



# ▶ Guidance Note 5.5: Dissemination of Lessons Learned and Emerging Good Practices

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This guidance note is part of Pillar 5 ▶ *Use and dissemination of evaluation findings*

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The purpose of this Guidance Note is to ensure that high quality lessons learned and good practices emerge from all ILO evaluations. It is addressed to all users of evaluation, and particularly to project staff and evaluation managers who should be working with the evaluation consultants to ensure that lessons learned and emerging good practices are captured accurately in the report.

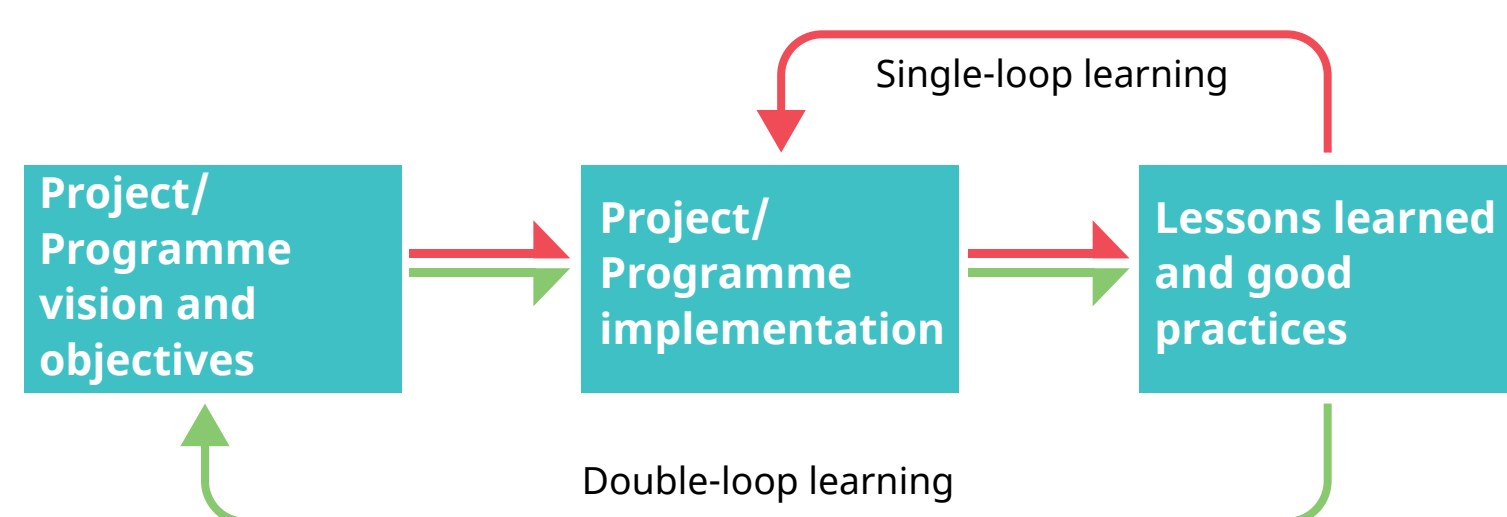
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Two of the most important purposes of evaluation are to contribute to improvements in project or programme performance and to promote organizational learning. Evaluations are expected to generate useful lessons that can be applied to these purposes. This guidance note is meant to ensure that high quality lessons learned and good practices emerge from all ILO evaluations. All lessons and good practices from independent evaluations are collected and recorded by the Evaluation Office (EVAL) and are made publicly available through [i-eval Discovery](#) (see Guidance note 5.3).

The knowledge produced by evaluations in the form of lessons learned and good practices can also be categorized as single and double loop learning. These learning loops are depicted in figure 1.

Figure 1. Learning from lessons learned and good practices



Single loop learning focuses on applying information to the immediate project or programme which is the subject of an evaluation. Double loop learning occurs when knowledge generated from an evaluation of one project is applied to the design of others.

## ► 1. KEY ELEMENTS OF LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Lessons learned and good practices are generated from evaluation reports and can be used to learn from past mistakes, include design features that have been shown to improve outcomes and operate more efficiently. They should, therefore, be incorporated into future projects/programmes.

