



Governing Body

352nd Session, Geneva, 28 October–7 November 2024

Programme, Financial and Administrative Section

PFA

Programme, Financial and Administrative Segment

Date: 9 October 2024

Original: English

Third item on the agenda

ILO Strategy on knowledge and innovation across the Organization: Updated Strategy and implementation plan

Purpose of the document

As requested by the Governing Body at its March 2023 session, the Office is herewith presenting for review an updated Strategy and implementation plan on knowledge and innovation for review at the October–November 2024 session of the Governing Body. It invites the Governing Body to provide comments and guidance (see the draft decision in paragraph 66).

Relevant strategic objective: All.

Main relevant outcome: Enabler A: Enhanced knowledge, innovation, cooperation and communication to advance social justice.

Policy implications: Enabling actions to support innovation in policy design and interventions, with improved knowledge functions throughout the Office.

Legal implications: None.

Financial implications: None.

Follow-up action required: Yes.

Author unit: Office of the Deputy Director-General and the International Training Centre of the ILO.

Related documents: [GB.347/PFA/4](#); [GB.346/PFA/1](#); [GB.344/PFA/5](#); [GB.341/PFA/1](#); [GB.335/INS/9](#).

► I. Introduction

1. In a technical United Nations (UN) agency, such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), innovation should aim to generate, test and scale up novel ideas, processes, products and services that support constituents to achieve the goal of social justice through decent work.¹ Knowledge and innovation, while distinct functions, are fundamentally interconnected, each amplifying the impact of the other. Effective knowledge management processes lay the groundwork for innovation, providing the critical context in which new processes, products and services can be tested, refined and scaled. Conversely, innovation drives the creation of new knowledge, enriching the Organization's overall capacity to adapt, thrive and lead.
2. In this broader context, the ILO Strategy on knowledge and innovation² discussed by the Governing Body at its 347th Session in March 2023 outlined an Office-wide approach to address constituents' needs for innovative policies, products and services at the global, regional and national levels. The Strategy aimed to promote agility and coherence, and deliver better results around four strategic priorities: (i) strengthening internal capacity for knowledge management and innovation across the ILO's organizational structure; (ii) fostering innovation policies, products and services for the achievement of decent work and social justice; (iii) developing partnerships to support innovation in the world of work; and (iv) reinforcing a culture of knowledge and innovation.
3. The 347th Session of the Governing Body provided guidance on the proposed Strategy, requesting the Office to strengthen the framework, including the vision, goals and actions, and provide a clearer governance structure and further details regarding the Strategy's financial sustainability.
4. In response to this guidance, this paper presents an updated Strategy and implementation plan, and summarizes the actions taken to operationalize the knowledge and innovation functions over the 2024–25 biennium, including progress and challenges faced in both functions, with a view to receiving further guidance from the Governing Body.

► II. Updated Strategy and implementation plan

Governance

5. Given the knowledge-driven nature of the ILO, and the broader complex nature of innovation, the responsibility for conducting these functions is not confined to a single managing unit. Both functions are integral to the Organization's success and should be leveraged across various departments and field offices, based on their needs and in response to constituents' priorities.
6. This approach requires leveraging the capabilities of the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC-IL), along with those of Research and Publications, Statistics, policy departments and field offices, relying on the Office's expertise, resources and existing infrastructure through a

¹ See the [UN 2.0 Quintet of Change](#) for a broader UN system perspective on these issues.

² GB.347/PFA/4.

coordinated strategy. The four priority action programmes, the [Global Coalition for Social Justice](#) and the [Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions](#), which have explicit deliverables under the Programme and Budget 2024–25, have concrete roles in promoting knowledge-sharing and innovation in their respective areas. Field offices are crucial in driving a demand-driven and bottom-up approach (in line with Decent Work Country Programmes), which requires strengthening mechanisms for coordination and flow of information.

7. Based on the Governing Body's request to strengthen the Strategy and its implementation plan, the Office has taken several actions since March 2023 to address the integration of activities, improve coordination and foster a broader culture of knowledge and innovation.
8. First, the Office took stock of the results of prior innovation initiatives, knowledge assessments and needs surveys across the Organization that have informed the pipeline of work for the 2024–25 biennium further described below. Lessons learned ³ from previous policy innovation facilities show that innovation thrives on collaboration and networking, where diverse ideas and creativity are fostered through shared platforms and communities. Leveraging technology can enhance efficiency and engagement, making processes more transparent and effective. Capacity-building and knowledge-sharing can ensure that innovative methodologies are sustainably implemented and continuously improved, while flexibility and adaptability are crucial in response to changing circumstances, and inherent to innovation.
9. Internal reviews have indicated a significant demand for strengthening digital-led approaches. For example, the ILO Skills Mapping exercise launched in 2023 has highlighted a strong desire for developing technical skills on artificial intelligence (AI) and data analytics, as reported by staff. In addition, constituents have also indicated a demand for support on new technologies. For instance, the capacity development needs analysis of employers' organizations, carried out by the Employers' Activities Programme of the ITCILO in 2023, revealed an interest in strengthening data-driven services powered by AI. The prioritization of digitalization and AI in knowledge and innovation approaches considered in this paper, both internally and with constituents, is in line with the proposed Strategic Plan 2026–29 and outcome 8 of the Programme and Budget 2026–27.
10. On knowledge, the recommendations of the High-level independent evaluation of ILO's research and knowledge management strategies and approaches, 2010–2019 ⁴ and the Office's follow-up since 2020 provide important guidance, including on vision, leadership and governance, mainstreaming of knowledge management through the programme and budget, coordination, infrastructure and better targeting.
11. Second, the responsibility for guiding and coordinating the follow-up to the Strategy on knowledge and innovation has been transferred from the Office of the Director-General to the Office of the Deputy Director-General. As part of this decision, and in response to the Governing Body's request to clarify the Office's decision on establishing a "functional innovation facility", ITCILO has been tasked with facilitating innovation-related activities and supporting all departments and field offices (consistent with output A.3 of the Programme and Budget 2024–25, which is expanded upon below). Knowledge management continues to be decentralized, with leading roles for the Research and Publications Department, Department of Statistics, and other departments dealing with relevant policy and enabling outcomes of the

