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Annual Evaluation Report 2023–24

Purpose of the document

This document provides the Governing Body with a progress report on the ILO Evaluation Office's work covering the reporting year 2023–24, as measured against the indicators and targets in its results-based Evaluation Strategy (Part I). It also looks at the ILO's overall effectiveness using project evaluations conducted in 2023 as proxies (Part II). The Governing Body is invited to endorse the recommendations in this report (see the draft decision in paragraph 80).

Relevant strategic objective: All.

Main relevant outcome: Enabler B: Improved leadership and governance, Output B.3.: Strengthened oversight, evaluation and risk management to ensure transparency, accountability and learning.

Policy implications: Yes. Work across the policy outcomes on issues relevant to decent work and productivity.

Legal implications: None.

Financial implications: None.

Follow-up action required: Yes.

Author unit: Evaluation Office (EVAL).

Related documents: GB.352/PFA/9; [GB.349/PFA/4](#); [GB.346/PFA/6\(Rev.1\)](#); [GB.343/PFA/9](#); [GB.340/PFA/6](#); [GB.337/PFA/6](#); [GB.334/PFA/6](#); [GB.332/PFA/8](#); [GB.331/PFA/8](#).

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► Introduction

1. The period under review, spanning July 2023 to July 2024, has been critical in shaping the future trajectory of the ILO's evaluation function as laid out in the Evaluation Strategy 2023–25. As this is a relatively short strategy, and we have reached the mid-stage, now is an opportune time to provide an update on the progress made and obstacles faced in meeting its ambitious expectations.
2. The ILO has gained valuable experience through evaluations over the years, as reflected in key documents and decisions. To improve efficiency and uptake, planning and sequencing remain crucial. The Evaluation Office (EVAL) increasingly focuses on strategic, well-timed clustered evaluations as the default modality, rather than a piecemeal approach. Through the new Criteria-based Integrated Evaluation Planning System (CIEPS), this process has been streamlined via an online tool. Despite progress, challenges persist in identifying learning needs and evidence gaps within departments and regions. Developing a culture of evaluative thinking and learning among all stakeholders will remain a priority for the remainder of the period covered by the Strategy.
3. The information system underpinning the evaluation repository, *i-eval Discovery*, has been fully revamped, providing a more robust system for better real-time tracking of the evaluation process and, in the longer term, allowing for the leveraging of artificial intelligence (AI) to better use the lessons learned and good practices stored within the system. Additionally, new communication products have been explored and will be expanded to better target users and distil information based on specific needs. With synthesis reviews of evaluative evidence becoming more important for global United Nations (UN) reports on joint initiatives, collaboration with the new UN Sustainable Development Goals System-Wide Evaluation Office has been stepped up. Thanks to *i-eval Discovery*, which constitutes a robust repository of quality-controlled evaluation reports, EVAL is well-prepared to ensure that ILO initiatives feed into this larger UN oversight mechanism.
4. Part I of this Annual Evaluation Report reviews the progress made towards the end targets for 2025. In line with the update in last year's report on progress towards the 2023 milestones, it evaluates performance by assessing the progress made on indicators related to the three outcomes set out in the Evaluation Strategy. As the second report under the new Strategy, it demonstrates fewer gaps and clearer areas of progress. There is growing evidence of evaluation uptake in the ILO's strategic documents and governance discussions. On the other hand, ambitions for more strategic, ex post and impact evaluations are hindered by limited support for flexible evaluation funding. The Strategy aims to enhance learning so that evaluative evidence can improve implementation and performance. The evaluation function has expanded participatory methods to increase the use of findings, fostering engagement with social partners, government counterparts and beneficiaries. This improves dialogue on expectations at both the project and headquarters levels through mechanisms such as the reinstated Evaluation Advisory Committee (EAC), which now includes the ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV) and the ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACT/EMP).
5. Part II of the report focuses on the ILO's overall performance using a long-established methodology. A sample of 44 independent final project evaluations was utilized to approximate the ILO's performance based on 29 key performance indicators. This assessment also examined projects' alignment with the ILO's programme and budget. A recent independent review and scoring of impact evaluations have yielded fresh insights into the

importance of robust methodologies, emphasizing the need for continuous refinement to capture the true impact of ILO initiatives, particularly regarding intended learning and the application of findings. Impact evaluations are more resource-intensive than traditional performance evaluations, hence the need for a careful approach to ensure effectiveness and cost-efficiency.

► **Part I. Progress made towards achieving end targets**

6. Part I of this report is organized by strategic outcome as identified in the *ILO results-based Evaluation Strategy 2023–2025*. For each sub-outcome, the status with respect to the 2023 milestone under the relevant indicator is summarized, and progress towards the 2025 end target is marked either “achieved”, “on track” or “at risk”. The new Strategy also includes five enabling outcomes that are essential to achieving the end targets. Of the 21 end targets for 2025, 3 have been “achieved”, 13 are “on track” and 5 are “at risk”. Moreover, of the five enabling outcomes, four are “on track” and one is “at risk” in terms of meeting the end targets for 2025.

Outcome 1. Enhanced capacities at the individual, organizational and enabling environment levels for planning, undertaking, and using evaluations

Sub-outcome 1.1. Improved strategic planning and coordination with key internal and external stakeholders strengthens evaluation relevance, effectiveness and efficiency

Indicator 1.1.1: Degree to which effective integrated criteria-based procedures and practices are institutionalized and applied in the ILO to reduce the volume of evaluations and have strategically oriented evaluation learning and evidence by 2025.	Biennial milestone (end of 2023): Guidance and procedures for criteria-based integrated evaluation planning developed and tested in at least one region and one department. Criteria-based selection is defined and applied to undertake not only fewer, but also more strategic, evaluations (instead of financial thresholds).
Target (end of 2025): Integrated criteria-based evaluation planning is used in at least 50 per cent of regions and departments to reduce the volume of evaluations and have more strategically oriented evaluations.	
Custodians: EVAL, regions and technical departments, in particular regional evaluation officers (REOs) and departmental evaluation focal points (DEFPs).	Status: On track

7. Following an initial planning and scoping exercise in late 2023 that developed guidance and procedures, The CIEPS was launched in March 2024. This dynamic online planning tool aims to facilitate fewer, but more insightful, evaluations by adjusting their timing, clustering them, waiving some and determining which are essential and which can be replaced by alternative outputs. This initiative is crucial for transitioning from a project-based evaluation approach to a more strategic and flexible method.

8. Preliminary results indicate a positive uptake of the CIEPS in all regions and departments, making the 2025 target of 50 per cent usage well within reach. End-of-year data for 2023 showed that a total of 16 independent cluster evaluations were conducted, grouping a total of 42 projects. Moreover, during the first round of the CIEPS exercise in 2024, the number of independent evaluations was reduced by 29 thanks to waivers.
9. Although the clustering of evaluations and flexible funding modalities – prerequisites for strategic evaluation – are not yet the default mechanisms in ILO agreements with funding partners, the progress achieved so far is impressive. However, the ultimate goal of enhancing the strategic nature of evaluations to better address learning needs remains unmet. In addition to procedural obstacles, departments and regions require a deeper understanding of their knowledge and evidence gaps in order to engage effectively with the system.

Indicator 1.1.2: The existence of evaluations that coordinate with and complement other oversight functions, knowledge and learning mechanisms in the ILO by 2025.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): Mechanism to improve coordination and complementarity between evaluation, oversight and knowledge-sharing and learning functions developed and discussed with the Independent Oversight Advisory Committee (IOAC).

Target (end of 2025): 2025 Report of the IOAC to the Governing Body acknowledges progress in coordination and complementarity.

Custodians: EVAL, REOs, DEFPs, regions, technical departments, the ILO Research Department (RESEARCH), the ILO Strategic Programming and Management Department (PROGRAM), the Office of Internal Audit and Oversight (IAO) and the IOAC.

Status: On track

10. In 2023 and 2024, EVAL engaged in discussions with the IOAC to review the coordination of oversight functions across the ILO. The IOAC, in its annual report to the Governing Body at its 350th Session in March 2024, expressed satisfaction with “the increased communication and knowledge sharing between Evaluation and the Internal Audit offices”. This development was seen as a positive step towards improving the overall coherence and efficiency of oversight activities within the ILO. The IOAC emphasized the importance of sustaining and strengthening these collaborative efforts across all oversight functions within the Organization as a strategic commitment to promoting effective oversight practices, ensuring transparency and maximizing organizational effectiveness within the ILO.

Indicator 1.1.3: Percentage of mandatory evaluations that are completed in a timely and quality manner up to 2025.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): 94 per cent of independent evaluations are completed in a timely and quality manner.

Target (end of 2025): 95 per cent of mandatory and corporate evaluations are completed in a timely and quality manner.

