

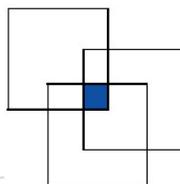
i-eval

Flash news



International
Labour
Office

EVAL highlights



EVAL is pleased to share the *twenty-third edition of i-eval Flash news* with you. Through this triannual electronic bulletin we provide readers with updates, news and information on publications and upcoming events related to evaluation.

A new direction for evaluation in the ILO?

Evaluation involves assessing the strengths and weaknesses of policies, programmes and projects with the aim to improve their relevance, effectiveness and overall efficiency. As such, evaluation is an important tool that brings to the table well-grounded information that should be used to inform decision-making.

The [Independent Evaluation of the Evaluation Function \(IEE 2016\)](#) concluded that the ILO Evaluation Office (EVAL) had made good progress since 2011 on delivering better evaluation products and reinforcing its structural independence, which has led to transformational change. The evaluation policy (2005) and results framework of the strategy (2011-2017) were, however, found to have served their purpose and to be insufficient to meet the challenges of a changing context. Following the adoption of a revised [Evaluation policy \(November 2017\)](#), the Governing Body adopted a new [Evaluation strategy 2018-21](#) during its 332nd session in March 2018.

The new evaluation policy and strategy set out bold principles to usher evaluation into a higher level of maturity. To address some of the evaluation fatigue that has set in, more clustered and integrated evaluations of projects and programme activities under similar themes will be pursued. This of course will not be possible without cooperation from constituents, donors and line managers. Evaluation approaches, methods and frameworks will also be reviewed to ensure they are more adapted to the ILO's specific mandate and context (e.g. tripartism, social dialogue, normative work) without compromising the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria. Finally, programmes for evaluation capacity development, including tripartite constituents and other relevant stakeholders, will be developed and rolled out on a demand basis. Their focus will be on the linkages between the ILO's Decent Work Agenda and the SDGs.

During the related GB sessions, constituents overwhelmingly supported the new direction for evaluation being taken in the new evaluation policy and strategy. However, they also asked practical questions on how the clustering of evaluation would be done; how gender could be better covered in evaluations; and, how evaluations could generate more information on the impact and sustainability of ILO's work on the lives of those we serve. These questions and feedback will be essential in the practical steps that will be taken in the coming years to roll-out the new evaluation policy and strategy.

Visit our website:

<http://www.ilo.org/eval>



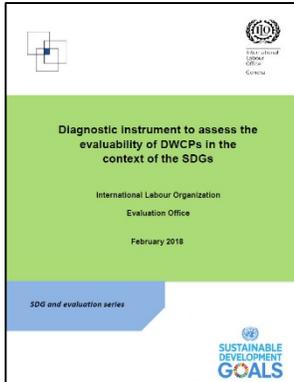
Guy Thijs, Director
Evaluation Office

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Innovation & Research

Completed studies



[Diagnostic instrument to assess the evaluability of DWCPs in the context of the SDGs](#)

The Evaluation Office (EVAL) has, over the last years, stepped up its efforts to report on its contribution to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

To support this work, a diagnostic instrument has been produced to guide and support ILO officials in the preparation of Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs). The intention is that they be evaluable through an SDG lens. The diagnostic instrument also reviews the degree to which country-level monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is ready to implement, monitor and evaluate the SDGs (with a focus on decent work). Moreover, the instrument analyses constituents' capacity needs and challenges in order to create effective advocacy and involvement in the SDG/Decent Work M&E processes.

Following the first pilot in Sri Lanka, EVAL is currently collaborating with Regional Evaluation Officers in the Arab States and Latin America and Caribbean regions to further pilot the diagnostic instrument. EVAL envisages further collaboration with the ILO Department of Programming and Management (PROGRAM), the Bureau of Workers' and Employers' activities, and the ILO Training Centre to integrate the instrument, or parts of it, into existing planning tools and training initiatives.

Ongoing and planned studies

- **Clustering and synchronising evaluations to create more strategic and effective use of evaluation mechanisms**

As part of efforts to systematize and strengthen compliance with evaluation requirements, the emphasis on meeting standards of accountability has not always been matched with those that relate to learning needs. EVAL has recognized this weakness and has proposed creating more strategic and cluster



evaluations as a solution. As part of the roll-out of the new [ILO results-based evaluation strategy \(2018-2021\)](#), the current conventional approach for carrying out individual project evaluations will be re-examined. Therefore, EVAL will launch a study during the second quarter of 2018 to review potential methodologies and procedures for strategic cluster evaluations, including a modality for pooling evaluation funds. This study will draw on experience with similar approaches within the ILO, as well as with comparable peer organizations.