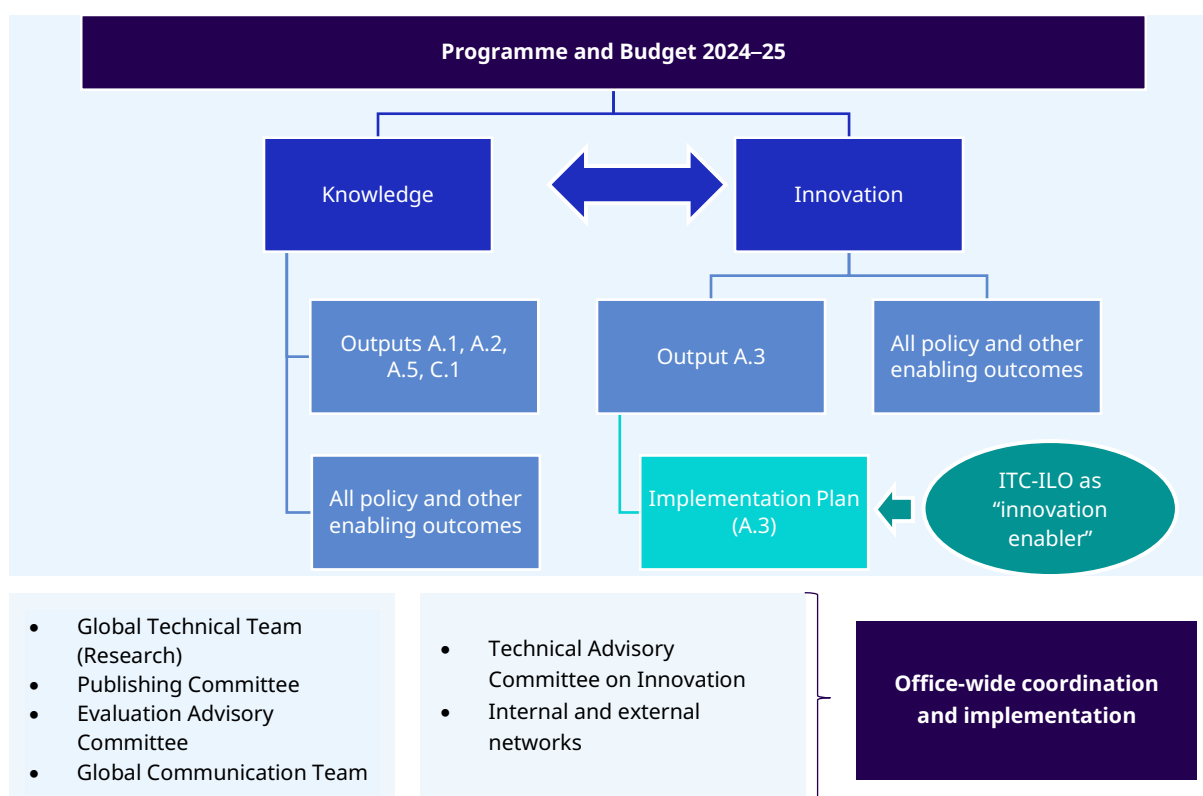
³ Based on an internal review of innovation facilities.

⁴ ILO, [High-level independent evaluation of ILO's research and knowledge management strategies and approaches 2010–2019](#).

Programme and Budget 2024–25 (figure 1). Other Office functions that directly impact knowledge dissemination include communication (output A.5), evaluation (output B.3) and information technology and management systems (output C.1).

12. Financial sustainability of both knowledge and innovation activities is ensured by the regular budget allocation to these outcome areas, along with budgetary commitments by ITCILO. In addition, as highlighted below in the progress update, more substantial interventions by the Office are supported by development cooperation projects, such as ILO PROSPECTS.
13. Third, to ensure greater coordination and coherence, a Technical Advisory Committee on Innovation was established to guide and support the implementation plan, as further described in the Annex.⁵ The Committee members are technical focal points who have been appointed by all clusters, regions and ITCILO.⁶ The coordination of knowledge management activities is overseen by several Office-wide bodies, including the Publishing Committee, the Global Technical Team (Research), the Evaluation Advisory Committee and the Global Communication Team (figure 1).