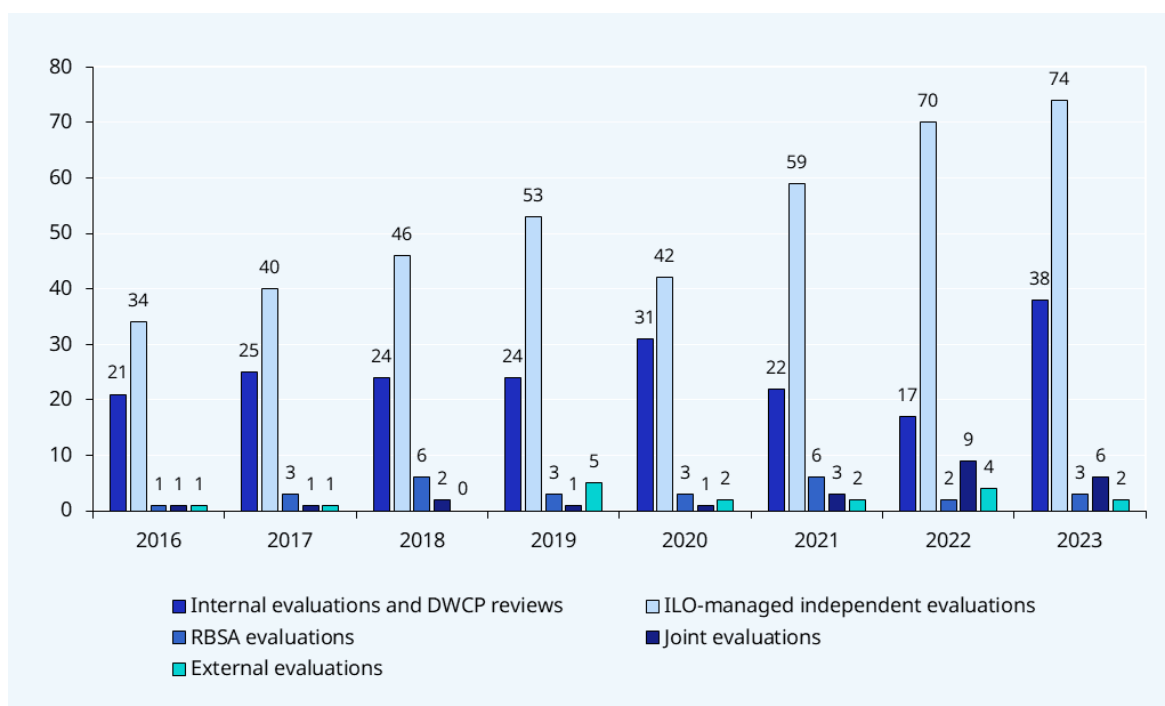
Custodians: EVAL, regions and departments, including the evaluation network.

Status: On track

Project and programme evaluations

11. All planned and completed evaluations, lessons learned, good practices, recommendations and management responses to evaluation recommendations are made publicly available via the *i-eval* Discovery dashboard, which contains a wealth of information (almost 1,600 evaluation reports, over 2,600 lessons learned, close to 1,400 good practices and over 2,600 recommendations) that can be used to inform results-based management, organizational learning and decent work.
12. A total of 74 independent evaluations were completed in the current reporting period (2023) – more than any other year, representing an increase of 7 per cent on the previous reporting period, which was also a record high (figure 1). EVAL expects the number of independent evaluations to begin to taper off over the coming years following the implementation of the CIEPS (see indicator 1.1.1), thereby helping alleviate unsustainable workloads and producing more strategic evaluations.
13. While more independent evaluations were completed in 2023 than ever before, five were delayed or not completed, representing a completion rate of 94 per cent for the current reporting period and therefore approaching the end target of 95 per cent. Submission rates for internal evaluations have improved on previous years. Of the 44 internal evaluations due in 2023, 38 were completed, indicating a completion rate of 86 per cent and an increase of 18 per cent from the previous year.

► **Figure 1. Number of completed evaluations by type, 2016–23**



Selecting high-level evaluation topics for strategic use

14. Every year, EVAL conducts informal consultations with constituents on the topics that should be evaluated and that are considered crucial from an accountability or learning viewpoint. Regional Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) evaluations are selected on a rotational basis and require no action. This year, EVAL used non-generative AI to analyse 182 Governing Body and International Labour Conference documents and meeting minutes to identify

possible evaluation topics. Eight high-level issues, programmes and fields of work were identified: improving social dialogue, social protection, the Youth Employment Action Plan, occupational safety and health, the impact of skills and apprenticeship policies and programmes, the Better Work programme, maternity protection and priority action programmes. These topics, combined with topics proposed in previous rolling work plans, formed the basis for further consultation with constituents, the outcome of which is reflected in table 1.

► **Table 1. Rolling work plan, 2024–27**

Year	Institutional or outcome level	Institutional or outcome level	Decent Work Country Programme *	Summary of constituents' feedback
2027	Outcome level: The ILO's occupational safety and health strategy	Institutional: A review of the ILO's priority action programme modality	Europe and Central Asia	There was some support for the topic of labour inspection but overwhelming support for the topics of occupational safety and health and priority action programmes, with some concern that it may be too early to decide for 2027.
2026	Outcome level: Skills and lifelong learning	Outcome level: Normative action	Asia and the Pacific	There was some support for the topic of social protection but overwhelming support for the topics of skills and normative action.
2025	Outcome level: Evaluation of the Youth Employment Strategy 2020–30	A global evaluation of Better Work	Latin America and the Caribbean	There was support for the topic of social dialogue and tripartism but stronger support for the topics of youth employment and a global evaluation of the Better Work programme.
2024	Institutional: Development and use of labour statistics	Institutional: Development Cooperation Strategy	Western Africa	To be discussed at the Governing Body's sessions in 2024.

* Regional DWCPs are selected on a rotational basis.

15. Recommendation 1: Endorse the topics for high-level evaluations for 2025, as identified in the rolling work plan, and provide guidance on topics for future years.

Sub-outcome 1.2. Enhanced evaluation capacity further strengthens evaluation function to implement its programme of evaluations

Indicator 1.2.1: Availability of improved training and recognition of, and incentives for, regional and departmental evaluation officers, focal points and evaluation managers in the ILO by 2025.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): New products and services (such as advanced training and cost-recovery for the evaluation network) are conceived with the ILO Human Resources Development Department (HRD), the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC-ILO) and the ILO Financial Management Department (FINANCE) to further incentivize and recognize ILO staff (notably REOs, DEFPs and evaluation managers).

Target (end of 2025): 100 per cent of REOs benefit from a standardized job family aligned with the ILO's job family for evaluators. Thirty ILO staff are certified in the advanced Evaluation Manager Certification Programme (EMCP+).

Custodians: EVAL, HRD, ITC-ILO.

Status: On track

16. Since the last reporting period, significant effort has been made to recognize, incentivize and strengthen the capacities of evaluation network members with a view to achieving the target set for 2025. Following the long-awaited introduction of an ILO job family for evaluators in 2023, initiatives are under way to enhance the recognition of evaluation duties among REOs by developing tailored job descriptions, building on the global evaluators job family. Drafts prepared by EVAL are currently being reviewed by HRD. Additional incentives have been reviewed to encourage the ILO's network of voluntary evaluation managers to continue their service. These incentives include an advanced training programme for evaluation managers (EMCP+), scheduled for a phased roll-out in late 2024 and early 2025, and the direct involvement of evaluation managers in stakeholder workshops to discuss evaluation results. Efforts to provide mechanisms for cost recovery and sharing between departments and regions to compensate for evaluation managers' time have so far been unsuccessful owing to the absence of such procedures and mechanisms within the ILO.

Indicator 1.2.2: Number of standard training activities organized by the ILO for tripartite constituents that are supported by EVAL to mainstream concepts on the evaluation of decent work until 2025.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): EVAL (including the REOs and DEFPs) supports at least one standard training activity organized by the ILO with the ILO tripartite constituents on the evaluation of decent work.

Target (end of 2025): Three training activities organized by the ILO for tripartite constituents are supported by EVAL to mainstream concepts on the evaluation of decent work.

Custodians: EVAL, REOs, DEFPs, regions, ACTRAV, ACT/EMP, ITC-ILO and PROGRAM.

Status: Achieved

17. As part of the current Evaluation Strategy, active collaboration with the ILO's departments and regional offices to strengthen tripartite constituents' evaluation capacities remains a priority. Since the last reporting period in 2023, the evaluation network organized or supported five additional training activities ¹ for constituents on monitoring and evaluation and the Sustainable Development Goals in order to mainstream evaluation concepts, thus exceeding

¹ One in Europe and Central Asia, one in Africa, two in the Arab States and one in Asia and the Pacific.

the end target for 2025. Overall, 116 government officials, 11 representatives of employers' organizations and 6 representatives of workers' organizations were trained. Ongoing efforts continue to focus on strengthening the evaluation culture by building the constituents' capacity to evaluate DWCPs and projects, aligning these efforts with the Sustainable Development Goals and the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework. Furthermore, collaboration with ACTRAV and ACT/EMP has ensured the participation of social partners in the eighth National Evaluation Capacities Conference (NEC 2024) in Beijing, October 2024.

Indicator 1.2.3: Percentage increase in the number of EMCP-certified ILO staff.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): 5 per cent increase against 2022 baseline in the number of qualified EMCPs.

Target (end of 2025): 10 per cent increase against 2022 baseline in the number of qualified EMCPs.

Custodians: EVAL, REOs, DEFPs, regions, HRD and ITC-ILO.