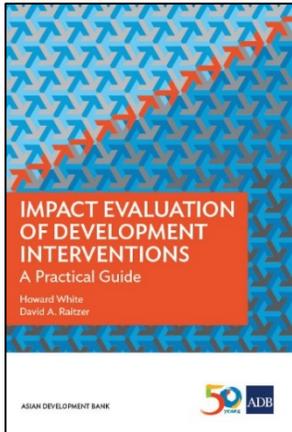
- **Enhanced independence of decentralized evaluations through an optimized business process and reporting lines**

The ILO's evaluation procedures and mechanisms for decentralized evaluation have often been praised in various reviews for their innovation by introducing the Evaluation Manager Certification Training, comprehensive guidance and real-time, ex-post quality control. Whilst this "hybrid" decentralized system considerably increased quality and independence, several limitations remain. The [Independent evaluation of the ILO's evaluation function \(2016\)](#) pointed out that the highest priority regarding independence was a review of the reporting lines of the Regional Evaluation Officers. Therefore, the study that will be launched this year will review reporting lines for REOs and identify possible scenarios that could potentially enhance independence. Some evidence suggests that structural underinvestment in monitoring and reporting expertise to support the results-based management (RBM) requirements of projects and programmes of the ILO. This may be an obstacle towards change in their role that would need to be analysed.

- **Study on ex-post quality review of impact evaluations**

EVAL is expanding its quality appraisals to include impact evaluations (IE). The purpose is to learn about the strengths and weaknesses of different IE designs, the extent to which designs are adhered to in practice, their appropriateness to the context, and how well the evaluation questions are addressed. The study is expected by the end of the year.

New Books and Articles on Evaluation



Impact evaluation of development interventions: A practical guide

by Howard White and David A. Raitzer

Summary from the Asian Development Bank: “Impact evaluation is an empirical approach to estimating the causal effects of interventions, in terms of both magnitude and statistical significance. Expanded use of impact evaluation techniques is critical to rigorously derive knowledge from development operations and for development investments and policies to become more evidence-based and effective. To help backstop more use of impact evaluation approaches, this book introduces core concepts, methods, and considerations for planning, designing, managing, and implementing impact evaluation, supplemented by examples.”

News from the Departments

Employment Policy Department (EMPLOYMENT)

A synthesis review of ILO employment promotion interventions, 2013-2016: A joint initiative between EMPLOYMENT, EVAL and PARDEV

A synthesis review of ILO employment promotion interventions was undertaken by the Employment Policy Department. The purpose was to strengthen the organization’s development cooperation efforts by drawing lessons from employment projects that were implemented between 2013 and 2016. Financial and technical support for the study was provided by the ILO’s Evaluation Office (EVAL) and the Department of Partnerships and Field Support (PARDEV) provided useful inputs. The synthesis review involved an analysis of ILO project evaluations, project documents, ILO research papers and guidance notes. In addition, it involved evidence-based research from outside the ILO. The study built upon previous meta-analyses and synthesis reviews of project evaluations undertaken by

EVAL. The aim was to improve the use of evidence-based theories of change, strengthen M&E frameworks and to set more realistic goals and time frames for future project design. More concretely, the review was expected to inform the development of solid intervention models for different types of employment promotion projects.

The main research material for this review consisted of 52 ILO employment promotion projects for which evaluations were carried out between 2013 and 2016. These projects were selected from an overall population of 66 projects that had been compiled by the ILO and searched through EVAL’s [i-eval Discovery platform](#). By considering a broader dataset beyond evaluation reports, this review was expected to tackle some of the limitations that were faced during previous reviews. The lack of contextual information (which proved to be a limitation in previous reviews) was addressed by reviewing project documents. At the same time, the review faced challenges in obtaining information on in-depth cost benefit or value for money analysis; changes at outcome level (e.g. changes in capacity of specific actors) or the projects’ contribution towards this change. The assumption that such additional analysis would be possible by consulting the broader datasets and research available to the projects and Departments, in addition to evaluation reports, turned out to be a misconception. This validated the recognised weaknesses in ILO’s overall monitoring and reporting practices.