► **Figure 1. Alignment of the updated Strategy to the Programme and Budget 2024–25 and Office-wide coordination**



14. Fourth, efforts have been made to align with the UN 2.0 Quintet of Change, released by the UN Secretariat following the 2023 mid-term review of progress towards achieving the Sustainable

⁵ GB.347/PFA/4, para. 4.

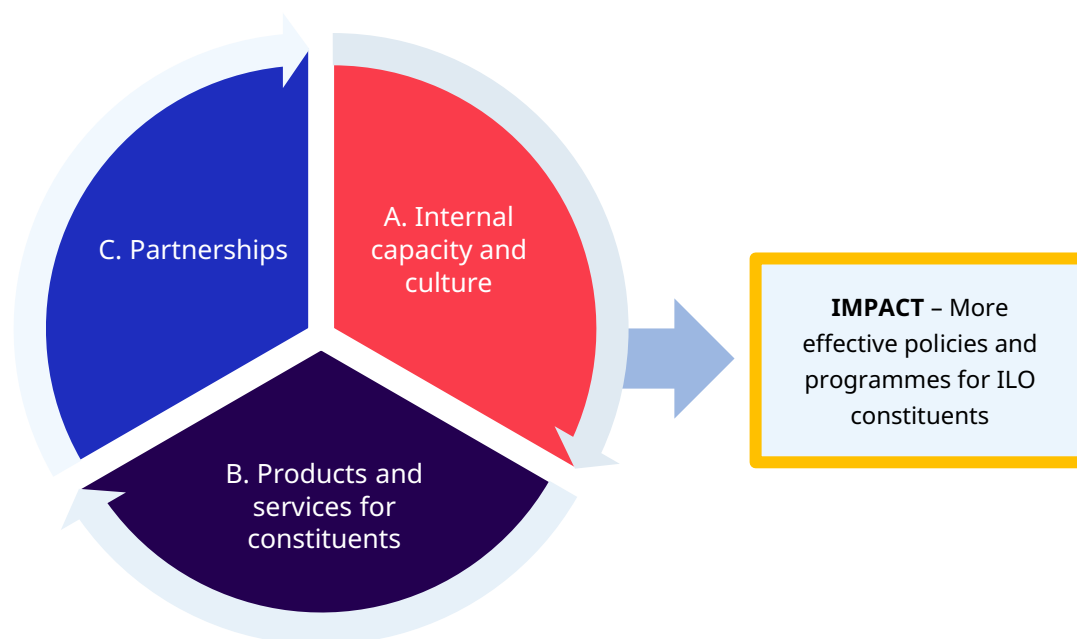
⁶ Membership of the Technical Advisory Committee on Innovation includes representatives from the Deputy Director-General's Office, the International Training Centre of the ILO, ACTRAV, ACT/EMP, ADG/CS, ADG/ECR, ADG/GRD, ADG/JSP, DCOMM and the five regions (Africa, Arab States, Asia and the Pacific, Europe and Central Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean).

Development Goals. In line with the critical skills promoted by the UN 2.0 Quintet of Change, the Office has increased its focus on innovation, digitalization, data-driven services and strategic foresight techniques for constituents and encouraged the application of behavioural science to achieve policy outcomes and make evidence-based decisions.

Updated Strategy

15. Following consultations across the Office, the updated Strategy on knowledge and innovation for 2024–25 proposed here has been further revised to be centred on three priorities, combining the two pillars of the initial 2023 Strategy (capacity-building and culture of innovation): (1) internal capacity and culture; (2) products and services for constituents; and (3) partnerships (figure 2). By merging capacity-building and culture, the Office seeks to align skill upgrading with promoting shared values and behaviours enabling innovation and change. Integrating cultural change with capacity-building ensures that staff is not only skilled but also encouraged to think critically and experiment innovative solutions.
16. The three strategic priorities collectively contribute to the overall goal of enhancing the Office's capacity to innovate, improving the relevance and impact of its knowledge, and strengthening its ability to collaborate effectively with constituents and development partners on these areas, in line with the current programme and budget and allocation of resources. As highlighted above, there is a strong demand for support for new digital technologies, including AI, which form a key component of the innovation pillar.

► **Figure 2. Updated Strategy on knowledge and innovation, 2024–25**



17. The first strategic priority under the updated Strategy focuses on strengthening internal capacity and enabling a culture of innovation and knowledge-sharing. The expected outcome of these interventions includes strengthened skills and knowledge to drive innovation; increased awareness and innovation mindset; and greater collaboration across the Office to improve efficiency and impact. Key deliverables under this strategic priority include:
 - capacity-building and peer learning for ILO staff, relating to, inter alia, research, statistics, innovation, and the use and application of digital/AI tools taking due account of the

[Principles for the Ethical Use of Artificial Intelligence in the United Nations System](#), foresight and behavioural science to improve impact and produce measurable results;

- promotion of innovation awareness and culture, including through ITCILO's Innovation Lab, innovation challenges and annual innovation days;
- launch of an Office-wide communication and advocacy campaign to promote an enabling culture for innovation;
- strengthened monitoring of ILO knowledge management to support stronger learning processes;
- enhanced usability of the intranet and IT infrastructure to facilitate internal knowledge-sharing;
- greater coordination of actions and oversight through existing and new committees and relevant bodies, including the Technical Advisory Committee on Innovation and the Publishing Committee.

