exercise that would hopefully have application for future more demanding 'impact evaluations' – for example: Development of a common framework for evaluation and analysis so as to allow for comparison of progress assessment across countries. This would improve the potential for drawing common 'lessons' across countries
- Such an evaluation would also be an occasion to gain a better appreciation for the country-led review process that has been mandated to report on SDG progress at the country level. It would offer an entry point for the ILO with the UN system to potentially work with selected countries (and relevant UNEG partners) to help sort out and clarify the roles and responsibilities as well as the coordination mechanisms for any future evaluation.

STAGE 8. Outcome and Impact Evaluation of ILO Interventions

8.1 Technical issues for measuring impact and attributing observed change to any one agency intervention or set of interventions is a common challenge for the Evaluation function. It is critical however, both for accountability and learning purposes, to understand whether long-term impacts have been achieved (or are likely to be achieved) and the extent that the interventions of the agency had a contributing effect to that change.

- Conduct targeted impact assessments building on EVAL's recently completed concept mapping on impact evaluation in the ILO and development of proposed Impact Evaluation Framework for the ILO
- Advocating on the use of Contribution Analysis, using both qualitative and quantitative information to assess impacts
- Ensure that all evaluations, from project to strategic level, provide relevant data for showing the achievements of relevant SDGs and the ILO contribution to this
- Work with UNEG partners, in the context of the UN system-wide efforts, to develop a common framework for evaluation and analysis so as to allow for comparison of progress assessment across countries. This will improve the potential for drawing common 'lessons' across countries (without falling into the trap of 'one size fits all')

8.2 Political and process issues around the SDGs add some uncertainty regarding evaluation strategy and architecture. For example, will 'follow-up and review processes' (national, regional and global) include rigorous, evidence-based 'evaluation'?

From a national perspective, Agenda 2030 commits UN Members to 'systematic follow-up

- In addition to the national-level capacity building (noted above), work with specific country offices and UN system partners (including through UNEG), to help build country-level capacity to demand and use the results of evaluation in programme and policy-level decision-making; i.e. informing-persuading national-level decision-makers of the 'value of evaluation'.
- Ensure that 'evaluation' is included as part of the ILO support to developing and implementing national sustainable development strategies

and review' which will be 'voluntary and country-led'. The implications of these terms are not yet well defined, and so cause some uncertainty in the use of evaluation to support SDG implementation:

- Will national-level evaluations take a long-term view, focus on identifying achievements, examine policy and programme implementation and effectiveness, and build well-reasoned and supported cases for claims of progress?

From a global perspective, what vehicle will become the single visible evaluation where organizations would want to see their contribution and their relevance to country progress towards the SDGs be duly reflected?

- Work with Cos and relevant UN system partners (including UNEG) to ensure that evaluation of the DW Agenda is a part of the SDG national review processes
- Work with COs and relevant UNEG partners to help sort out and clarify the roles and responsibilities as well as the coordination mechanisms for any evaluation

Chart 2
ILO Implementation of the SDGs: Relevant Areas of Intervention and Support along the Implementation Timeline