EVAL expects evaluations to be gender responsive and take into account race, ethnicity, indigenous identity, disability and the ILO’s normative work. These types of issues should be included as cross-cutting dimensions whenever lessons learned or emerging good practices are discussed. Evaluations should include data and information that is disaggregated so that these types of issues can be examined and an assessment can be made of the relevance and effectiveness of the ILO’s work. They should consider effects on gender equality, inclusion of people with disabilities and other marginalized groups. In addition, they should identify circumstances of empowering people, and eliminating discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, indigenous identity and/or disability.

EVAL developed templates for evaluators to easily capture lessons learned and good practices (Annexes 1 and 2). The information is collected, coded, stored and made publicly available through [i-eval Discovery](#). This information supports three core levels of the ILO’s work: 1) project design, 2) identifying trends in technical and administrative aspects of project implementation and 3) evidence-based lessons for consideration during the design and evaluation of country programmes and strategies.

Lessons learned and emerging good practices exist along a continuum. A lesson learned is generated which documents something that either went well for the project or programme

or something that did not work as well. A lesson learned may become an “emerging good practice” when enough evidence is available to suggest positive results or benefits, and its potential for replication or up-scaling to other ILO projects. However, good practices may emerge on their own through the course of a project and subsequent evaluation. These good practices can be derived from comparing findings across multiples settings and policies, or emerge from a single technical intervention. Key elements of lessons learned and good practices are presented below.

### Key elements

| Lessons learned   | Good practices  |
|---|---|
| A lesson learned is based on a positive or negative experience on the part of a project or programme.                     | An emerging good practice should demonstrate consistent, successful results and measurable impact.  |
| A lesson learned should specify the context from which it is derived, and within which it may be relevant for future use. | An emerging good practice implies a mapped logic indicating a clear cause-effect process through which it is possible to derive a model or methodology for replication.   |
| A lesson learned explains how or why something did or did not work.   | An emerging good practice is supported by documented evidence of sustainable benefit.   |
| A lesson learned should indicate how well it contributes to the broader goals of the project or programme                 | An emerging good practice has an established and clear contribution to ILO policy goals and demonstrates how that policy or practice aligns, directly or indirectly, to the needs of relevant beneficiaries or targeted groups. |

## ► 2. CRITERIA FOR CAPTURING LESSONS LEARNED AND EMERGING GOOD PRACTICES

EVAL has developed a set of criteria for lessons learned and good practices which is presented below. The purpose of the criteria is two-fold. First, the criteria lays out what is required to describe these two types of information in a comprehensive manner. Second, the criteria should help to distinguish what is a lesson learned and what is an emerging good practice. By considering these criteria when identifying and capturing lessons learned and good practices, EVAL aims to develop consistency in the kind of information contained within i-eval Discovery that is available for use.

Each of the following criteria should be considered, included and adequately explained to ensure that lessons learned are complete and useful. Specific instructions are provided to consultants conducting evaluations for the ILO and templates provided for this purpose must be filled in as a part of the evaluation's submission.<sup>1</sup>

### Lessons learned criteria checklist

**The evaluator should cite and explain the points below, when appropriate**

**Brief description of lesson learned** (link to specific action or task)

**Context and any related preconditions** – Explain the context from which the lesson has been derived (e.g. economic, social, political, racial, gender related). If possible, connect it to the broader ILO mandates or broader technical or regional activities. This information will help future programme designers determine whether or not it is likely to be relevant to their work.

**Targeted users / beneficiaries**

**Challenges / negative lessons -causal factors** – Present evidence of any difficulties, problems or obstacles encountered / solutions found - Positive and negative aspects of the lesson should be described.

**Success / Positive lessons – causal factors** – Present evidence of how the lesson learned benefited the project, improved outcomes, or improved the processes involved.

**Success** – The lessons learned should cite any decisions, tasks, or processes that reduced or eliminated deficiencies or built successful and sustainable practice and performance; or have the potential of success.