As a result, the main conclusions and recommendations that emerged from this review were consistent with earlier findings from meta-studies and synthesis reviews undertaken by EVAL, showing that overall:

- Projects are highly relevant and well aligned with national priorities and local needs;
- The majority of ILO projects are successful in achieving expected results at the output levels;
- Project efficiency is positively assessed across evaluation reports, however, most evaluations did not have the necessary data nor the time to carry out an in-depth cost benefit or value for money analysis;
- Achieving sustainable project results is a considerable challenge across most of the reviewed interventions; and
- M&E systems across a majority of reviewed interventions continue to face challenges in terms of supporting results-based management that goes beyond tracking and reporting progress against planned activities and outputs.

An interesting finding of the review was that integrated approaches for supporting employment promotion have great potential. An integrated project design tackling employment promotion through different technical components (e.g. policy, skills, etc.) was identified. This had the potential to provide important added value for creating strong opportunities for enhancing the project's effectiveness and sustainability of results. Indeed, past ILO interventions have provided evidence that employment intensive investment programmes, for example, do not only have a positive effect on the socio-economic well-being of the beneficiaries (e.g. provide for their basic needs). They can also stimulate economic activity through the built infrastructure (e.g. increased road traffic, easier access to the market). Another positive corollary of the review is that it contributed to the development of a series of intervention models for the Employment Policy Department. These models present key elements of the theory of change that underpin ILO employment promotion projects.

Overall, this exercise was firmly anchored in the principles of organizational learning. It was based on a thorough review of evaluation findings emanating from ILO project implementation and other available evidence, with a view to enhancing the effectiveness of ILO development cooperation interventions. It has also supported efforts that ensure that projects and programmes in the ILO incorporate their contribution to the SDGs in their respective result frameworks.

News from the Regions

Latin America and the Caribbean

Evaluating Decent Work Country Programmes in the Latin America and Caribbean Region from the angle of technical assistance models

Decent Work Country Programmes (DWCPs) are important strategic instruments whereby countries organize ILO technical assistance in order to reduce and eliminate decent work gaps. Completed in March 2018, a [regional independent evaluation](#) of such technical assistance developed models highlighted several



positive and more challenging aspects for the Latin America and Caribbean region.¹

The evaluation found that the ILO's technical assistance in the region is highly relevant with respect to addressing decent work gaps and focusing on the most critical issues of policy and institutional capacities. Its action plan is also coherent with the 2030 Agenda, in particular with SDG 8, although connections with the SDGs are not usually explicit. DWCPs are valued by constituents as being strategic instruments for structuring the ILO's technical assistance and guiding results to reduce decent work gaps. However, they tend to lose validity when the country context changes. Less specification of the action plan of DWCPs implies greater possibilities for adaptability to contextual changes. However, it also implies a risk of diluting the strategic vision and limiting its impact in the medium and longer terms.

DWCPs, in comparison with the XBTC and RBSA projects, systematically involve greater tripartite participation especially at the beginning. Yet, the evaluation showed that there is a tendency of reduced interest and commitment from constituents during the DWCP's implementation stage. Specifically, there is a general lack of solid tripartite follow-up mechanisms. This is explained by the fragility of social dialogue, insufficient leadership of the ILO to promote these spaces, and the level of workload for sub-regional offices that support several countries. More broadly, DWCPs have important resource gaps that challenge their implementation. This is in part explained by the absence of adequate financial plans at the design stage.

In terms of effectiveness, the implementation of DWCPs

¹ The evaluation analysed two DWCPs: Haiti 2015-2018 and Panama 2015-2019. Only the former passed the QAM process.

in Argentina and some Caribbean countries has been strong. In others countries, such as Haiti and Panama, the implementation of DWCPs has been more challenging. This is mainly due to: insufficient political commitment from constituents, weak ILO leadership, insufficient resources, and a disconnect between the DWCPs and DWTs in terms of programming/implementation. While the ILO adopted effective models that help build institutional capacities, their success is determined by them having appropriate levels of technical support, financial and human resources. Moreover, there is a tendency to focus more on the delivery of outputs than on achieving long-term impacts, which affects the sustainability of results.

It is, therefore, important for the ILO to ensure sustained technical support for DWCPs in the medium and long term (minimum of 3 to 5 years). Extra-budgetary Technical Cooperation (XBTC) interventions have advantages over RBSA and RBTC funds to maintain these processes due to their level of resources and duration. On the other hand, applying a combination of these modalities would generate more effective results. DWCPs could therefore be used as a frame to articulate different sources of technical cooperation in an effort to support a long-term strategy. This would offer added value in terms of generating tripartite consensus in establishing decent work policy objectives.

