8.7 Accelerator Lab Initiative
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Executive Summary

Target 8.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) holds ambitious time-bound aims for the eradication of forced labour by 2030 and the elimination of child labour by 2025. Both ambitions demand rapid and sustained progress.

Faced with the challenge of stalled progress on child labour and forced labour, development cooperation assistance being often designed and implemented in silos, and an inconsistent approach in how interventions are targeted, the 8.7 Accelerator Lab serves to concentrate and prioritise the ILO contribution to the achievement of the SDG 8.7 target through a new theory of change.

It does so by shaping a new ‘system’ of prioritising, coordinating and implementing development cooperation ‘interventions’ and accelerating results in these interventions using acceleration factors.

The six acceleration factors are the focus of national, regional and global Development Cooperation interventions, setting out the types of intervention that together are designed to accelerate the process of eliminating child labour and forced labour. These factors include fostering and developing political commitment, addressing root causes, focusing on vulnerable populations, creating and sharing knowledge, supporting sustainable financing, and leveraging innovation. These were devised on the basis of input from ILO experts and a review of a selection of DC programmes within fundamentals between 2015 and 2022.

This document shall be the basis for planning and activities for the next two years. It is the second iteration of the 8.7 Accelerator Lab’s Initiative document and will be revisited on the basis of evaluations to change or adapt as needed.
The challenge

- Inconsistent approach in strategically prioritising interventions
- Interventions often operating in silos
- Stalled progress on child labour and forced labour

The Lab’s system-level solutions

- Better targeting of interventions by using a clear evidence base
- Exchanging information to better coordinate and measure
- Accelerating action to meet SDG 8.7 targets

Intervention-level actions

Implementing six acceleration factors through national, regional and global Development Cooperation interventions

Contribution to SDG Target 8.7
1. Context

Background

Significant action is required if the eradication of forced labour by 2030 and the elimination of child labour by 2025 - the SDG 8.7 target. This is evidenced by the International Labour Organization’s (ILO) latest global estimates for forced labour and child labour showing stalled progress, the detrimental impact and an uneven recovery from the pandemic. It is also acknowledged that these challenges will continue to arise, particularly driven by climate change and its impacts.

The 8.7 Accelerator Lab therefore serves to concentrate and prioritise the ILO contribution to the overall achievement of the SDG 8.7 target, working to deliver as One ILO within:

- the framework of the Integrated Strategy on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work 2017–2023,
- the underlying IPEC+ strategy,
- Outputs 1.4 and 7 of the Director-General’s Programme and Budget proposals for 2024–25
- The Durban Call to Action, and
- the ILO’s call for a Global Coalition for Social Justice which will position the ILO to scale up and accelerate efforts in favour of the advancement of all the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, including forced labour and child labour.

This document provides an update to the initial 8.7 Accelerator Lab Initiative document from 2022, reflecting two years of implementation and learning since the Lab’s inception, and adapting to changing realities and evidence of how to meet the SDG 8.7 Targets.

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The role of the ILO

Since its creation, the ILO has worked on addressing child labour and forced labour. To support its mandate as the custodian of International Labour Standards on those issues, the ILO’s Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch (FUNDAMENTALS) was established. The Branch supports governments, workers and employers’ organisations to fulfil their obligations to respect, to promote and to realise, in good faith, all fundamental principles and rights at work – including child labour and forced labour.

How does the 8.7 Accelerator Lab fit into this picture?

The 8.7 Accelerator Lab is an Initiative of the FUNDAMENTALS Branch. Rather than reinventing the wheel, it builds on and leverages the ILO’s extensive experience in tackling child labour and forced labour, with a focus on accelerating results.

It does this by shaping a new ‘system’ of prioritising, coordinating and implementing development cooperation projects and accelerating results using acceleration factors in its Development Cooperation (DC) ‘interventions’. The Accelerator Lab as an initiative also intends to stay on top of current trends and best practice so that the results of piloting interventions can also influence and inform necessary changes at the system level.
2. The Structure of the 8.7 Accelerator Lab

The System Level: A new way to prioritise, coordinate and implement development cooperation

The innovative approach which underpins the Accelerator Lab is reflected by its role in advocating for a ‘system level’ change across all ILO DC interventions aimed at eliminating child labour and forced labour. At the system-level, the Accelerator Lab focuses on three pillars to improve: ‘targeting’, ‘exchanging’, and ‘accelerating’ of ILO DC interventions on child labour and forced labour.