Status: Achieved

18. ILO evaluation managers who hold EMCP certification serve as invaluable assets within EVAL's evaluation function, which, while decentralized, is subject to headquarters control in terms of quality. Owing to the ongoing demand for this well-regarded training initiative, the target number of staff members trained as evaluation managers has increased progressively since the last reporting period. To date, 193 ILO staff members have been certified as evaluation managers, representing a 29 per cent increase on the 2022 baseline and surpassing the end-of-strategy target. This achievement underscores the Office's success in cultivating a cadre of ILO professionals with specialized evaluation expertise, thereby contributing to high-quality evaluations and fostering an enhanced evaluation culture.

Outcome 2. Enhanced evaluation systems and processes leading to more credible, strategic and higher-quality evaluations

Sub-outcome 2.1. Use of more strategically oriented evaluations provide evaluative information that is more responsive to strategic and learning needs, enhancing knowledge base on ILO's contribution to Decent Work and providing more learning opportunities

Indicator 2.1.1: Degree to which clustered evaluations are institutionalized and functional in the ILO and are supported by donors by 2025.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): Clustered evaluations guidance and procedure updated and practice adopted for 30 per cent of all required project evaluations.

Target (end of 2025): At least 60 per cent of ILO donors are involved in cluster evaluations, including 15 of the largest ILO donors.

Custodians: EVAL (including REOs and DEFPs), regions, technical departments, Multilateral Partnerships and Development Cooperation Department (PARTNERSHIPS), FINANCE, donors.

Status: At risk

19. During the period covered by the current Strategy, significant strides have been made, with 16 clustered evaluations undertaken in 2023, grouping 42 projects and involving 13 funding partners (11 per cent). This represents a more than 100 per cent increase on the previous year, when 20 projects were clustered into 7 independent evaluations. Of the funding partners

involved in the clustered evaluations, 9 are among the top 20 contributors to the ILO's voluntary funding.

20. A need for much more progress remains, however, to meet the end targets for 2025, the achievement of which will require additional internal and external buy-in in terms of the benefits of clustered evaluations. This includes efforts to promote those evaluations as the default option, rather than the exception, among funding partners.

Indicator 2.1.2: Degree to which impact and ex post evaluations are integrated in the evaluation plan of the ILO by 2025.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): An approach to integrating impact and ex post evaluations in the evaluation plan is established and agreed with technical departments and regions, demonstrating the added value of the ILO's contribution to decent work and social justice.

Target (end of 2025): At least one ex post evaluation and one impact evaluation are undertaken by EVAL or a technical department with support from EVAL.

Custodians: EVAL, technical departments and regions (including REOs and DEFPs).

Status: At risk

21. In 2023–24, the introduction of the CIEPS facilitated discussions on learning needs and evidence gaps, including impact and ex post evaluation requirements. A 2023 independent quality assessment of impact evaluations by EVAL highlighted the need for more support in conducting such evaluations, identifying that quality and utility were suboptimal (see Part II). To raise the overall quality and scope of impact evaluations, EVAL revived its impact review facility, assisting in various activities and exploring ex post evaluations with several donors, and it established the ILO Evaluation Trust Fund (IETF) in 2023.
22. To effectively implement ex post and impact evaluations as a modality, greater flexibility in project evaluation funding is essential. The IETF would offer flexible resources for broader impact evaluations beyond individual projects. Despite strong interest from funding partners, the lack of facilitated dialogue with donors to advocate for the benefits of pooled evaluation funds remains a challenge. Without flexible funding outside project-based budgets, the exploration and implementation of meaningful impact evaluation methodologies are at risk.

Sub-outcome 2.2. Appropriate methodologies responsive to ILO's mandate, context and learning needs are implemented

Indicator 2.2.1: Degree to which participatory methods for evaluations are further developed and applied for an enhanced use of results by 2025.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): Guidance materials developed to support centralized and decentralized evaluations include participatory methods in their design. EVAL's ex post quality appraisal of evaluations is upgraded to measure the use of evaluation results.

Target (end of 2025): At least 10 per cent of surveyed evaluation users positively report on using evaluation results.

Custodians: EVAL, regions and technical departments (REOs and DEFPs).

Status: On track

23. EVAL has developed a guidance note on incorporating participatory approaches throughout the evaluation process, including design, data collection, analysis, reporting and follow-up, recognizing that higher levels of participation increase the likelihood of stakeholders utilizing

evaluation results. EVAL plans to launch a survey targeting key stakeholders, such as field directors and policy department heads, to assess how evaluation results are used for decision-making and organizational learning. Additionally, insights from a quality assessment of evaluation reports that was undertaken by an external company are covered under indicator 2.4.1.

Indicator 2.2.2: Development of improved ILO evaluation policy guidelines and guidance material to best reflect the ILO's mandate and policy drivers by 2025.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): Results from EVAL's ex post quality appraisal of independent evaluations are used to identify improvements to methods and approaches.

Target (end of 2025): At least three guidelines are updated or added for evaluations to best reflect the ILO's mandate and policy drivers.

Custodians: EVAL, regions and technical departments (REOs and DEFPs). **Status:** Achieved

24. EVAL regularly updates its guidance material to reflect new developments and international best practices as they pertain to the ILO's mandate and policy drivers. For example, in the current reporting year, EVAL produced three new guidance notes. These include the [evaluation of capacity development in ILO programmes and projects](#), a [supplementary guidance note on integrating gender equality in ILO monitoring and evaluation](#) and a [guidance note on incorporating participatory approaches in ILO evaluations](#). Looking ahead, EVAL will also create a new guidance note on environmental sustainability and will mainstream disability inclusion throughout existing guidance before the end of 2025. EVAL will further update and develop new guidance as new demands in the world of work evolve, thus ensuring that its guidance is always relevant and responsive to emerging realities.

Sub-outcome 2.3. ILO's continued involvement in relevant initiatives in UN system and multilateral institutions strengthens the independence, quality, and credibility of ILO's evaluation work

Indicator 2.3.1: Outcomes and products of the working groups of the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) integrated into Evaluation Strategy guidance documents by 2025.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): EVAL participates in three UNEG working groups and contributes to at least one joint inter-agency initiative.

Target (end of 2025): At least one ILO Evaluation Strategy guidance document has benefited from EVAL's contribution to relevant initiatives in the UN system and multilateral institutions.

Custodian: EVAL.

Status: On track

25. EVAL has maintained an active role within UNEG by participating in numerous working groups focusing on the professionalization of evaluation, methods, ethics, use, gender and human rights considerations, national evaluation capacities, social and environmental sustainability, decentralized evaluation, policy influence evaluation and AI integration. For example, EVAL is collaborating on a new international UNEG norm on sustainable environmental practices and social and economic effects, expected to be approved this year and subsequently incorporated into the ILO Evaluation Strategy. In 2023–24, EVAL has also shared knowledge with UNEG on independent evaluations of the ILO's Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy (one of the first among the UN agencies), highlighting methodological evaluation considerations for disability inclusion.

26. Other promising joint initiatives include collaborations with the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) on a synthesis review of youth employment that explores new uses of AI to sample reports and substantiate key findings. At the UN reform level, EVAL supports the new system-wide evaluation policy, which aims to strengthen oversight, transparency and accountability across the UN system without compromising the principle of subsidiarity. Synthesis reviews are a key tool for the System-Wide Evaluation Office, and EVAL has proactively engaged with the process by participating in planning, resource sharing and the leveraging of strengths to conduct synthesis or thematic reviews that are relevant to ILO priorities to maximize learning and minimize duplication.

Sub-outcome 2.4. Quality of all types of evaluations assures credible, useful evaluation results that can be acted upon by management and constituents

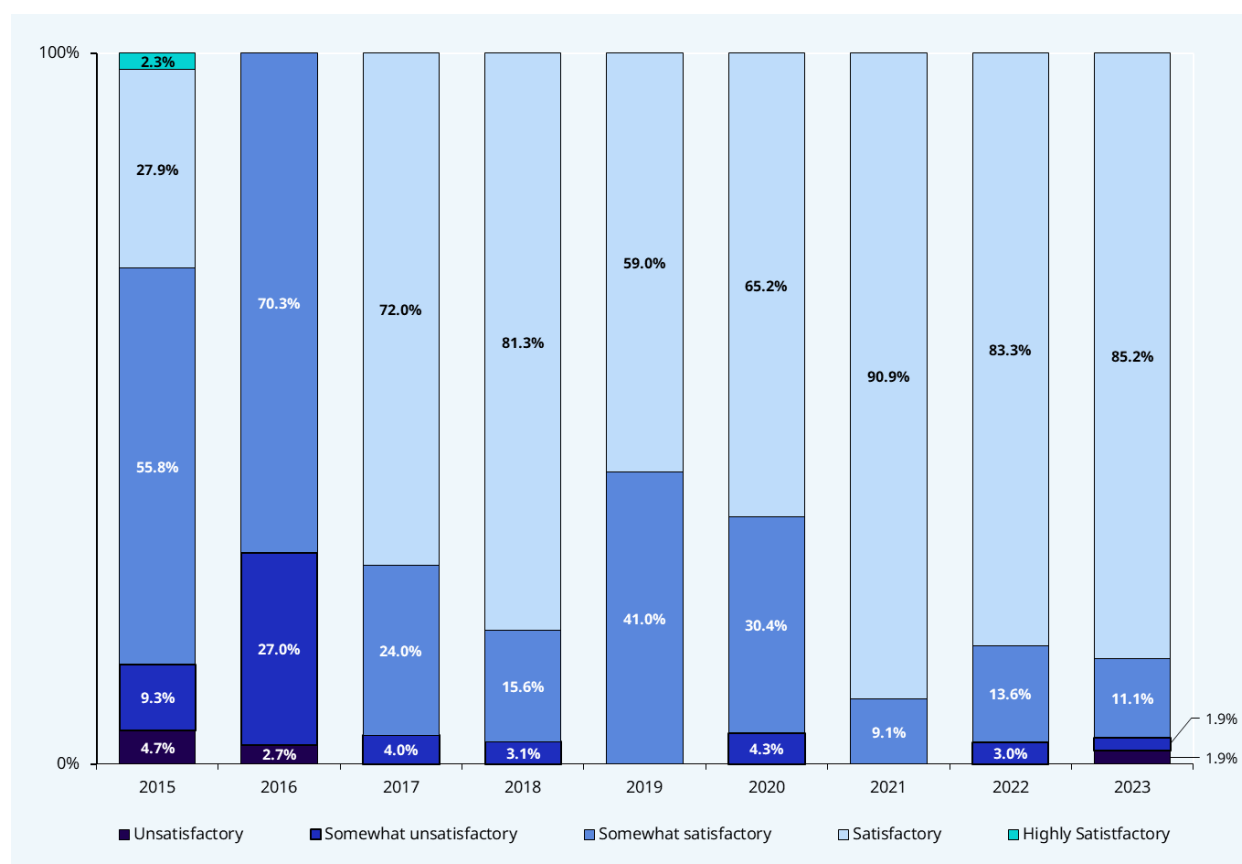
Indicator 2.4.1: Availability of an improved and effective quality assessment mechanism in the ILO by 2025 to assess the utility of independent evaluations.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): A concept note on novel approaches to assessing utility-focused evaluations is prepared.