In order to reinforce the importance of DWCPs in the Latin American and Caribbean region, the evaluation proposed ten recommendations, some of which are highlighted below:

1. DWCPs must be framed within the ILO Strategic Plan, so its achievements contributes to the fulfilment of the overall results of the Organization;
2. DWCPs must be aligned with the objectives of the 2030 Agenda, addressing the social, economic and environmental dimensions of development;
3. DWCPs should be based on an up-to-date diagnosis of the country's social, political and economic context; establish priorities and country program outcomes;
4. DWCPs should identify management and implementation modalities, have financing plans resource mobilization, and monitoring of results.
5. During the implementation of the DWCPs, changes in the national context and in the priorities of the constituents should be reviewed periodically to properly adjust the DWCP strategy and ensure the active functioning of the tripartite committees to monitor achievements.

Some notable lessons learned & good practices

- A DWCP that defines strategic objectives but leaves open the range of actions to achieve them allows greater flexibility to adapt cooperation actions to changing contexts.
- The combination of technical cooperation resources XBTC, RBSA and RBTC to conduct "bottom-up" work in policy development facilitates a multiplier effect at the national level.
- Having a focal point in the country is key to the effectiveness and continuity of actions, especially in contexts of fragile countries and challenging relationships among constituents, such as Paraguay.

To read the full evaluation report, please access [i-eval Discovery](#) - EVAL's repository of all planned and completed evaluations, including their lessons learned, good practices and recommendations.

EVAL Highlights

EVAL's fifth biennial workshop

The ILO's evaluation network met in Geneva from 27 February to 2 March 2018 for its fifth biennial workshop. It was attended by EVAL staff located in headquarters, Regional Evaluation Officers and Departmental Evaluation Focal Points attended in order to:

- Discuss elements for an action plan and the priorities for the implementation of the new [Evaluation strategy 2018-21](#) with an emphasis on monitoring and reporting;
- Standardize and improve the knowledge of the evaluation network on the mechanisms to improve the quality of evaluation work, including the SDGs and gender dimensions, and harmonize evaluation practices in the regions and in headquarters; and
- Discuss opportunities to improve the enabling environment for evaluations relevant to the ILO's mandate and the new demands from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The workshop cultivated a deeper sense of collaboration to achieve shared goals, particularly in light of the new evaluation policy and strategy. Specifically, some topics that were discussed included improving the quality of evaluation reports, enhancing the use of evaluation for decision-making, enhancing the accessibility of evaluation findings and

recommendations, and widening the evaluation network. The workshop also benefited from presentations made by the ILO Deputy Director-General for Field Operations and Partnerships, Mr Oumarou, and Ms Frueh (Chair of the United Nations Evaluation Group) whom discussed the role of evaluation in UN reform and in the SDG era. In addition, Ms Vejs (Director of PARDEV) discussed the use of evaluation results, and Ms Rossignotti (Deputy-Director, PROGRAM), presented the requirements for an enabling environment to enhance the use of evaluation results, to name a few external speakers. The conclusions and action points that emerged from the workshop will inform the direction of the evaluation function for the 2018-19 biennium.



Mr Thijs (Director of EVAL), Ms Frueh (UNEG Chair) and Mr Oumarou (ILO Deputy-Director General) discussing evaluation in the ILO reform and SDG era



The evaluation network at the biennial workshop

Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO development cooperation: A meta-analysis of project evaluation, 2013-2016

The recently published [meta-analysis](#) represents the findings of an assessment covering final independent evaluations, which were completed between 2013 and 2016. The report is intended to contribute to optimizing the performance and effectiveness of ILO's

development cooperation strategies, approaches and projects.

New automated system for tracking management response to evaluation recommendations

EVAL, with support from the Department of Information and Technology Management (INFOTEC), launched an automated system to follow up on management response to recommendations from independent evaluations. Launched in February 2018, the system is designed to improve efficiency of ILO staff by reducing mechanical tasks and to improve organizational learning and accountability through a wider and timelier use of evaluations. The need for strengthening the decentralized evaluation management response mechanism was also recognized by the 2016 [Independent Evaluation of the ILO's Evaluation Function](#). The automated system effectively incorporates data visualization tools and clarifies reporting lines, all in an effort to support results-based management across the ILO. Training sessions on how to use the new automated system will take place in April-May 2018 with Regional Evaluation Officers and Departmental Evaluation Focal Points.