These pillars have been identified to address three overarching challenges related to child labour and forced labour, namely, prioritisation, project design, and stubbornly high estimates of these issues globally.

The Initiative has identified tools to promote a more evidence-based targeting of DC interventions, map successes, and increase efficiency and effectiveness by working across projects, finding synergies and opportunities for joint action.
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<th>Challenge 1</th>
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<td>There is a lack of strategic prioritisation and evidence-based targeting of interventions.</td>
<td>Development cooperation projects to eliminate child labour and forced labour are often designed and implemented in silos.</td>
<td>There are an estimated 160 million child labourers (and 8 million increase from the previous global estimates) and 28 people in forced labour (3 million higher than the previous estimates).</td>
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**Solution 1: Targeting**

The Lab ‘targets’ by identifying where interventions are best placed. This involves matching needs and political commitment through the use of evidence-based methodologies for prioritising development cooperation.

**Solution 2: Exchanging**

The Lab ‘exchanges’ by working together and across projects in a more coordinated manner, starting at the design phase and through a lightly earmarked funding approach; by setting harmonised systems to measure results and promote community of practices.

**Solution 3: Accelerating**

The Lab ‘accelerates’ results to end child labour and forced labour by defining and implementing methodologically strong and evidence-based solutions to increase the effectiveness of interventions.

**Ongoing examples**

- The Lab has developed a series of tools to support improved targeting of programming. This includes a tool that summarises needs for programming - by reviewing comments and observations of the ILO’s Committee of Experts - and evidence of enabling environments - by reviewing member state requests for technical assistance on child labour and/or forced labour. See more on this below.

- To promote the exchange of ideas and information the Accelerator Lab:
  - has developed measurable key performance indicators (KPI) to monitor the effectiveness of interventions.
  - has designed and piloted projects across four countries and two sectors to harmonise these KPIs
  - publishes a progress report of activities and impact of the Lab
  - holds donor meetings as an opportunity to effectively exchange best practices and learnings with partners.
  - Promotes knowledge sharing via a new Community of Practice.

- There are a number of ways in which the Lab is testing approaches to accelerating action. This includes:
  - undertaking a mapping of ILO programming to understand the extent to which the 6 acceleration factors of the Lab are covered by programming on child labour and forced labour. This supports both targeting and accelerating interventions by highlighting opportunities to promote effective interventions and to fill any potential existing gaps.
  - designing and planning an innovation workshop allowing ILO constituents and funding partners to participate in an annual review and learning forum.
Summary of opportunities for more targeted DC interventions

As part of the 8.7 Accelerator Lab’s work to improve how DC interventions are targeted and prioritised, a tool has been developed to support ILO staff in identifying ‘programming needs’ and ‘enabling environments’ across ILO member states. An analysis of data in this tool highlights the following related to further opportunities for more targeted interventions.

Forced labour

42/72 countries with no support

Between 2021 and 2023, 79 countries received Observations from the Committee of Experts on the application of C029 and/or C105. In this same period, 6 were countries asked to submit information to CAS under these Conventions. Of the 79, 37 have existing or recent ILO programming on FPRW, of which 26 have programming focused on forced labour or child labour and forced labour combined. This leaves 42 without any Fundamentals programming despite identified challenges in application of the conventions, highlighting opportunities for additional ILO interventions.

4 countries asking for but without support on Forced Labour Conventions 29 and 105

Between 2019 and 2023, four countries requested technical assistance from the ILO concerning the application of C029 and C105. Three of these countries have also had Observations from the Committee of Experts under these conventions, with the same three being named on the US Department of State’s Trafficking in Persons Watchlist. However, none of the countries that have requested technical assistance have ILO programming on any of FPRW – signalling an opportunity for additional programming in potentially enabling environments.