Target (end of 2025): At least 10 per cent of evaluations apply novel approaches to assessing their utility.

Custodians: EVAL, regions and technical departments (REOs and DEFPs). **Status:** On track

27. For over a decade, the ILO has had an effective external quality assessment mechanism for independent evaluations that reviews the overall quality of evaluation reports and their compliance with the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP) (see paragraph 32 below). By 2025, the goal is to further fine-tune this mechanism to include a focus on utility and use insofar as they can be assessed.
28. In 2023, EVAL conducted a pilot study with 38 stakeholders (directors of country offices and project staff) to gather their perspectives on evaluating the utility of evaluations. The study highlighted the need for greater participatory engagement (indicators 2.2.1 and 2.2.2) and to address challenges such as time constraints in providing feedback and the requirement for more specific and contextually applicable recommendations. This aligned well with the Evaluation Strategy 2023–25. To enable reporting on the end target for 2025, EVAL will ensure that the quality assessment process captures the use of these novel participatory methods and progress towards actionable recommendations.
29. The systematic quality assessment of evaluation reports is a core component of EVAL's approach to ensuring high-quality reports that are useful and impactful. This includes external ex post quality assurance of all independent project evaluations and high-level evaluations (HLEs). Over the past eight years, appraised evaluation reports received a median score of 5. The percentage of reports achieving a "satisfactory" overall rating continues to remain high, increasing from 28 per cent in 2015 to 85 per cent in 2023 (figure 2).
30. No causal or statistically significant relationship was found between the evaluation budget or time frame and the overall rating of an evaluation report. EVAL is working with REOs and DEFPs to address the gaps.

► **Figure 2. Overall median scores and evolution of project evaluation report ratings, 2015–23**

- 31.** Among the five HLEs that were externally appraised in 2022 and 2023, four received a “satisfactory” overall rating and one was rated “somewhat satisfactory”. The share of “satisfactory” evaluations has increased significantly, from 50 per cent in 2015–19 to 80 per cent in 2020–23. In 2023, median scores of 5 were awarded in five of the seven components of the quality assurance scoring tool, and median scores of 4 were awarded in the remaining two components, consistent with the 2020–21 results. These results mark an improvement from 2015–19, demonstrating the improvement in the quality of HLEs seen over time.
- 32.** Regarding performance against the UN Country Teams Performance Indicators for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard) for 2015–23 (figure 3), there is slight but consistent improvement in average meta-scores for evaluation performance indicators up to 2022, with the exception of a slight decline from 2022 (5.71) to 2023 (5.67). In 2023, 28 per cent (15) of project evaluations met the requirements of the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard, while 67 per cent (36) “approached requirements” and 5 per cent (3) “missed requirements”. Opportunities for improvement remain since the ILO falls short of the 6.5 meta-score threshold for “meets requirements”. To work towards improving performance in the area of gender, EVAL has developed a supplementary guidance note on the topic (indicator 2.2) and is reviewing the methodology for assessing the UNCT-SWAP Gender Equality Scorecard to address performance gaps.

► Figure 3. UN-SWAP gender meta-scores, 2015–23



Indicator 2.4.2: Operational and effective quality assessment process for impact evaluations in place and applied in the ILO by 2025.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): A standardized quality assessment tool and community of practice guidelines for impact evaluations are agreed and introduced.

Target (end of 2025): At least 50 per cent of impact evaluations in the ILO use EVAL's quality assessment tool and community of practice for impact evaluations.

Custodians: EVAL, EAC, regions and technical departments (REOs and DEFPs).

Status: At risk

33. EVAL strengthened its role in impact evaluations during the period covered by the current Strategy, as evidenced by the reinstated Impact Evaluation Review Facility (IERF). In 2024, several requests for reviews of impact evaluation inceptions and draft reports were received. The 2022 ex post review of impact evaluations led to the development of an ex post quality assessment tool, reviewed and validated by an impact evaluation expert. A community of practice for ILO colleagues interested in impact evaluations will be launched in 2024 to introduce this new tool. Going forward, impact evaluation designs will be reviewed by the IERF, and reports will be assessed using the ex post quality assessment tool. Progress has been hampered by competing priorities and resource constraints, giving rise to challenges in identifying the right time for impact evaluations to ensure meaningful input and review. The establishment of the CIEPS aims to identify the need for impact evaluations in upcoming projects, promising solid progress by 2025. The obstacles linked to flexible funding and the role of the Evaluation Trust Fund in this process are discussed under enabler 1 below.

Outcome 3. Expanded knowledge base of evaluation findings and recommendations that effectively contributes to organizational learning and enhances organizational effectiveness

Sub-outcome 3.1. ILO's evaluation dashboard (*i-eval* Discovery) is revamped with improved functionality and use

Indicator 3.1.1: Existence of an improved *i-eval* Discovery for enhanced visibility and use by 2025.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): Revamping of *i-eval* Discovery ongoing to better capture and tag evaluations, and improved evaluation management experience.

Target (end of 2025): 20 per cent increase in the use of *i-eval* Discovery and more user-friendly access through AI plug-ins or comparable innovations.

Custodians: EVAL, Information and Technology Management Department (INFOTEC). Required coverage and availability of evaluation information and outcomes, and awareness-raising and support activities as part of a communications campaign.

Status: On track

34. The ILO's public dashboard, *i-eval* Discovery, was launched in 2016. It displays all planned and completed evaluations, along with their related summaries, lessons learned, good practices and recommendations, as well as management responses to evaluation recommendations, allowing evaluation results to be fully accessible for accountability and learning purposes. By early July 2024, the dashboard contained over 1,600 evaluation reports, almost 2,700 lessons learned, over 1,400 good practices and more than 2,500 recommendations. The dashboard has proven to be a useful tool, as evidenced by a 30 per cent increase in the number of users accessing it, already surpassing the end target by 10 per cent.
35. In July 2024, EVAL, with support from INFOTEC, launched a new, modernized database (*i-Track* 2.0) that underpins *i-eval* Discovery. The new database allows for a new methodology for planning, managing and completing evaluations for use by all members of the evaluation network throughout the evaluation process. The expectation is that the new system will provide various efficiency gains and sustainability over the long term. Meanwhile, EVAL continues to explore options for adding an AI plug-in to *i-eval* Discovery to further enhance the use of evaluation evidence aligned with organizational guidance, capabilities and ethical considerations.

Sub-outcome 3.2. Better targeted knowledge and communication products strengthens their potential use and integration in ILO's knowledge base

Indicator 3.2.1: Development of enhanced synthesis and meta-analysis reports responsive to needs by 2025.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): An approach to a revamped needs-based synthesis and meta-analysis of evaluative information is established.

Target (end of 2025): Five audience-specific products providing synthesized information on evaluation results and learnings are produced.

Custodians: EVAL, EAC, regions and technical departments (REOs and DEFPs).

Status: On track

36. During the period covered by the current Strategy, EVAL has continued to explore opportunities to fine-tune its synthesis review methodology to better target results at key audiences. One approach has been EVAL's active involvement in the UNEG working group on synthesis review methodologies to learn from leading international experts about innovative methods that could be applied to its own synthesis reviews. Meanwhile, two thematic synthesis reviews were produced during the reporting period: one on the performance of the ILO's work on labour statistics and its contribution to policy results, and the other on the ILO's work in Western Africa. Furthermore, three thematic synthesis reviews were produced at the regional and policy outcome levels: one on regional support for gender equality (Arab States), another on the ILO's work with a just transition approach (Latin America and the Caribbean) and one providing a systematic review of 220 evaluations of youth-focused active labour market programmes conducted around the world since 1990 (the ILO's Employment Department, in collaboration with the World Bank).
37. This year's study entitled *Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: Meta-analysis on the performance of development cooperation evaluations* continues to adopt an innovative and enhanced approach to demonstrate the effectiveness of decent work results at the thematic level in alignment with the ILO's strategic priorities. Performance results are set out in terms of country programme outcomes and policy outcomes, allowing progress to be tracked and lessons extracted in relation to the implementation of these objectives (see Part II).