18. The second strategic priority is expected to lead to more impactful, inclusive and relevant products and services, which are responsive to the needs of constituents and accessible to a larger target population. It is also expected that more innovative solutions will be developed, tested and scaled to address constituents' challenges, thereby leveraging new technologies, data and innovative approaches. Key deliverables under this strategic priority include:

- targeted knowledge products and services, including those based on innovative approaches, such as behavioural science and foresight;
- capacity-building activities in collaboration with ITCILO and other partners;
- launch of an innovation fund to support constituents' finance and test new innovative solutions;
- use of AI and digital tools to enhance services for constituents (for example, development of chatbots to support access to information; training);
- establishment of observatories and platforms to facilitate access to ILO knowledge, tools and guidance;
- a communication strategy to promote knowledge-sharing and dissemination, including through the ILO website and ILO Live;
- events, such as conferences, workshops and webinars, on AI and digitalization, including joint events with UN entities and other partners.

19. The third strategic priority on partnerships focuses on the important role of collaboration and networks in promoting knowledge and innovation by connecting constituents across and within regions, while tapping into the expertise of the Office and other stakeholders, including the UN system. The expected outcome of this strategic priority is strengthened networks and alliances, knowledge-exchange and mobilization of resources from external partners. Key deliverables to achieve this strategic priority include:

- networks and communities of practices with constituents, development partners, other organizations, foundations, private sector and experts;
- partnerships with global and regional organizations, and academic institutions, among others;

- benchmarking ILO on innovation with other organizations through monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, including joint evaluations (for example, the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) and the Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN)).
20. The implementation of the deliverables under the three strategic priorities are guided more generally by the programme and budget and a specific plan to enhance innovation-related activities. The time frame for implementation is 2024–25.
 21. While implementation of knowledge-related activities is integrated in the Programme and Budget 2024–25, it is recognized that efforts are needed to strengthen coordination, coherence and resource efficiency. To this end, the Office of the Deputy Director-General, will undertake several actions in 2024–25, including:
 - reviewing the production and use of knowledge products, including through a knowledge assessment and mapping of existing resources, with a view of streamlining knowledge creation and dissemination;
 - establishing key indicators, metrics and analytics to measure the effectiveness of knowledge products;
 - strengthening coordination, including through the ILO Publishing Committee.
 22. The Implementation Plan on Innovation 2024–25 (see Annex) was developed by ITCILO, in close consultation with the members of the Technical Advisory Committee on Innovation and all relevant ILO departments and regions. It provides more details on key innovation-related activities linked to output A.3 of the Programme and Budget 2024–25. The plan foresees 12 interconnected innovation initiatives grouped along the result areas of the ILO Strategy on knowledge and innovation.
 23. The key indicators for the Implementation Plan on Innovation have been developed by the Office, coordinated by ITCILO, include the number of innovation networks and communities of practice (lead indicator for output A.3), along with indicators on the number of innovation solutions identified and scaled across the Office, the number of constituents gaining access to these solutions through the ILO, and an improved Office-wide innovation climate (baseline to be established) (Annex).
 24. For knowledge-related deliverables, there is no separate implementation plan, as activities are being carried out through the programme and budget, as highlighted above. Monitoring of these activities will be achieved through outcome-based work plan discussions and an implementation report.
 25. The focus on knowledge and innovation in the Programme and Budget for 2026–27 will be based on the results from this updated Strategy, including through better coordination, coherence and resource efficiency.

► III. Progress to date on knowledge and innovation

26. This section highlights the progress made on the implementation, in both knowledge and innovation functions, of the updated Strategy presented above and aligned with the Programme and Budget for 2024–25. These insights represent only a selection of the Office's work in the current biennium in order to underscore recent achievements, and should not be considered as a complete review or inventory of initiatives.

Strengthened internal capacity and culture

27. The Human Resources Development Department and ITCILO continue to support the building of staff capacity through various learning opportunities in line with their respective mandates. Recent initiatives include innovation-focused training in the ILO Executive Leadership and Strategic Management programme.
28. To foster a culture of innovation, a network of “innovation scouts” was established to identify innovative solutions and feed them into relevant fund projects. An Office-wide communication and advocacy campaign, developed with the ILO Department of Communication and Public Information and ITCILO, will be launched in January 2025, coinciding with the first ILO-wide Innovation Day.
29. Key examples of regional efforts to enhance internal capacity and a culture of innovation include:
 - (a) the prioritization and leveraging of innovation and AI for staff, in 2024, by the ILO Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia. A digital capacity development plan for the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Eastern Europe and Central Asia was co-created, with training provided by ITCILO to strengthen remote collaboration and agile work.
 - (b) the introduction of specialized training by the ILO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific for programme officers in research and statistics to enhance knowledge-sharing with constituents, which has led to plans for similar training sessions for UN partners.
30. To promote improved internal access to information, the ILO intranet now features dedicated sites on knowledge management and policy innovation, thus boosting staff engagement. The rollout of Microsoft Teams has facilitated internal knowledge-sharing. For example, the Flagship Programme on Safety + Health for All created an OSH knowledge management platform on Teams, featuring a library of over 500 resources and a chat function for discussions and training among staff.