Child labour

63/103 countries with no support

Between 2021 and 2023, 103 countries received Observations regarding the application of C138 and/or C182. Seven of these countries were asked to submit information to CAS. Only 46 of the 103 countries have current or recent ILO programming on FPRW, of which 40 have programming with a focus on child labour, highlighting an opportunity for more targeted child labour focused interventions.

7 countries asking for but without support on Child Labour Conventions 138 and 182

Only 10 countries have requested technical assistance from the ILO in relation to the application of C138 or C182. Eight of the ten have also received Observations from Committee of Experts about either child labour convention or have been asked to submit information to CAS. However, only 3 of the 10 countries have programming on child labour. This highlights further opportunities for interventions in contexts where there are indicators of an enabling environment and need for interventions.

A further 32 countries also requested technical assistance regarding P029 in 2021. Of these, 18 have existing ILO programming– 10 on forced labour, and another 8 with programming on other FPRW. All those countries with programming on forced labour are IPEC+ countries, and 5 have forced labour standards within EU or US trade agreements, highlighting the positive role these can play in promoting action.
The Intervention Level: Accelerating results using acceleration factors

Based on the review conducted at the System level, the Accelerator Lab supports tripartite actors and civil society in targeting and implementing DC interventions through national, regional and global DC programming. Accelerated action is then achieved by embracing the six acceleration factors across the ILO interventions.

The Lab’s approach at the system level to better target, exchange or accelerate action is being concretely tested and adapted at the intervention level through national, regional and global programming.

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<th>Regional</th>
<th>Global</th>
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<td>A portfolio of national interventions is assembled to accelerate action on forced labour and child labour. The portfolio includes interventions that demonstrate feasibility for achieving the SDG 8.7 target, accelerate the eradication of forced labour and elimination of child labour at scale and initiate action where there is currently limited progress.</td>
<td>The regional emphasis supports the coordination of key stakeholders and partners and their sharing of common challenges and opportunities. It looks to enhance South–South cooperation and triangular cooperation and promote peer-to-peer learning while encouraging solutions across transnational sectors.</td>
<td>The global direction harnesses technical expertise and fosters coordination, including through Alliance 8.7 and other critical initiatives led by or jointly implemented by the ILO, (e.g. Durban Call to Action follow up, ILO Global Accelerator for Jobs and Social Protection, Fair Recruitment Initiative and ITCILO training programmes related to FPRW) to share good practices, generate knowledge and reduce duplication.</td>
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Integrating approaches to accelerate action, harnessing social dialogue
3. Acceleration factors

To accelerate action on child labour and forced labour the Lab adopted a strategic approach in March 2022, identifying through consultations and an in-depth review of past project evaluations, six cross-cutting Acceleration Factors that serve as pillars for programming at the national, regional, and global levels.

The acceleration factors derive from an in-depth assessment of what can positively effect change in policy and practice at scale. The emphasis is on benefiting the most vulnerable persons and helping to address gaps in programming while combining forward-looking innovations and scaling up effective practices.

At a system level, the Lab reviews existing ILO programming to understand whether the factors needed to accelerate action on child labour and forced labour are present. And for ILO programmes, the Acceleration Factors provide a menu of options to support designing more effective interventions.

**Foster and develop political commitment**
Political commitment is central for eradicating forced labour and child labour, for creating buy-in to develop an evidence base to inform policy and legal reforms, for resourcing these activities and policies, for perpetuating ongoing monitoring and for supporting change.

**Address root causes**
Effective action on forced labour and child labour requires understanding and addressing the root causes. Sustainable interventions are also needed for lasting impact on those root causes.

**Focus on vulnerable populations**
Impact can be accelerated by harnessing attention and resources towards people most vulnerable to forced labour or child labour.

**Create and share knowledge**
Evidence and robust data are required to identify and target the greatest needs, establish a baseline and measure progress. Sharing this information is necessary to determine where and how the resources can be most effectively used.

**Support sustainable financing**
Sustainable resources to ensure the sustainability of impact beyond project timelines – from Member State and private sector financing will allow for continued action on the root causes.

