

**FOR DEBATE AND GUIDANCE**

FIRST ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Global Employment Agenda
implementation****(c) Suggested modalities for the evaluation
of the GEA in the context of the decent
work country programmes**

1. At its November 2005 session, the Committee requested the Office to prepare a paper which would suggest modalities for the evaluation of the Global Employment Agenda (GEA) in the context of the decent work country programmes (DWCPs). More specifically, the Committee would like such an evaluation to report on two questions: (a) the impact or value added of the work of the Office, both at headquarters and in the field, in the formulation and implementation of national employment strategies at the sectoral or local level; and (b) the contribution of the GEA, i.e. was the employment policy of the country influenced by the GEA and its operational framework and, if so, how. The Committee saw this as an incremental process, building and improving upon some of the mechanisms already in place, and suggesting for the long-term future more rigorous impact assessments. The aim at this stage is to consider simple but effective tools and feedback mechanisms to better ensure that the ILO's country work on employment draws on the GEA and that discussions in the ESP Committee on the GEA learn from the results in the field.
2. In suggesting modalities in line with this thinking, effort has been made to avoid duplication with the work to be conducted by the newly set up ILO Evaluation Unit¹ and reviews of country experiences to be conducted under the preview of the ESP Committee. Indeed the suggested modalities attempt to maximize synergies between these two in order to obtain the best possible feedback for the implementation of the GEA in the development of national employment strategies and DWCPs.
3. Accordingly, Part I of this paper suggests the following modalities: (i) improvements to the present process of country presentations at the ESP Committee by linking them more explicitly with how the GEA framework contributed to their drawing up and implementation of national employment strategies and how the ILO supported this

¹ GB.294/PFA/8/4 presents a new policy and strategic framework for evaluation at the ILO and implementing arrangements and role of the Evaluation Unit.

exercise; (ii) drawing upon the evaluations of DWCPs to be conducted by the ILO Evaluation Unit to analyse how the GEA contributed to the employment component of the DWCP; and (iii) evaluation of specific instruments or groups of policy instruments for improving quantity and quality of employment, within and across countries. The specific tools to be evaluated could be identified by the ESP Committee and the evaluation in the first instance be carried out by the concerned technical unit and the results shared with the Committee.

4. Part II of the paper suggests that there are opportunities, for countries that so wish, to develop a more rigorous impact assessment of national employment strategies drawing on the GEA. This should be based on a methodology to be developed by the ILO for such an assessment, including drawing upon similar initiatives being undertaken such as the European Employment Strategy.
5. It is important in suggesting or reviewing alternative methodologies to keep in mind that the ILO already has in place a number of reporting procedures which could be drawn upon in conducting a review of the GEA. These include the constitutional reporting procedures for international labour Conventions and Recommendations adopted by the International Labour Conference such as the Employment Policy Convention, 1964 (No. 122), the Human Resources Development Convention, 1975 (No. 142), the Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment (Disabled Persons) Convention, 1983 (No. 159), the Employment Promotion and Protection against Unemployment Convention, 1988 (No. 168), the Job Creation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Recommendation, 1998 (No. 189), and the Promotion of Cooperatives Recommendation, 2002 (No. 193).²
6. Also with the ILO now operating under a results-based management framework and strategic budgeting, the Programme and Budget for 2006-07 lays out concrete outcome and success indicators for specific operational objectives which are closely related to the GEA, and the results achieved against these indicators are reported back to the Governing Body.³ These indicators, however, deal with results achieved in terms of the objectives and core elements of the GEA and not explicitly to the use of the GEA framework in achieving these results.

Part I: Proposals for reviewing the GEA's contribution to national employment strategies

Country presentations at the ESP Committee

7. As part of the regular updates on the implementation of the GEA, presentations on country experiences in developing national employment strategies in the context of their respective DWCP's, have been made by Argentina, Ghana and the Philippines to the ESP Committee in March 2005 and November 2005. These national tripartite presentations have then been commented upon by the ESP Committee's tripartite members. However, it has not always

² For a list of relevant Conventions related to employment policies see GB.295/ESP/1/1, appendix.

³ For instance, in the Programme and Budget for 2006-07, Outcome 2a.1: Employment as central to economic and social policies, which is the principal objective of the GEA, provides under Indicator 2a.1(i) that "Countries improve labour market information and analysis and formulating, implementing and evaluating employment and labour market policies, with special attention to employment and income security and equal access to decent and productive employment for all women and men", with a target of 50 countries.

been clear from the presentations how the GEA and ILO technical support contributed to the process.