Improved products and services for constituents

31. To strengthen products and services for constituents through more effective knowledge-sharing and innovation, the Office has explored, piloted and implemented various approaches, including a shift to “digital-first” approaches in the type of knowledge products offered. Innovation, typically with a strong focus on new technologies, including AI, has been promoted through different initiatives, including support through the ITCILO innovation fund, challenge calls and specific events.

Observatories and knowledge platforms to facilitate access to ILO guidance and tools

32. The observatories and platforms developed by the Office aim to enhance evidence-based policymaking, global collaboration and greater visibility, while improving access to data, research and tools. These initiatives target different decent work domains, from supporting employment policies to combating forced labour. The examples listed below are not exhaustive but illustrate efforts to improve access to knowledge and facilitate the engagement of constituents and other partners:
 - (a) The [ILO Observatory on AI and Work in the Digital Economy](#) (WIDE) is a platform that enhances the visibility of AI’s impact on the world of work, policy tracking and engagement with global experts.

- (b) The [Global Coalition for Social Justice](#) (GCSJ) involves global partners through webinars and other forms of collaboration, laying foundations for thematic social justice development.
- (c) The [ILO Social Protection Platform](#) provides social protection data, publications and monitoring tools, thus supporting sustainable policy analysis.
- (d) The [Research to Action](#) (RTA) project converts data into insights to support policy decisions on child labour, forced labour and human trafficking, while the [FLO Dashboard](#) offers comprehensive data on forced labour and trafficking, including country profiles and legal frameworks.
- (e) The [Employment Policy Action Facility](#) (EPAF) curates employment policy knowledge and develops AI tools to improve access to ILO expertise, while the platform, [YouthForesight](#), acts as a resource hub for young people's employment, education and entrepreneurship, jointly hosted by the ILO and Generation Unlimited.
- (f) The [Fair Recruitment Initiative Knowledge Hub](#) addresses the challenges of implementing fair recruitment practices.
- (g) The [ILO Global Care Policy Portal](#) provides legal and statistical data on care policies, and incorporates the Care Policy Investment Simulator, which helps to create tailored care policy investment packages and assesses their impact.
- (h) The [ILO Repository of knowledge on cross-border social dialogue](#) provides access to information on social dialogue processes and initiatives beyond national borders.
- (i) The [Labour Provisions in Trade Agreements Hub](#) allows users to navigate and analyse labour provisions in trade agreements.
- (j) Regional platforms, such as the Regional Child Labour Observatory for Latin America and the Caribbean, which gathers standardized data to combat child labour, coordinating with 31 countries. [CINTERFOR](#) has developed the Vocational Training Observatory, which integrates secondary data and information provided by institutions through surveys. Other regional platforms are in operation.

Knowledge products and data for better dissemination and impact

- 33. The Office continues to shift to a “digital-first”, data-driven dissemination strategy for research and publications in order to improve access and dissemination. Key research products produced by the Research and Publications Department include concise research briefs, interactive reports, infographics and videos tailored for constituents, researchers and the broader public. Research findings have also been widely disseminated through a newsletter, with more than 7,000 subscribers, and through webinars and seminars, reaching over 4,000 online participants and 620 in-person attendees in 2023. Tracking of research products, using key metrics such as citations, downloads, views and media mentions, has enabled better targeting and a greater impact. To enhance knowledge-exchange, awareness and dissemination of planned and ongoing research activities, a Research Knowledge Platform was developed in 2022 and was recently expanded to include the regional focal points and other members of the portfolio.
- 34. Recent innovations by the Office have also improved the accessibility and searchability of ILO publications. The ILO flagship report, [World Employment and Social Outlook 2023: The Value of Essential Work](#), was launched as an accessible web PDF, improving inclusiveness for persons

with disabilities. Since 2021, all ILO Working Papers have been available in HTML format, making it easier to find documents.