**Leverage innovation**
Acceleration on SDG 8.7 progress needs and feeds on new ideas and expanding the use of effective approaches in new contexts. It specifically requires the ILO and its social partners to leverage the use of new technologies to add extra value to existing approaches.
Case study: How the acceleration factors have been used in the design phase of the GALAB project

At the inception stage the GALAB project used the acceleration factors as a framework to determine the design the project. Below explains how two factors were used to shape GALAB’s approach.

- The Global Accelerator Lab (GALAB) Project is a USDOL standalone contribution to the 8.7 Accelerator Lab initiative that aims at intensifying action against child labour and forced labour through innovation. Launched in 2021, the initial conception phase focused on refining the project design using the acceleration factors.

- Firstly, the Acceleration Factor to focus on vulnerable populations stresses the effect of poverty and the importance of expanding social protection to families dependent on child labour. Therefore, when designing and targeting the interventions on child labour in Ghana, the Project made sure to incorporate measures to expand social protection to vulnerable families in Bono East and Oti regions.

- Likewise, the Acceleration Factor on addressing the root causes highlights social dialogue, freedom of association and collective bargaining as a crucial framework through which workers, including family-based farmers, can join forces to increase wages and invest jointly in technology. The Project has therefore identified districts (Pru East and Krachie Nchumburu) in which community-based committees to end child labour will be established to raise the voice of workers and families and to find solutions together in partnership with the Trade Union Congress (GAWU).

For more information on the project see.

Case study: how the acceleration factors have been used in the implementation phase of the Multi Partner Fund

In August 2022, a fishing vessel was detained by the South African Maritime Safety Authority (SAMSA) after inspectors identified indications that workers may be subject to forced labour. SAMSA ensured repayment of wages to fishers who had not been paid, arranged for repatriation for those who wanted to return home, and made sure that the vessel owner addressed safety issues on board before the vessel could sail once more.

This inspection and subsequent detention came two weeks after a Multi Partner Fund capacity building session organised by the South Africa and global team in which the political commitment of SAMSA was both celebrated and further fostered, the focus on the vulnerability of migrant fishers was highlighted and innovative digital tools to detect forced labour at sea before vessels’ entry into port were promoted. The training also gave the team a better understanding of the root causes of the fishers’ vulnerability, the knowledge of which was then shared to the Multi Partner Fund’s counterparts in Indonesia for preventative interventions.

This experience also underlines the interconnectedness of the 6 acceleration factors as the political commitment of SAMSA has since led to an initiative to impose a welfare levy for all fishing vessels to provide sustainable financing for the Stella Maris Fishers’ Centres. Stella Maris was the first to raise the alarm about the vessel detained by SAMSA in August 2022.

For more information on the Multi Partner Fund see.
**Acceleration factor 1**

**Foster and develop political commitment**

**Increase political commitment to eradicate forced labour and eliminate child labour in contexts where it is most needed**

**National**
Create buy-in for developing an evidence base to inform policy and legal reform, to resource these activities and policies, to consistently monitor and to support ongoing changes in societal norms.

- Ensure links between interventions and the comments of the ILO supervisory system.
- Explore opportunities created by relevant international agreements.
- Ensure sufficient resourcing is available to support political commitment at all levels of government and with social partners through constant and ongoing capacity-building.
- Integrate all fundamental principles and rights at work within the United Nations Common Country Assessment (UNCCA) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), and national development planning.
- Continue efforts to engage more countries as Alliance 8.7 Pathfinder countries.
- Mobilize all national constituents around labour ministry leadership to develop a vision for action on forced labour and child labour.

**Regional**
Harness the role and leverage of regional trade, sector and development organizations to build support for inclusion of the eradication of forced labour and elimination of child labour in national agendas and regional initiatives.

**Global**
Drive political commitment through global partnerships, with the ILO taking a central role as the secretariat of Alliance 8.7.
Support the coordination of and foster partnerships between “multipliers”. This includes global social partners, multilateral development banks, international financial institutions, private investors, regional trade blocs and multistakeholder initiatives.
Harness the emerging range of legal initiatives, regional initiatives on migration and the ILO business networks (Global Business Network on Forced Labour and the Child Labour Platform) to establish and support human rights due diligence.
Acceleration factor 2

Address root causes

Identify and address the root causes of forced labour and child labour and ensure the sustainability of interventions to effect change

National

Empower governments, workers, employers and their representatives to address decent work deficits linked to fundamental principles and rights at work to ensure the sustainability of interventions.