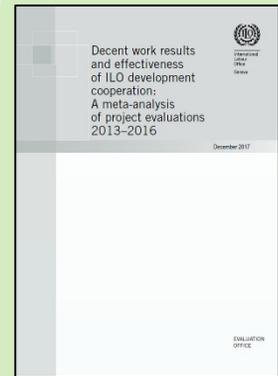
New EVAL collaboration site and filing system on SharePoint

With support from INFOTEC, all modules from EVAL's Knowledge Sharing Platform, including the consultant database, mission reports and calendar of events will be migrated to SharePoint by the end of April. This collaboration site will be accessible to all ILO staff and selected external individuals. EVAL's newly restructured filing system will also be hosted in SharePoint and will be operational by the end of the month.

Introduction to the 2018 high-level evaluations

Each year, EVAL manages at least two strategy and/or policy evaluations and one Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) evaluation. These high-level evaluations (HLEs) are mandated by, and presented to, the Governing Body (GB) during its final session of the year. This year's 2018 HLEs consist of:

- Independent evaluation of ILO's capacity development efforts 2010-2017;



- Independent evaluation of ILO's strategies and actions for improved youth employment prospects 2012-2017; and
- Independent Evaluation of ILO's Programme of Work in Lebanon and Jordan in terms of Decent Work and the Response to the Syrian refugee crisis 2014-2018.

Learning Activities and Events

Evaluation Manager Certification Programme

The objective of the Evaluation Manager Certification Programme (EMCP) is to develop the required knowledge, skills and attitudes of ILO professional staff to manage independent evaluations on an occasional basis for the organisation. This will be the sixth year that EVAL and its partners, the ITC-Turin and HRD-Talent, have supported the programme. For the first time, the EMCP workshop will be held on the ILO's HQ premises. The programme consists of two-week distance learning phase, a three-day workshop and will be followed by a guided practice that consists of managing an actual project evaluation. Upon successful conclusion of the workshop and practicum, participants will receive a certification signed by the ILO Director-General. The workshop is scheduled for 30 October to 1 November, 2018. There will be no cost for HQ participants. Please contact eval@ilo.org for more information.

Internal evaluation training programme

By popular demand, EVAL and its partners, the ITC-Turin and HRD-Talent, are reprising the Internal Evaluation Certification Programme. The objective of the programme is to increase the frequency and enhance the quality of internal evaluations, improve their utility, and contribute to organizational learning. The programme will be delivered through a blended format: there will be four distance-learning modules, a one week face-to-face workshop and finally an application/coaching phase. Upon successful conclusion of the workshop and practicum, participants will receive a certification signed by the ILO Director-General. The workshop is scheduled to take place from 7-11 May, 2018 at the campus of the ITC-Turin. All tuition fees, lodging and board will be covered by the HRD training credits. In some exceptional cases, projects for TC staff

are covering funding for the training, which shows a strong commitment for evaluation.

NEW: Training programme for ILO Constituents on evaluation in the SDG era

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development places new demands on countries to establish national frameworks that review the progress made in achieving the 17 SDGs. The involvement of ILO's tripartite constituents in the national reviews is critical to ensure that sufficient attention is paid to the SDGs relevant to Decent Work. In response, EVAL is developing a training package for tripartite constituents on evaluation in the context of the SDGs to enhance their capacities.

Orientation for Consultants

EVAL is currently working on developing an orientation package for future evaluation consultants to increase their familiarity with the unique aspects of the ILO. The orientation provides an overview of the ILO's work, the types of ILO engagement, as well as an introduction to EVAL and the types of evaluations that are conducted in the ILO. Participants will receive credentials for participation and completion. The orientation is scheduled to be complete by the end of the year.

External knowledge sharing, conferences, courses and webinars

UNEG – The 2018 Evaluation Week takes place in Rome from 7-11 May. It comprises three components: a professional development seminar, an evaluation practice exchange and an annual general meeting.

Canadian Evaluation Society: Held from 26-29 and 31 May-June 1 2018 in Calgary and Yellowknife, this year's theme for the conference is *co-creation*.

Blogs on evaluation

- ✓ [World Bank Blog on Impact Evaluation](#)
- ✓ [Evaluation Capacity Development Group](#)
- ✓ [African Development Bank eval- blog](#)

Other evaluation newsletters

- ✓ [United Nations Evaluation Group](#)
- ✓ [IOS Inspection & Evaluation](#)
- ✓ [EVAL Partners Newsletter](#)

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