8. The suggestion is that the present process of inviting a selected country to present its experience be continued, with two country presentations each biennium starting in March 2007, but with the following improvements both to make it clearer how the GEA has added value to their exercise and to make the discussion in the ESP on the presentation more interactive and meaningful. These would include:
 - (i) The country presentation specifically bring out the use made of the GEA framework and ILO input, direct and indirect, in developing the elaboration and implementation of its national employment strategy, including the extent to which the work drew from the basic concepts, approach and tools, including the checklist of key policy areas and corresponding guidelines (as suggested in the “Vision” document).⁴ The aim of these presentations is to identify good practices and lessons learnt so that countries can benefit from each other’s experiences as well as improve the delivery and effectiveness of ILO technical advisory services.
 - (ii) The country presentation to be made by the Government, Employer and Worker representatives be shared with the ESP Committee sometime before the presentation is to be made. The Office will prepare a list of basic questions to guide the elaboration of the written documents and presentations by the country delegation.
 - (iii) A tripartite delegation represented by one Government representative, one Worker representative and one Employer representative, selected by the ESP Committee visits the country to discuss primarily with policy-makers and the social partners the impact of ILO technical support to the drawing up of the employment strategy, its implementation and results achieved to date. The tripartite delegation would share its report with the ESP Committee sometime before the corresponding ESP session and presents this report to the ESP Committee after the country presentation. The costs of this exercise will be charged to the Employment Sector regular budget for the biennium.
 - (iv) Based on the country presentation, the comments by the tripartite delegation and the discussion in the ESP Committee, the Office provides feedback especially to the ILO technical advisory services on key lessons learnt and what does and what does not seem to work.
 - (v) Once a group of countries has made presentations at the ESP Committee, the Office would draft a synthesis report drawing on good practices and experiences which would be shared with the ESP Committee as well as being more widely distributed.

The ILO strategic framework for evaluation

9. The newly adopted policy and strategic framework for evaluation at the ILO aims to improve and strengthen the practice of independent evaluation at the ILO. It also establishes principles for systematic self-evaluation of programme performance so that together these provide comprehensive coverage of all ILO activities supporting the 2006-09 Strategic Policy Framework.
10. Under the country programme evaluation, the Evaluation Unit would conduct an independent evaluation of at least one country programme each year over the next two

⁴ GB.295/ESP/1/1.

biennia. These country evaluations will aim to reinforce implementation of DWCPs and new approaches to this process. Since in the case of most countries the entry point into the DWCP process is job creation, these evaluations, especially of those countries which give high priority to employment goals, will examine in some depth how employment priorities reflected in the DWCP have been operationalized with ILO technical support and the results achieved. Such an assessment could be viewed against the framework of the GEA and its main policy areas as operationalized in the “Vision” document. Indeed, with the DWCPs now serving as the main vehicle for ILO policy advice and technical advisory services, it would be important to evaluate the contribution of the GEA within the DWCP framework.

Assessment of specific instruments or groups of policy instruments

11. The ILO has developed a number of specific instruments, tools and methodologies in support of generating more and better jobs for women and men in many parts of the world. These include to name a few, employment-intensive investment approaches, community-based rehabilitation, active labour market policies for job and enterprise creation, women’s entrepreneurship development, upgrading of informal enterprises and community-based training.
12. These instruments and tools are a vital component in the implementation of national employment strategies especially at the sectoral and local level. Many of these have been successfully evaluated as part of national technical cooperation projects. The challenge in many cases is to scale-up these successful micro- or project-level interventions at the national level as well as to replicate them in other countries.
13. In consultations with the ESP Committee, one or two key instruments and tools could be identified each biennium and impact assessed at the country level, including issues related to its upscaling, or across a selected number of countries to draw lessons from why it has worked more effectively with better results in some countries rather than others. These evaluations, that could in the first instance be conducted by the concerned technical unit, could be shared with the ESP Committee.