Indicator 3.2.2: Functional and effective mechanism to validate good practices in place in the ILO by 2025.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): Concept note on the validation process for good practices developed and discussed with regions and departments.

Target (end of 2025): At least 25 per cent of good practices are validated using the agreed validation approach before being shared with community of practice and Global Technical Teams.

Custodians: EVAL, EAC, regions and technical departments (REOs and DEFPs).

Status: At risk

38. For over a decade, EVAL has been instrumental in promoting good practices derived from evaluations, updating its guidance and templates in 2020 to enhance their quality. EVAL has been considering the introduction of a new process involving the validation of these good practices by a network of experts. This validation mechanism would entail peer reviews by ILO technical experts who would assess the practices based on established criteria and provide constructive feedback. The process would ensure the retention of practices that are relevant, replicable beyond the context in which they emerged and actionable. By enhancing participatory methods and leveraging *i-eval* Discovery, EVAL aims to integrate better-validated good practices into ILO project designs. Although the Global Technical Teams could contribute significantly to the validation of good practices, this has proven challenging owing to the absence of mechanisms to engage with them online. Without the establishment of communities of practice or comparable mechanisms for each technical topic, EVAL cannot feasibly pursue this validation process within its limited resources, and this indicator may need to be reconsidered as unachievable.

Indicator 3.2.3: Extent to which innovative ways of presenting targeted evaluation results exist and are applied in the ILO by 2025.

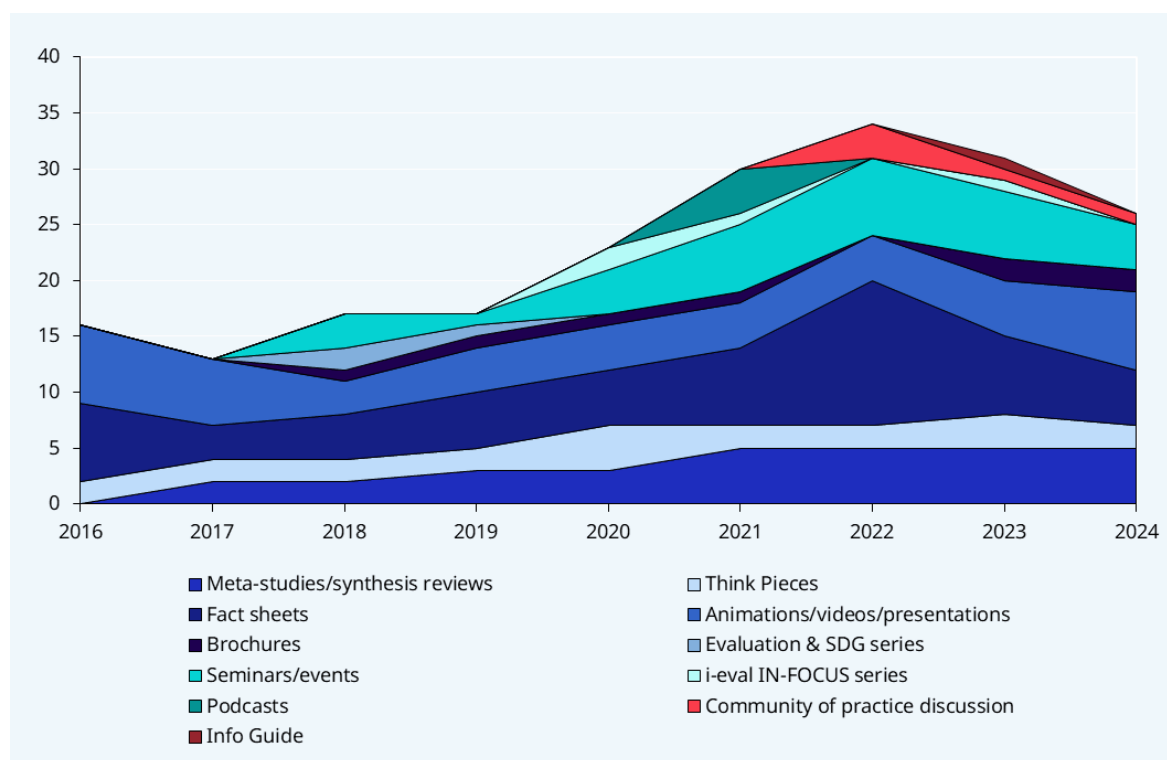
Biennial milestone (end of 2023): Revamped communication strategy ongoing to include innovative ways of presenting targeted evaluation results.

Target (end of 2025): 25 per cent of new communication and knowledge management products incorporate innovative ways of presenting targeted results.

Custodians: EVAL, regions and technical departments (REOs and DEFPs). **Status:** On track

39. EVAL creates communication products to maximize the learning potential of evaluation evidence for informed decision-making. These are primarily aimed at constituents, donors and ILO staff. While the quantity of communication products has increased over time (figure 4), it has levelled off in the last two years. Embracing the principle of “less is more”, EVAL has adopted an innovative focus on targeted evaluation products. A strategic communication plan – complete with a theory of change, implementation plan and results framework – aims to achieve the strategy’s end targets effectively.

► **Figure 4. Number of communication products, 2016–24**



Indicator 3.2.4: Percentage of evaluation recommendations fully or partially implemented within 12 months of completion of an evaluation. Effective mechanism to assess the quality of follow-up to recommendations in place in the ILO by 2025.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): 75 per cent of recommendations are fully or partially implemented within 12 months of completion of an evaluation. Process to assess quality of follow-up established.

Target (end of 2025): 85 per cent of recommendations are fully or partially implemented within 12 months of completion of an evaluation.

Custodians: EVAL, EAC, regions and technical departments (REOs and DEFPs).

Status: At risk

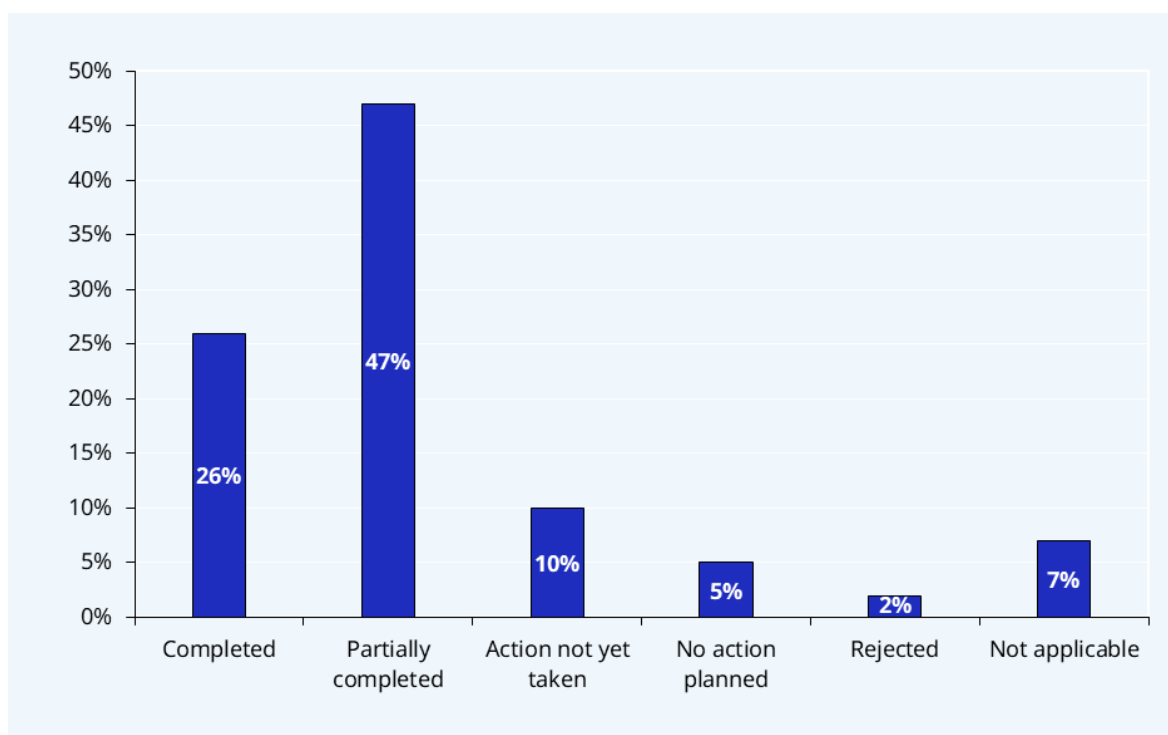
40. Line managers are required to submit responses to recommendations from independent evaluations via EVAL's Automated Management Response System, which was launched in 2018. Recommendations are given one of five statuses: (a) action taken in response to the recommendation has been completed; (b) action taken in response to the recommendation has been partially completed; (c) no action is planned; (d) action has not yet been taken; or (e) the recommendation has been rejected.
41. During the review period, 68 of the 71 required management responses to recommendations from independent evaluations were received, representing 96 per cent. This covers 664 of a total of 683 recommendations addressed. Of these, 73 per cent have been marked as "completed" or "partially completed" (see figure 5). The overall completion rates (see table 2) would have been higher had the following three offices submitted their required responses: the ILO Decent Work Technical Support Team and Country Office for Central and Eastern Europe (one response missing, totalling six recommendations); the ILO Country Office for the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo and Gabon (one response missing, totalling six recommendations); and the ILO Country Office for Ethiopia, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan, and for the Special Representative to the African Union (AU) and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) (one response missing, totalling seven recommendations). Moreover, figures from recommendations marked "no action planned," "action not yet taken," "rejected," and "not applicable," were high, particularly in the Asia and the Pacific region, which played a major role in decreasing overall completion rates. As a result, the 2025 end target of 85 per cent of recommendations fully or partially implemented is at risk and has declined from 79 per cent last year to 73 per cent this year. Recommendations by resource implications, level of priority and time frame are noted in figures 6 to 8, respectively.