35. Launched in 2023, the ILO Research Repository offers centralized access to over 20,000 publications, enhancing the visibility and accessibility of ILO research. The ILO Library has subscribed to Overton, a database that tracks over 3.2 million policy citations, and has been assigning Digital Object Identifiers to ILO publications since May 2022 to improve tracking, impact analysis and web visibility.
36. The new ILO global website is the primary platform for online knowledge management and sharing, featuring modern architecture and design. The Office is also experimenting with AI to facilitate data retrieval and communication. Additionally, the ILO Live platform has been upgraded for better stability and performance in broadcasting and recording events.
37. The ILO has significantly improved accessibility across its IT and communication platforms. The public website now complies with WCAG 2.1 AA standards, while ITCILO has improved accessibility to its online platform (e-campus).
38. The Office is implementing an Open Access policy that enables better use of all its knowledge products, with the goal of increasing accessibility, visibility and impact. All new ILO knowledge products are freely available for use or reuse without needing to request permission. The policy covers all materials published or made available by ILO ranging from reports and publications to videos and datasets (applying to materials produced as of 3 May 2023).
39. Access to data and analytical insights based on cutting-edge methodologies is a critical ingredient for maintaining the ILO's reputation as a centre of excellence. As the world's leading repository of data on the world of work, the ILOSTAT platform expanded from 125 million data values in early 2023 to 325 million currently. Since 2023, the microdata repository has added 1,955 survey datasets, bringing the total to 15,200 datasets from 165 ILO Member States, while the number of ILOSTAT users increased by 35 per cent and 28 additional statistical blogs were added during the same period. Advanced econometric modelling and nowcasting techniques underpin ILO estimates and statistical insights that are produced for various publications, such as updates on the *World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends* flagship report.
40. The four ILO priority action programmes established in 2023 play a key role in coordinating and sharing knowledge relating to transitions to the formal economy, just transitions, decent work in supply chains, and crises and post-crisis situations. Examples from 2024 include the Regional Knowledge Sharing Forum on Innovative Approaches to Formalization in Africa and an event on Decent Work Across the Humanitarian, Development and Peace Nexus in the Arab Region.
41. Due to strong demand for support for digital transformation, the Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP) has built the institutional capacity of employer and business membership organizations (EBMOs) on data management software, development of guidance notes, practical tools and reference materials, as well as provision of training and direct support. As a result, EBMOs are better equipped to collect, store and analyse data, thereby improving operational efficiency, broadening membership, gathering insights for evidence-based advocacy and improving service delivery. ACT/EMP has adapted its intervention model to improve its responsiveness and delivery of support to EBMOs, which was first applied at a larger scale during the COVID-19 pandemic where global tools and guidance were developed that could be quickly customized to the national context. It continues to be an effective delivery mechanism and empowers EBMOs to play a leadership role in key policy areas.

42. In response to the rise of AI and other new technologies, the Office is developing new guidance and tools on these issues. For instance, the Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) has published a resource package on the impacts of technological change, including AI, on workplaces, which has been disseminated through regional workshops since 2023. The aim is to promote shared governance of the implementation of new technologies at the workplace, and responsible use of new technologies through applications and other software by trade unions to provide better services for their members. This complements a concerted effort to close knowledge gaps among constituents, which is crucial for effective social dialogue on issues such as digitalization and AI.
43. A range of efforts have also focused on experimenting with less traditional approaches to sharing knowledge with constituents. For example, in March 2024, ACT/EMP, in collaboration with ITCILO, hosted a live broadcast entitled *Business is Not as Usual: What EBMOs Need to Know*, attracting 350 EBMO leaders. Short video summaries and full reports were shared online and on social media to broaden the impact.
44. Capacity-building for constituents on knowledge and innovation involves various approaches, including online, hybrid and face-to-face modalities. For instance, the Business and Decent Work mass open online course, developed in collaboration with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), International Organisation of Employers (IOE), International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), the UN Global Compact and Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), strengthens stakeholders' awareness of responsible business conduct and ILO principles. Its success has led to the development of a new annual MOOC on Human Rights Due Diligence in Support of Decent Work. The SKILLS Bridge Masterclasses are another example of an innovative practice that allows successful knowledge-sharing, by offering a series of online classes that explore effective practices and innovative approaches.

Stimulating and supporting innovation initiatives

45. ITCILO supported Innovation Fund, with a budget of €450,000, aims to support scalable and replicable solutions for decent work and social justice, in line with the Implementation Plan (Annex) and the Programme and Budget 2024–25. For example, the Employers' Confederation of the Philippines is developing an AI-powered chatbot to disseminate knowledge efficiently with the support of the Fund, in collaboration with ITCILO. Another project under the Fund is the development of mobile-based micro-learning using WhatsApp to deliver interactive content and increased outreach among workers.
46. In September 2024, ITCILO organized a Global AI Forum, focusing on leveraging AI to enhance capacity development across the UN system, building upon prior initiatives. Adopting a hands-on, hackathon-style format, the AI Forum enabled participants to tackle real AI-related challenges, with guidance from experts. Participants collaborated with industry leaders to develop tangible solutions to integrate AI across sectors and navigate the challenges of AI deployment.
47. Innovation challenge calls have been employed as a mechanism for constituents and partners to identify new approaches and solutions. In Kenya, the PROSPECT's Innovation Challenge on Decent Digital Jobs for Refugees and Host Communities is supporting innovative business development solutions to help local organizations scale successful projects. In 2024, the Regional Forum on Digital Transformation in Nairobi provided a platform for discussing such digital economy opportunities and challenges. The ILO Skills Innovation Challenge Calls have

invited scalable solutions, with the latest call focusing on upgrading informal apprenticeships in India through digital transformation.