ILO Administrative issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)

The following criteria for identifying an **emerging good practice** should be fully considered and addressed in the evaluation.

### Emerging Good Practice Criteria Checklist

**The evaluator should cite and explain the points below**

**The Good Practice** - Cite as specifically as possible the task, strategy, process or practice which works and how it works. Be sure to link this to a project's relevance and purpose.

**Relevant conditions and context** – Indicate the circumstances under which the good practice took place and cite anything that might affect its application to other settings (e.g. problems and obstacles). Provide relevant preconditions or specific organizational aspects which contributed to the emerging good practice.

**Cause-effect relationship** – This is sometimes linked to context and beneficiaries, and should also indicate where project design and objectives, or the prevailing theory of change in the project can be linked to the emerging good practice. Evidence should include discussion of any anticipated or unanticipated risks emerged and how they were mitigated.

**Impact & beneficiaries** – Explain who are the targeted beneficiaries or users of the good practice and the impact this practice may have on them.

**Potential for replication** – Cite specific reasons why the emerging good practice is considered to be potentially replicable in different contexts.

**Link to ILO policy goals** – When possible, indicate any relevant contribution or link to the broader ILO policy goals or country programme outcomes.

1. The handout to evaluators is [Checklist 4.2: Preparing the Evaluation Report](#), which contains details on all aspects of formulating and presenting an ILO evaluation report, including the identification and presentation of lessons learned and emerging good practices in EVAL standard templates.



### ► 3. SHARING AND DISSEMINATING LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

Lessons learned and good practices are disseminated through various channels in order to be available to ILO staff and key stakeholder groups. Some of the key channels and outlets for disseminating lessons learned and good practices are illustrated below.

Figure 2: Communication strategies and channels for the dissemination of lessons learned and good practices



### ► 4. ACCESSING LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

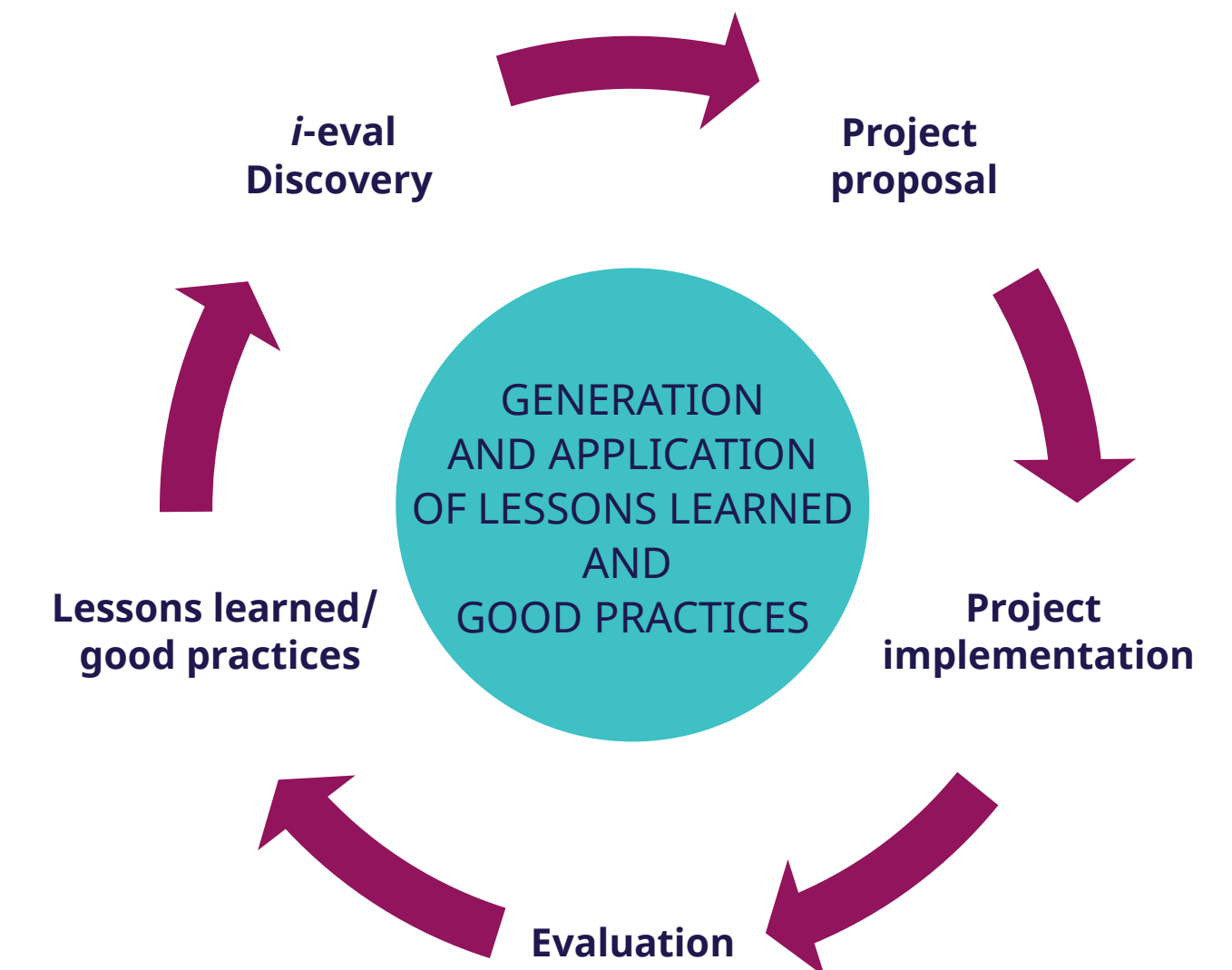
All lessons learned and good practices are publicly accessible through i-eval Discovery. For details on how to use the i-eval Discovery and retrieve lessons and good practices, please see Guidance Note 5.3.