- Take a multisector landscape approach to policy and institutional issues and encourage other actors to take on multisector solutions, such as involving a range of ministries (agriculture, rural development, education, social protection, finance, justice, trade, women’s affairs and migration), the private sector, trade unions and civil society.

- Provide technical advice on laws and policies that directly address forced labour and child labour and on those that tackle the root causes, such as discriminatory employment practices, limited freedom of association, lack of social protection, informal employment, unsafe migration and unfair recruitment.

- Work with business networks and with business schools to mainstream labour rights into their curricula to raise awareness of forced labour and child labour.

Regional

Engage societal and cultural drivers (media, social media and popular culture) to expand awareness and understanding of the issues and to build on the knowledge of what works in specific contexts, including with cross-border labour migration, to reach and communicate with targeted audiences.

Global

Integrate within a One ILO approach and harness expertise on a range of root causes, including social protection deficits, youth employment, gender inequalities, labour migration and recruitment risks and gaps in social finance.

Mobilize sustainable financing (see acceleration factor 5) to allow for continued action on root causes beyond project timelines.

Collect evidence on interventions that address the root causes at the national, sector and supply chain levels. Seek opportunities for lessons learned and evidence gathered at one level to be shared with actors at another level.
Acceleration factor 3

Focus on vulnerable populations

Accelerate results by harnessing attention and resources towards vulnerable groups who experience the greatest decent work deficits

**National**

Promote interventions in ILO programming – and actions pursued by ILO constituents within and outside those programmes – that address the vulnerabilities of populations susceptible to forced labour and child labour.

- For child labour, this means targeting interventions towards the most vulnerable children, including young children (aged 5–11), and children vulnerable to or engaged in the worst forms of child labour, children affected by conflict and crisis (including child soldiers), children at risk of commercial sexual exploitation and those involved in illicit activities.

- For forced labour, this means targeting the most disadvantaged, underserved and excluded populations, including migrants, refugees, displaced people and seasonal workers. Special attention must be directed to women and girls within these populations.

**Regional**

Share expertise and lessons learned on how to work with different vulnerable population groups and how to reduce vulnerability to forms of exploitation.

**Global**

Improve data and knowledge on populations vulnerable to forced labour and child labour.

Improve the ability to anticipate economic, climatic and demographic changes as well as their impact on the vulnerability of people at risk of forced labour and child labour.
Acceleration factor 4

Create and share knowledge

Generate and share evidence needed to target interventions towards the greatest needs, and to understand where resources are most required and how they can most effectively be used

National
Help develop an evidence base to inform policy and legal reforms.
Support knowledge expansion among policymakers, employers and workers and the expansion of governments’ capacity to collect survey-derived data and then create the evidence base to inform future policymaking.

- Build awareness on the links between forced labour and child labour and decent work deficits associated with non-discrimination, freedom of association and collective bargaining.
- Introduce integrated approaches that have worked in similar countries but that are untested in the national context.
- Monitor, evaluate and share the learning.

Regional
Take an innovative approach to Member State partnerships and involve Member States that share similar challenges related to forced labour and/or child labour.
Support platforms that promote South–South dialogue on challenges to and lessons for overcoming the root causes of forced labour and child labour, involving all ILO constituents in the process.
Work with regional organizations (including trade, sector and development organizations) on the inclusion of the eradication of forced labour and the elimination of child labour into their agendas, including monitoring.

Global
Support research in areas where knowledge gaps exist, including generating and expanding data on the root causes and the prevalence and forms of forced labour and child labour, to further target efficient resource mobilization.
Use data on specific forms of forced labour and child labour to inform better targeting of ILO interventions.
Promote the development of global research methodologies and tools to increase the visibility of interventions that work and on good practices.
Coordinate closely with the Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Research Department to ensure that relevant research is accessible online, continues to be developed and is used in the development of cooperation projects (in the designing of interventions, in linking between data and development cooperation design and implementation).
Generate knowledge on how to achieve fair recruitment and effectively disseminate through the ILO Fair Recruitment Initiative Knowledge Hub.
National

Promote sustainable resourcing and financing, including financing from Member States, recognizing that sustainable financing ultimately requires domestic resource mobilization strategies. This should include supporting ILO constituents to ensure that adequate financial resources are channelled towards decent work outcomes and supporting Member States to plan for the financing of their national action plan.