► **Table 2. Status of management responses by region and department, 2023**

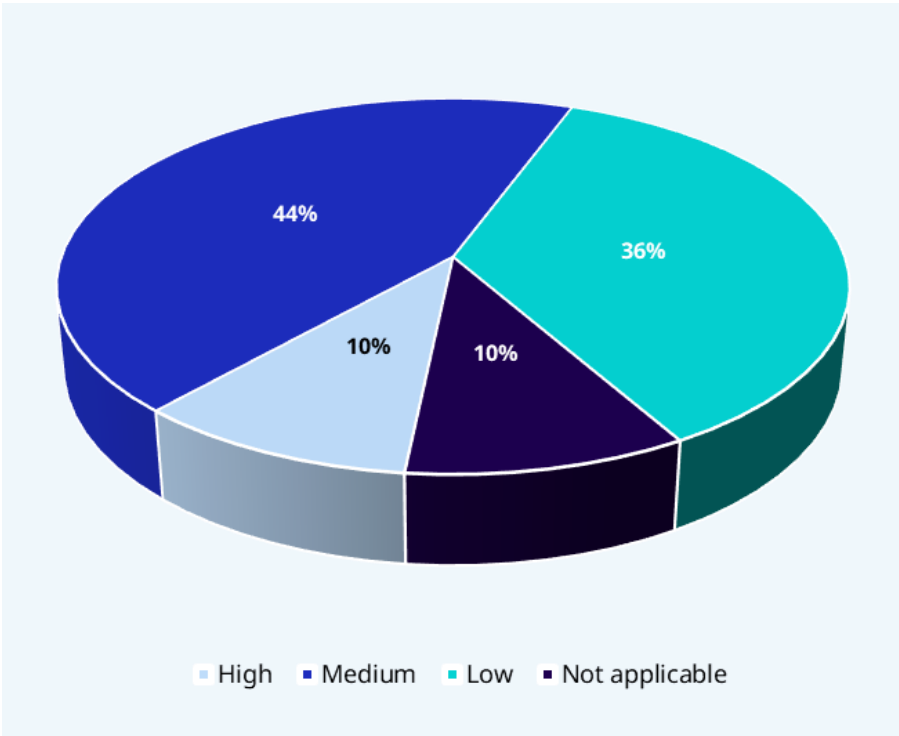
Administrative region or office/unit	Evaluation reports requiring management response (71)		Completed	Partially completed	No action planned	Action not yet taken	Rejected	Not applicable
	No. of recommendations with no responses	No. of recommendations with responses						
Africa	13	158	67	53	5	16	4	13
Arab States	0	73	17	44	0	1	7	4
Asia and the Pacific	0	214	56	91	16	22	5	24
Europe and Central Asia	6	37	7	16	6	2	0	6
Latin America and the Caribbean	0	52	14	26	2	10	0	0
Subtotal for regions	19	534	161	230	29	51	16	47
ADG/JSP	0	7	0	7	0	0	0	0
EMPLOYMENT	0	31	5	23	0	3	0	0
ENTERPRISES	0	13	2	10	1	0	0	0
GOVERNANCE	0	32	3	20	3	5	1	0

Administrative region or office/unit	Evaluation reports requiring management response (71)		Completed	Partially completed	No action planned	Action not yet taken	Rejected	Not applicable
	No. of recommendations with no responses	No. of recommendations with responses						
SECTOR	0	7	2	5	0	0	0	0
SOCPRO	0	6	4	2	0	0	0	0
STATISTICS	0	4	2	2	0	0	0	0
WORKQUALITY	0	30	1	21	0	8	0	0
Subtotal for departments/units	0	130	19	90	4	16	1	0
Grand total	19	664	180	320	33	67	17	47
Percentage	3%	97%	26%	47%	5%	10%	2%	7%
Total of completed and partially completed management responses			73%					

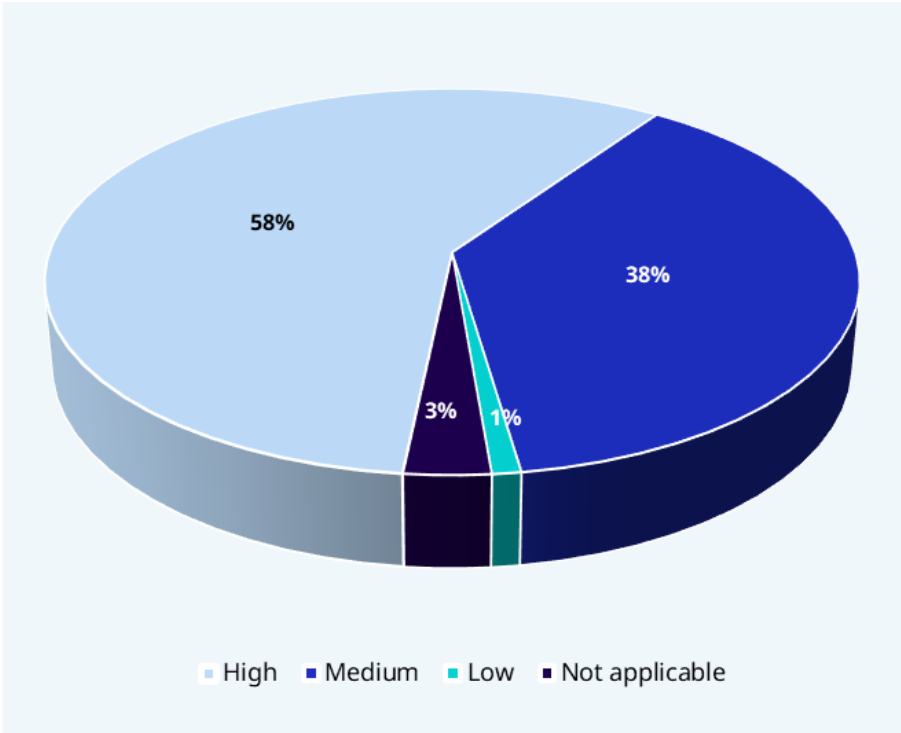
► Figure 5. Status of management responses to evaluation recommendations, 2023



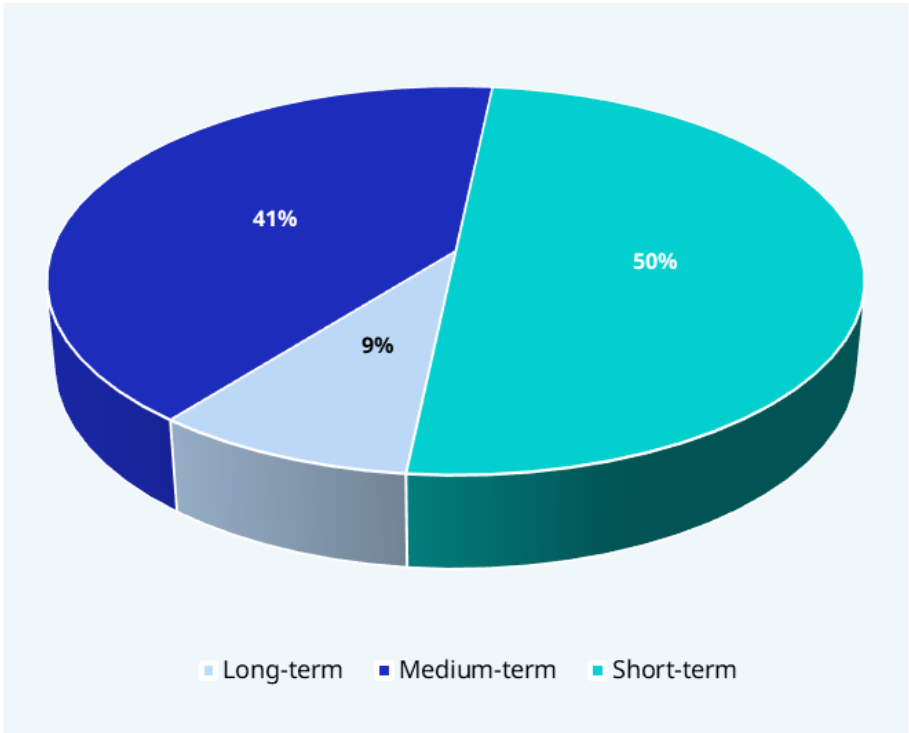
► Figure 6. Recommendations by resource implications, 2023



► Figure 7. Recommendations by level of priority, 2023



► Figure 8. Recommendations by time frame, 2023



Sub-outcome 3.3. Improved tracking of uptake and use by constituents and management of the knowledge and lessons generated from evaluations for governance and decision-making

Indicator 3.3.1: Extent to which the profile of evaluation results is strengthened in the ILO’s strategic and programmatic documents (programme and budget, programme implementation report, Governing Body reports) and knowledge-sharing platforms.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): EVAL’s integrated evaluation planning approach promotes the enhanced use of findings in governance and reporting mechanisms of the ILO.