### ► 5. USE OF LESSONS LEARNED AND GOOD PRACTICES

The dissemination of lessons learned and good practices through the various channels described in the previous section is done with an eye towards use. All of this information should be channelled into both the project or programme that is being evaluated, and into the future planning and design of new initiatives.

A primary application of lessons learned is their input into the drafting of new project proposals. The project appraisal process stipulates that all new project proposals review relevant evaluations contained in i-eval Discovery and incorporate, with proper citation, any appropriate lessons learned into new project designs. [i-eval Discovery](#) is publicly accessible and users can easily search for specific lessons learned or good practices that can be incorporated into new project proposals.

All line managers are accountable for ensuring proper use of relevant evaluation findings, lessons learned, good practices and recommendations. The process provides effective management information to support organizational objectives by replicating successful outcomes and avoiding unsuccessful efforts.



# ANNEX I. TEMPLATE FOR PRESENTING LESSONS LEARNED

## ILO LESSON LEARNED TEMPLATE

Project Title:

Project TC/SYMBOL:

Name of Evaluator:

Date:

*The following lesson learned has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text explaining the lesson may be included in the full evaluation report.*

**LL Element**

**Text**

Brief description of lesson learned (link to specific action or task)

Context and any related preconditions

Targeted users / Beneficiaries

Challenges /negative lessons - Causal factors

Success / Positive Issues - Causal factors

ILO Administrative Issues (staff, resources, design, implementation)

## ANNEX II. TEMPLATE FOR PRESENTING AN EMERGING GOOD PRACTICE

### ILO LESSON LEARNED TEMPLATE

Project Title:

Project TC/SYMBOL:

Name of Evaluator:

Date:

*The following emerging good practice has been identified during the course of the evaluation. Further text can be found in the full evaluation report.*

**GP Element**

**Text**

Brief summary of the good practice (link to project goal or specific deliverable, background, purpose, etc.)

Relevant conditions and Context: limitations or advice in terms of applicability and replicability

Establish a clear cause-effect relationship

Indicate measurable impact and targeted beneficiaries

Potential for replication and by whom

Upward links to higher ILO Goals (DWCPs, Country Programme Outcomes or ILO's Strategic Programme Framework)

Other documents or relevant comments