Sustain resourcing beyond individual project timelines to ensure that impact and knowledge are not lost after a project ends.

Advocate for innovative financing approaches towards SDG 8.7 progress that maximize the impact of public and private investments.

Coordinate with other catalytic investors, specifically multilateral development banks and international financial institutions, to generate public and private sector commitments and to enable change by addressing root causes.

Regional

Promote sustainable resourcing and financing from regional development banks and donors with specific regional focus.

Global

Foster interagency partnerships to avoid parallel efforts and duplication and to promote the effective use of resources and expertise.

Promote predictable and flexible funding, such as pooled donor funding and non-earmarked funding, that is commensurate to ongoing efforts to address the root causes over time. Target where impact can be optimized, and harness and coordinate multiple resource streams, from global to local resource mobilization.

Reduce the duplication of reporting, and promote smarter, integrated monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems.

Coordinating with other catalytic investors, specifically Multilateral Development Banks and International Financial Institutions, to generate public and private sector commitment and to enable change by addressing root causes.
National

Deploy and replicate existing good practices in other sectors, supply chains and regions. Support the establishment of financing and institutional arrangements so that innovation and knowledge are not lost upon the completion of each project. Harness big data and digital technology in projects to target and provide support to populations subject to forced labour and child labour and to monitor results in real time.

- Identify and prevent forced labour and child labour by triggering alerts for areas at high risk, thus facilitating monitoring, decision-making and the prioritizing of resources. Build on existing ILO and other stakeholder approaches to predictive risk modelling.
- Learn from doing – deploy real-time feedback loops based on the ongoing monitoring of forced labour and child labour.
- Reduce the delay between the identification of cases and referral to protection systems.
- Promote coordination and information-sharing between national and subnational stakeholders.

Regional

Promote the deployment and replication of existing good practices in other Member States. Harness big data and digital technology in regional projects to target and provide support to populations subject to forced labour and child labour. Monitor results in real time, specifically focusing on cross-border information-sharing to tackle trafficking in persons, prevent recruitment abuses, facilitate access to justice and remedies, facilitate regionally relevant knowledge-sharing on what works and leveraging the role of artificial intelligence (for monitoring and measurement).

Global

Actively seek and test new and innovative ideas, and harness digital innovation, including possibilities offered by artificial intelligence to build up or gather knowledge on already successful practices.

Foster an innovation community around forced labour and child labour and share transferable lessons from one sector, supply chain or Member State to another, including how to accelerate implementation by Member States of new technologies developed in the global space. Develop information systems and frameworks that allow for the involvement of multiple actors and provide the means to make different information systems complementary and compatible.
4. Responsive funding and programmatic mechanism

A Multi-Partner Fund has been set up to ensure a coherent programmatic approach and to facilitate the funding of the Accelerator Lab. The programme comprehends a multi-donor funding mechanism to ensure effective management and oversight of resources, while promoting collaboration and partnerships.

Resources are mobilised by the ILO in collaboration with tripartite partners towards meeting a funding target of US$50 million by 2030. In addition, the ILO contributes to the Accelerator Lab through its own resources, including technical expertise at the global, regional and country levels and cost-sharing operational expenditures.

This document shall be the basis for planning and activities for the next two years. It is the second iteration of the 8.7 Accelerator Lab’s Initiative document and will be revisited on the basis of evaluations to change or adapt as needed.
5. How to contribute

A pooled funding mechanism has also been set up to facilitate funding of the Accelerator Lab, and ensure effective management and oversight of resources. Current support for the Lab comes from the Canadian Government, European Commission, US Department of Labor, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development and Norad.

Join the common effort to accelerate the pace of change and support governments, workers and employers to achieve SDG Target 8.7 and align your project with the 8.7 Accelerator Lab vision and coordinate with us on where your interventions are most needed and would have the biggest impact.

Reach out to us for more information at 87acceleratorlab@ilo.org