48. In 2024, ACTRAV released a Working Paper on using strategic foresight to innovate trade union activities and enhance organizational intelligence, which documents global trade union experiences with foresight, offering concrete examples and lessons tailored to specific contexts. In 2025, [Future Foresight laboratories](#) will be held for ILO constituents in pathfinder countries under the Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions to map scenarios for inclusive growth and employment promotion.
49. Internal and external demand for new AI tools, such as chatbots, has increased significantly since the rise of ChatGPT, which is reflected in several initiatives. For example, the [FAIRWAY](#) programme is developing an AI-powered chatbot to assist migrant workers in the Arab States with questions about workers' rights. Globally, this is the ILO's first application of an AI-large language model. This chatbot will be accessible via WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger and text message.
50. In Latin America and the Caribbean, an innovative AI-based solution is being developed to enhance training and advisory services for small and medium-sized enterprises in business management, using a chatbot based on OpenAI's GPT-4, used on WhatsApp to leverage good business practices. The prototype includes a monitoring and evaluation system based on a theory of change and specific outcome indicators. Implemented under the [FORLAC 2.0 Strategy](#), it involves coordination across the Office and with business organizations.
51. In recent years, the Office has applied behavioural science in its country-level work, developing diagnostic methodologies to identify behavioural determinants of informal and formal employment. These interventions have produced measurable impacts and created a global knowledge base on the formalization of domestic work. In Argentina, a social media campaign, promoting the registration of domestic workers, used social norms and emotional satisfaction in testimonial videos and flyers. This increased the likelihood of viewers clicking the registration link by 46 per cent and boosted the intention to register by 8 per cent. Behavioural science shows significant potential for enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of policies, programmes and informational campaigns.

Enhanced partnerships

52. The Office engages in a range of networks and initiatives, such as the annual [AI for Good Global Summit](#) hosted by the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). ITCILO participates in the [UN Innovation Network](#) (UNIN) to disseminate ILO messages about social justice through decent work and promote peer learning on innovation with other UN agencies. This includes participation in the annual UNIN meeting in New York and the Action Days linked to the [UN Futures Summit](#) in September 2024.
53. ITCILO served as an organizing partner for the [UN Virtual Worlds Day](#) held in June 2024 in Geneva, together with the ITU, World Bank, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), United Nations Futures Lab Network, World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and a range of other UN agencies. The Office also actively participates in the [Geneva Innovation Movement](#), which is a network and knowledge-sharing platform that promotes and supports organizational innovation.
54. With more than 300 partners, the Global Coalition for Social Justice seeks to foster multilateral cooperation and partnerships, accelerating progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, including through innovative approaches. The Coalition

serves as a platform to generate political commitments, investments and concrete actions that support social justice in alignment with national priorities.

55. Traditional academic partnerships support the Office's efforts to strengthen its knowledge-related activities. In addition, initiatives focus on building broader partnerships. For example, the Future Leaders in the World of Work Summer University, hosted by ITCILO, nurtures mission-driven students and young professionals to support Global South, South-South and Triangular cooperation initiatives. This global learning partnership with academia will serve as a platform for consultations leading up to the UN World Summit on Social Development.
56. Partnerships are a key focus of development cooperation projects. For instance, under the [PROSPECTS project](#), the Community of Practice on Digital Jobs and Skills, established in Kenya and Uganda, supports knowledge-sharing on key digitalization issues, while the Learning Lab series under PROSPECTS has promoted collaboration and peer learning with other UN agencies (the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)) and emerging actors working on making decent digital jobs accessible for underserved populations, including refugees.
57. Promoting knowledge sharing on youth continues to be a key priority as reflected by the activities under the [Decent Jobs for Youth](#) global initiative, which involves 22 UN entities and 100 partners, and aims to scale youth employment interventions. The [Green Jobs for Youth Pact](#), in collaboration with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UNICEF, aims to create 1 million green jobs, to "green" 1 million existing jobs and to support 10,000 green entrepreneurs. At the regional level, the [Africa Youth Network for Social Justice](#) promotes African youth voices in global social justice dialogues.

► IV. Lessons learned, implementation challenges and risk mitigation measures

58. Within the context of the Programme and Budget 2024–25, the Office is implementing a range of knowledge and innovation initiatives, with an increasing focus on new technologies, such as AI. While progress is being made, challenges persist in terms of capacity, culture and coordination, which require targeted, operational and pragmatic measures.
59. **Funding for innovation and knowledge activities:** Overall financial sustainability of actions on knowledge and innovation is based on the commitments made within the programme and budget, as outlined by the specific outputs (figure 1). As of September 2024, all initiatives in the Implementation Plan on Innovation (Annex) have relied on decentralized funding from across the Office, development cooperation projects and constituents. However, further resource mobilization is needed to improve the Office's delivery on knowledge and innovation, including through development cooperation efforts.
60. **Risk aversion:** Risk and uncertainty are inherent to innovation. It can be challenging to predict whether an attempt to scale an innovative idea will succeed, and how partners and end-users will react. Programming efforts tend to focus on innovation activities with safe but often marginal returns (incremental innovation), rather than taking the higher risk of innovation investments that can trigger transformative change. Accepting failure as part of the innovation process is key in promoting innovation. Managing risk through the innovation lab at ITCILO is one way to overcome reluctance to take on more ambitious projects that have more transformative potential. At the same time, efforts are needed to promote a culture of

innovation, and several initiatives, including the network of innovation scouts have been established to this end.