Part II: Possible future directions for more rigorous impact assessments and reviews of national employment strategies

Impact assessments⁵

14. Impact assessment of a programme or project has received increasing attention in recent years and has become an important component of the kit of evaluation tools and approaches of a number of development agencies including the World Bank, the EU, and

⁵ There is large body of literature on methodology and experiences on conducting impact assessments. See, for example, J. Baker: *Evaluating the impact of development projects on poverty: A handbook for practitioners*, World Bank, 2000; and Cherp, A. George, C., Kirkpatrick, C.: *A Methodology for Assessing National Sustainable Development Strategies*, Impact Assessment Research Centre (IARC), Working Paper Series No. 6, 2004. For materials and tools on how to conduct strategic level poverty and social impact assessments (PSIA), see the World Bank web site: www.worldbank.org .

several national donor agencies. Defined as the systematic identification of the effects – positive or negative, intended or not – caused by a given development activity, impact assessments can range from large-scale sample surveys to small-scale rapid assessment and participatory appraisals where estimates of impact are obtained from combining group interviews, key informants, case studies and available secondary data. Impact assessments can be used for measuring outcomes and impacts of an activity, help clarify whether costs for an activity are justified, or drawing lessons for improving the design and management of future activities. The advantage of carrying out such an assessment is to provide answers to the important questions. To what extent is the intervention making a difference? What are the results on the ground? How can it do better?

15. The Office could, over a longer term, develop a methodology for measuring and assessing the impacts of employment policy interventions on employment performance at the national level, based on the GEA operational framework as identified in the checklist of key policy areas and tools outlined in the “Vision” document. The methodology could include practical guidance and tools for defining specific quantitative and measurable targets for national employment strategies and for conducting assessments of progress towards achieving the targets so defined. The approach adopted would need to be practical and sufficiently flexible for application in a range of different contexts and with varying resource constraints. At the same time, it would need to have the capacity to provide clear and timely information to decision-makers on the expected or actual impact of interventions made in the context of the implementation of the GEA to develop national employment strategies, policies and programmes.

The European Employment Strategy and its assessment tools

16. The European Employment Strategy (EES) has been the means since 1997 by which the EU has attempted to “define common objectives in relation to employment policy and detailed guidelines for the development of the employment policies of Member States”. The European Commission currently describes the goals of the employment strategy as: full employment (more jobs); job quality and labour productivity (better and more productive jobs); fostering cohesion and an inclusive labour market (greater social cohesion). These objectives are to be reflected in national employment policies and goals, namely: to attract and retain more people in employment; increase labour supply and modernize social protection systems; to improve adaptability of workers and enterprises; and to increase investment in human capital through better education and skills.
17. The implementation of the EES relies on what is called the “open method of coordination”.⁶ The coordination of national employment policies at EU level is built around an annual reporting cycle: integrated employment guidelines which set common priorities agreed at the Council level; national reform programmes (NRPs) which are the reports of the member countries monitoring the fulfilment of the guidelines; a joint employment report (drafted by the Commission, adopted by the Council, assessing all NRPs); and recommendations (decided by the Council on proposals by the Commission). This process is not, however, in any way supported or enforced by mandatory directives to member States.

⁶ Since 2005 a new reporting system has been adopted which integrates the employment and the broad economic policy guidelines. However, the “open method of coordination” is still valid and so is the annual reporting cycle.

- 18.** The strategy uses quantified measurements, targets and benchmarks, to allow for better monitoring and evaluation of progress. Since 2003 use is made of 40 key indicators and 64 context indicators, with the latter supporting analysis of the NRPs. These indicators cover the areas of employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability and equal opportunities between women and men (for example the prevention of long-term unemployment, activating of unemployed persons, lifelong learning, disadvantaged groups, enterprise birth and survival rates, quality in work and gender gaps) as well as the overall performance indicators of the labour market (for example employment, full-time equivalent employment, unemployment, youth unemployment, long-term unemployment, employment growth, labour productivity growth and real unit labour costs).
- 19.** How could the EES model be used in developing a framework for assessing and monitoring the implementation of the GEA? The “Checklist of key policy areas” presented in the “Vision” document, could serve for countries, that so wish, to develop national guidelines, benchmarks and targets. For each key policy area and sub-area of policy intervention, the Office could work in developing appropriate qualitative and quantitative indicators to measure progress for use by countries in both the drawing up of national employment strategies as well as in monitoring progress.⁷ The ILO could then work closely with countries that voluntarily wish to apply this methodology. The country and the Office could report to the ESP Committee on the progress and results of this application.

Conclusions

- 20.** Based on the foregoing review of possible evaluation modalities, the ESP Committee is invited to consider the options presented, mainly for the immediate future (Part I), as well as its views on the possible development of a more rigorous country-level impact assessment methodology for the GEA and its application, over the longer term (Part II).

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Submitted for debate and guidance.

⁷ This could draw on the ILO’s Key Indicators of the Labour Market (KILM).