Target (end of 2025): Evaluation findings are part of at least one strategic and programmatic document and in one knowledge-sharing platform.

Custodians: EVAL, EAC, regions and technical departments (REOs and DEFPs).

Status: On track

42. As part of its annual assessment of the uptake of evaluation findings in ILO strategic documents, EVAL reviewed 182 documents from the 347th to 350th Sessions of the Governing Body and the 112th Session of the International Labour Conference, as well as key strategic documents such as the Programme and Budget for 2024–25 and the 2022–23 Programme Implementation Report. It was found that 7 per cent of these documents referenced evaluation findings and recommendations, resulting in a total of 66 references, 23 per cent of which were used to justify policy decisions, 9 per cent were used for programme design changes and 68 per cent were cited as evidence in discussions on interventions or programmes. Additionally, 2024 has seen the highest overall number of references (66, compared with 22 in 2023, 59 in 2022 and 32 in 2021). While this increase can be partly attributed to the fact that a larger set of documents was reviewed, more broadly it shows growth in the use of evaluation

findings and recommendations in strategic and programmatic documents and on knowledge-sharing platforms.

Indicator 3.3.2: Enhanced strategic role of the EAC and regional chapters in the ILO by 2025 for the strategic identification of knowledge requirements, uptake and use of evaluation results.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): Concept note on the approach to the role and membership of the EAC and regional chapters reviewed and agreed with the EAC and the regions.

Target (end of 2025): Ninety per cent of EAC discussions are on strategic issues, focusing on evaluation insights and implications arising from HLEs, synthesis reviews and meta-analyses.

Custodians: EVAL, EAC, regions and technical departments (REOs and DEFPs).

Status: On track

43. The EAC oversees follow-up to recommendations from HLEs. After being dormant during the transitional period as the new Director-General took office in October 2022, the EAC was revitalized at the end of 2023, with the Deputy Director-General as its new Chairperson. Its composition was adjusted to include representatives of the Assistant Directors-General of the four clusters and of the Office of the Director-General (CABINET), Regional Directors and representatives of ACT/EMP and ACTRAV, reflecting the new office structure and broader social partner interests.
44. At its three sessions, held on 7 December 2023, 7 May 2024 and in early September 2024, the EAC focused on follow-up to several HLEs. Key themes included the topics addressed by previous HLEs that continued to require additional follow-up: gender equality, public-private partnerships, research and knowledge management and the ILO response to COVID-19. The EAC also discussed the review of follow-up work plans for the HLEs undertaken in 2023 on fundamental principles and rights at work, the rural economy and the ILO's work in post-conflict countries in the Arab States. Between 80 and 90 per cent of the sessions were strategic in nature, thereby facilitating high-level exchanges to ensure the implementation of recommendations to enhance the ILO's effectiveness and impact. Emphasis was placed on functioning according to the "One ILO" approach and addressing systemic issues.

Indicator 3.3.3: Number of comprehensive and timely overviews of the overall effectiveness of the ILO produced annually by 2025.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): One annual overview of ILO effectiveness produced and results presented to the Governing Body through the annual evaluation report.

Target (end of 2025): Three annual overviews of ILO effectiveness produced and results presented to the Governing Body through the annual evaluation report.

Custodian: EVAL.

Status: On track

45. EVAL conducts annual performance assessments of the ILO's decent work outcomes and effectiveness, using a robust methodology to evaluate projects with budgets over US\$1 million against 29 key performance indicators. The evaluation results are aggregated and analysed to produce an annual assessment of the ILO's strategic relevance, effectiveness, coherence, impact, sustainability and efficiency; Part II of this report summarizes the main results. Building on last year's innovations, the results are presented using a thematic approach that is aligned with the ILO's policy outcomes and country programme outcomes to meet specific information needs.

Enabling environment

Enabler 1: Degree to which a functioning trust fund exists in the ILO by 2025 that is supported by funding partners.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): Approach to a functioning trust fund discussed and agreed among ILO custodians.

Target (end of 2025): Consultations started with at least two funding partners based on a concept note on the trust fund.

Custodians: PARTNERSHIPS, FINANCE and EVAL.

Status: On track

46. As highlighted in this report, flexible funds are essential for enhancing the ILO's evaluation function. They enable comprehensive assessments that go beyond individual projects and are crucial for impact and ex post evaluations. The IETF supports strategic evaluations and addresses the limitations of project-specific evaluation budgets. The effective engagement of funding partners is critical for improving evaluation quality, with clustered evaluations and pooled funding mechanisms advancing impact evaluation methodologies.
47. Despite discussions with interested funding partners, persistent ambiguity surrounds existing agreements. To address this, and following consultations with PARTNERSHIPS, it has been agreed to review standard donor agreements and develop a new default paragraph on evaluation that will reflect updated evaluation policy provisions for flexible funding and clustering, offering donors the option to participate in clustered evaluations, contribute to the IETF or opt out of one or both of those options. These measures will enhance transparency and improve understanding of the steps needed to advance evaluation methodologies and impact measurement at the ILO.
48. **Recommendation 2: Communicate to donors the new default paragraph on evaluation that incorporates the updated evaluation policy and strategy on flexible funding and clustered evaluations, offering them the choice to either participate in or opt out of these additional options.**

Enabler 2: Percentage of ILO DWCPs and development cooperation-funded interventions that are responsive to constituents' institutional capacity needs and their on-the-ground realities.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): At least 50 per cent of ILO development cooperation projects involve constituents in design and implementation. At least 60 per cent of new DWCPs (against 2022 baseline) involve constituents in their design.

Target (end of 2025): At least 60 per cent of ILO development cooperation projects involve constituents in design and implementation. At least 70 per cent of new DWCPs (against 2022 baseline) involve constituents in their design.

Custodians: Evaluation network (EVAL, REOs, DEFPs, evaluation managers (EMs)) ACT/EMP, ACTRAV, PARTNERSHIPS and PROGRAM.

Status: On track

49. During the reporting period, the ILO actively engaged constituents in the strategic planning of DWCPs and initiatives funded by development cooperation. According to EVAL's comprehensive meta-study on decent work outcomes and the effectiveness of ILO operations, 53 per cent of ILO development cooperation interventions effectively integrated constituents in their design in 2023, a 10 per cent decrease in comparison with 2022 levels. In 2023–24, all DWCPs benefited notably from constituent involvement during their formulation. The robust participation of constituents in both design and implementation continues to significantly bolster the evaluability, sustainability and overall impact of ILO interventions.

Enabler 3: Integrated evaluation needs into monitoring and evaluation frameworks of development cooperation projects by 2025.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): ILO key custodians discuss and agree on practical ways to strengthen monitoring procedures, including evaluability assessments of development cooperation-funded interventions.

Target (end of 2025): 20 per cent increase (against 2022 baseline) in ILO development cooperation-funded interventions that have proper monitoring systems in place, as confirmed in evaluability assessments.

Custodians: PROGRAM, PARTNERSHIPS, EVAL, regions and technical departments.

Status: At risk

50. Progress has been made in setting up an institutional monitoring and reporting mechanism. Since the last reporting period, the Office has been updating the Strategic Management module in the Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS) to improve work planning, monitoring and reporting capabilities. A new application is being developed to link the ILO's biennial programme and budget, DWCPs and development cooperation projects, thereby enabling comprehensive work planning and providing continuous updates on implementation and financial delivery. The application is expected to be operational by January 2026.
51. Efforts are under way in certain regions to strengthen monitoring and reporting practices. For instance, in 2024 the Latin America and the Caribbean region plans to establish a community of practice on monitoring and evaluation to promote collaboration and knowledge-sharing on best practices, challenges and solutions among ILO staff. However, at the project level, monitoring and reporting remain weak. EVAL's meta-studies on decent work results and the effectiveness of the ILO's operations ² have revealed a general inadequacy in monitoring and reporting since 2012. Specifically, only 30 and 35 per cent of projects had strong monitoring systems in 2022 and 2023, respectively. Projects performed well when they used results-based monitoring frameworks and performance tracking tools to measure progress and maintain transparency in financial reporting.

Enabler 4: Number of strategic programmatic, knowledge-sharing and learning discussions to which EVAL contributes with evaluative inputs.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): EVAL (including REOs and DEFPs) invited to at least two strategic programmatic, knowledge-sharing and learning discussions to provide evaluative inputs.

Target (end of 2025): EVAL (including REOs and DEFPs) invited to at least four strategic programmatic, knowledge-sharing and learning discussions to provide evaluative inputs.

Custodians: Evaluation network (EVAL, REOs, DEFPs, EMs) ACT/EMP, ACTRAV, PARTNERSHIPS and PROGRAM.