61. **Coordination challenges:** Coordination of the Office's knowledge and innovation efforts is critical to ensure that the right synergies are built, leading to impactful results for constituents. To enhance coherence and effectiveness, it is essential to develop tailored coordination mechanisms that consider the specific contexts and capacities of field offices, and lead to demand-driven approaches. This requires coordination within the Office and with constituents and external partners, including the UN system, international financial institutions and others. As part of the decentralized approach, internal coordination is being steered by several taskforces (for example, the Technical Advisory Committee on Innovation) that link the policy departments and the field with the key units mandated to drive overall implementation. External coordination is targeted through the Office's participation in various platforms, such as UNIN.
62. To ensure oversight, the Deputy Director-General's office will further strengthen its role, overseeing knowledge and innovation activities through the reporting lines with the Research and Publications Department, Department of Statistics, priority action programmes and ITCILO, and supporting coordination through its steering of relevant Office-wide committees.
63. **Capacity:** As highlighted above, staff have reported a strong interest in developing technical skills in AI and data analytics. Constituents have also revealed a demand for increasing their knowledge on current and future issues related to new technologies. In response, the Office will need to continue building capacity of staff – including those in development cooperation projects – and of constituents in related areas, and making broader efforts to promote the development and implementation of other forms of innovation.
64. **Adaptation:** Adapting and adopting new tools, methods and approaches, present a range of challenges, especially when aligning global tools with country-specific realities. Ensuring that standard Office resources are applied across diverse settings with varying demographic and workplace configurations requires inclusive strategies and adapted tools that are relevant and effective.
65. **Inclusion:** Throughout the implementation of the updated Strategy, greater attention will be paid to both the risks and opportunities of knowledge and innovation for gender equality and non-discrimination. These include addressing the risks of inequality-reproducing technologies, potential discrimination and bias in AI data models and algorithms, and safeguarding against the risks posed by digital technologies.

► Draft decision

66. **The Governing Body endorsed the updated ILO Strategy and implementation plan on knowledge and innovation, and requested the Director-General to take into account its guidance in implementing the Strategy and to undertake an Office-wide review of its implementation at the end of 2025.**

► Annex – Implementation plan on innovation, 2024–25 (output A.3)

Deliverables	Office lead	Partner	Status (August 2024)
Strategic priority 1 – Strengthened internal capacity and culture			
Network of In-House Innovation Scouts: Identifying and promoting innovative solutions from within the ILO and its constituents	ITCILO, PARTNERSHIPS		Call for expression of interest under preparation
ILO-wide Innovation Days: Promoting innovation through annual events and communication campaigns	ITCILO, DCOMM		First innovation day tentatively scheduled for January 2025
Digital Capacity Development Plans: Creating digital strategies for ILO field offices	ITCILO, DWT for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Regional Office for Europe and Central Asia		A digital capacity development plan for DWT for Eastern Europe and Central Asia completed in July 2024; a follow-up planning event to discuss staff training activities scheduled for September 2024
Innovation Labs and Challenges: Developing and testing innovative solutions in collaboration with ILO field offices	ITCILO, FUNDAMENTALS, ADG/GRD, ILO PROSPECTS		First innovation lab completed in Kenya for the PROSPECT programme in April 2024
Communication and Advocacy Campaign: Raising awareness and promoting buy-in for innovation activities through social media and other channels	ITCILO, DCOMM		Starting January 2025
Strategic priority 2 – Improved products and services for constituents			
Innovation Fund: Supporting innovative projects through seed funding for the ILO and its constituents	ITCILO, EMPLAB, ENTERPRISES, AP/CRISIS, GEDI, ADG/CS (for AI powered business tools), ACTRAV, ACT/EMP		Round 1 will be completed by June 2025, 12 innovation projects are being implemented
AI Forum: Exploring how AI can enhance capacity development and innovation across the UN system	ITCILO, RESEARCH, DDG Office		The first AI Forum was held in September 2024

Deliverables	Office lead	Partner	Status (August 2024)
Future Foresight Laboratories: Developing scenarios for inclusive growth and employment policies in pathfinder countries	ITCILO, Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection for Just Transitions – ADG/JSP, ACTRAV, ACT/EMP		At least two laboratories will be held by June 2025; pathfinder countries yet to be determined
Strategic priority 3 – Enhanced partnerships			
Leveraging UN Innovation Networks: Disseminating ILO messages and innovations across the UN system	ITCILO, DDG Office	UN Innovation Network, Executive Office of UN Secretary General, ITU (AI for Good)	The ITCILO participated in the UNIN meeting in New York, May 2024, along with interventions in other global and regional networks
Global Learning Partnership with Academia: Engaging future leaders on the social dimension of sustainable development	ITCILO, Turin School of Development, PARTNERSHIPS, Global Coalition for Social Justice Secretariat – ADG/ECR		First edition of the Summer University for Future Leaders in the World of Work convened in July 2024
Benchmarking ILO Services: Comparing ILO capacity development services with those of other UN agencies to unlock synergies	ITCILO	UNITAR, UNSSC	A concept note has been prepared and shared with UNSSC and UNITAR; for further discussion during a global online symposium on the future of learning in the UN system scheduled for December 2024, the benchmarking exercise is planned for the first quarter of 2025

► **Key performance indicators and monitoring of the implementation plan on innovation, 2024–25**

Indicators	Target for the biennium
1. Number of innovation solutions identified and scaled across the office	At least 20
2. Number of constituents gaining access via the ILO to these solutions	At least 100
3. Improved Office-wide innovation climate	0.2 improvement over baseline on the innovation climate index (baseline to be established)
4. Number of innovation networks and communities of practice with active participation of the ILO and the ITCILO (lead indicator for output A.3 in the ILO Programme and Budget 2024–25)	At least 5 (as per the Programme and Budget for 2024–25)