Status: On track

52. The evaluation network's emphasis on knowledge-sharing and learning has significantly contributed to strategic, programmatic and thematic discussions. This involvement ranges from Office-wide discussions on outcome-based work planning and the preparation of the strategic plan and programme and budget, to more specific illustrative examples:

² For reporting purposes, meta-studies have been chosen as the most appropriate measurement tool since they encompass a broader array of interventions than tools requiring evaluability assessments, which are typically limited to large-scale interventions.

- **Interregional Workshop on Country Programming:** At the “Country Programming in the ILO” workshop that took place in Dakar in May 2024, EVAL shared valuable lessons and good practices for supporting the evaluability of DWCPs by using tools such as the Evaluability Diagnostic Instrument. Insights were drawn from evaluations conducted across multiple regions, contributing to a broader understanding of DWCP effectiveness in the context of UN reform.
- **Presentation on the findings of an evaluation of the ILO’s Disability Inclusion Strategy:** In 2023, EVAL conducted an independent evaluation of the ILO’s Disability Inclusion Strategy with the aim of providing strategic inputs for the next strategy. EVAL presented key findings at a workshop, and its recommendations will influence the upcoming strategy (to be presented to the Governing Body in November 2024).
- **Strategic cluster evaluation of the Safety + Health for All flagship programme:** The Governance/Occupational Safety and Health Team leveraged evaluation findings from the Safety + Health for All flagship programme in discussions with the global technical advisory committee. The follow-up to the related recommendations is expected to improve coordination with development cooperation initiatives and inform the revised ILO Global Strategy on Occupational Safety and Health (2024–30).
- **Regional Office for the Arab States labour migration strategy:** In response to a recommendation from the final evaluation of the ILO Regional Fair Migration Project in the Middle East (FAIRWAY I) (2019), the Regional Office for the Arab States developed a regional strategy on labour migration for 2024–27. This strategy will allow the region to transition from a project-centric approach to a more integrated, programmatic framework for managing labour migration projects.

Enabler 5: Availability of formal training that integrates evaluative thinking in the ILO by 2025.

Biennial milestone (end of 2023): Training module on evaluation for ILO staff under development.

Target (end of 2025): Training module on evaluation for ILO staff available in ILO People.

Custodians: HRD, ITC–ILO and EVAL.

Status: On track

53. EVAL continues to strengthen the evaluation culture within the Organization. Since the last reporting period, EVAL has facilitated three sessions on evaluation as part of the orientation workshops provided for new ILO staff members, in coordination with HRD and ITC–ILO. These sessions aim to enhance knowledge of the importance and added value of evaluations. Another session is scheduled for the second half of 2024. Additionally, EVAL is creating an online induction training module on evaluation for new staff members with the goal of integrating it into the compulsory induction training process for all staff. This training module will be finalized within the period covered by the current Strategy, and by ensuring broad access to it, EVAL seeks to raise awareness of the crucial role of evaluation in achieving the ILO’s mission.

► Part II. Assessing the ILO's effectiveness and results

54. For over a decade, EVAL has systematically conducted annual assessments of the ILO's overall effectiveness and presented them in its annual evaluation report, as required under the current and former Evaluation Strategy. Effectiveness is measured by analysing independent evaluations of projects undertaken during the previous calendar year which serve as proxies for gauging the ILO's performance and extracting lessons learned and good practices. Since this assessment only captures results from project interventions that have been evaluated, it cannot be viewed as equivalent to an assessment of the ILO's overall performance.
55. In Part II of this report, EVAL presents findings from its recent meta-analysis of all independent final evaluations conducted in 2023. Additionally, as part of EVAL's ongoing efforts to assess the contribution of development cooperation projects to the programme and budget and its policy outcomes, this section provides an overview of performance trends at the policy outcome level and regional clusters of country programme outcomes for the 2022–23 biennium.
56. In line with EVAL's commitment to working towards improvements in capturing the ILO's impact, this section concludes with the results of an ex post quality review of recently completed impact evaluations, assessing their role in informing effective policy interventions and evaluating how that role can be strengthened.

2.1. The ILO's effectiveness and results in 2023

57. The effectiveness of operations was evaluated using our consistent set of 29 predefined performance criteria, which were rated on a four-point scale: unsuccessful (1), partly successful (2), successful (3) and highly successful (4). Performance focuses on four clusters of predefined criteria aligned with the evaluation parameters set out by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development as well as cross-cutting ILO policy issues, namely strategic relevance and coherence, effectiveness, sustainability and impact, and efficiency.

2.1.1. Overall performance trends, 2023

In 2023, the performance of 57 per cent of ILO development cooperation projects was average or above average, indicating a steady level of performance compared with 2022.

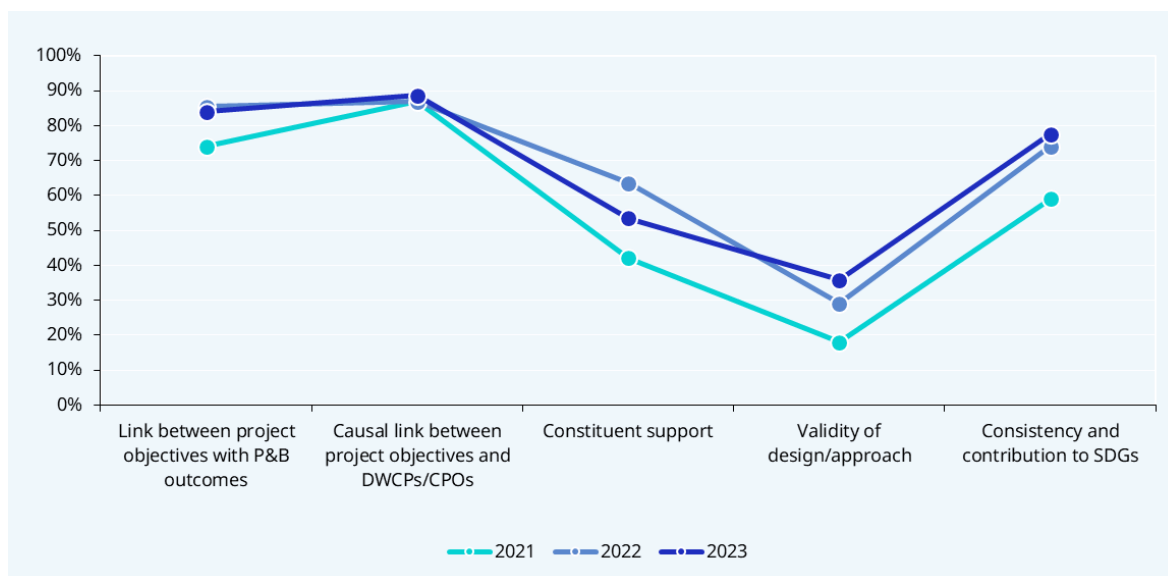
58. Close to 70 per cent of the evaluated interventions in 2023 exhibited good strategic relevance and coherence. When considering overall effectiveness in achieving results, the ratings were positive but displayed greater variability, with 55 per cent of interventions attaining a successful level of performance. The sustainability of results and impact was rated satisfactorily in slightly over 60 per cent of interventions. The weakest performance results were observed in terms of overall efficiency, with less than 50 per cent of ILO interventions performing at an average or above-average level (figure 9).

► **Figure 9. Aggregated results by performance criteria cluster, 2023 (percentage)**



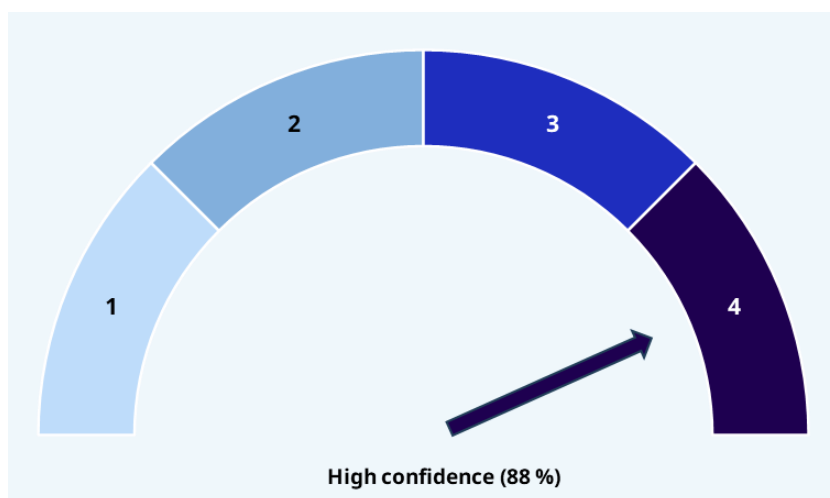
2.1.2. What worked well in terms of the relevance and coherence of the ILO's development cooperation work in 2023?

► **Figure 10. Percentage of interventions with scores of “highly successful” or “successful” for strategic relevance and alignment, 2021–23³**



Overall good performance was seen in most areas related to strategic relevance and coherence (70 per cent average performance). There was variability in the extent to which ILO development cooperation interventions reflected national decent work needs as expressed by constituents, with successful involvement reported in 50 per cent of the assessed cases. The main area of weakness in this category continued to be the validity of the project design or approach, with just over one third of projects having strongly valid designs (figure 10).

³ The percentage for each performance criterion reflects the proportion of projects that received scores of 3 and 4. This applies to figures 10, 12, 14 and 16.

► Figure 11. Confidence of evidence ⁴

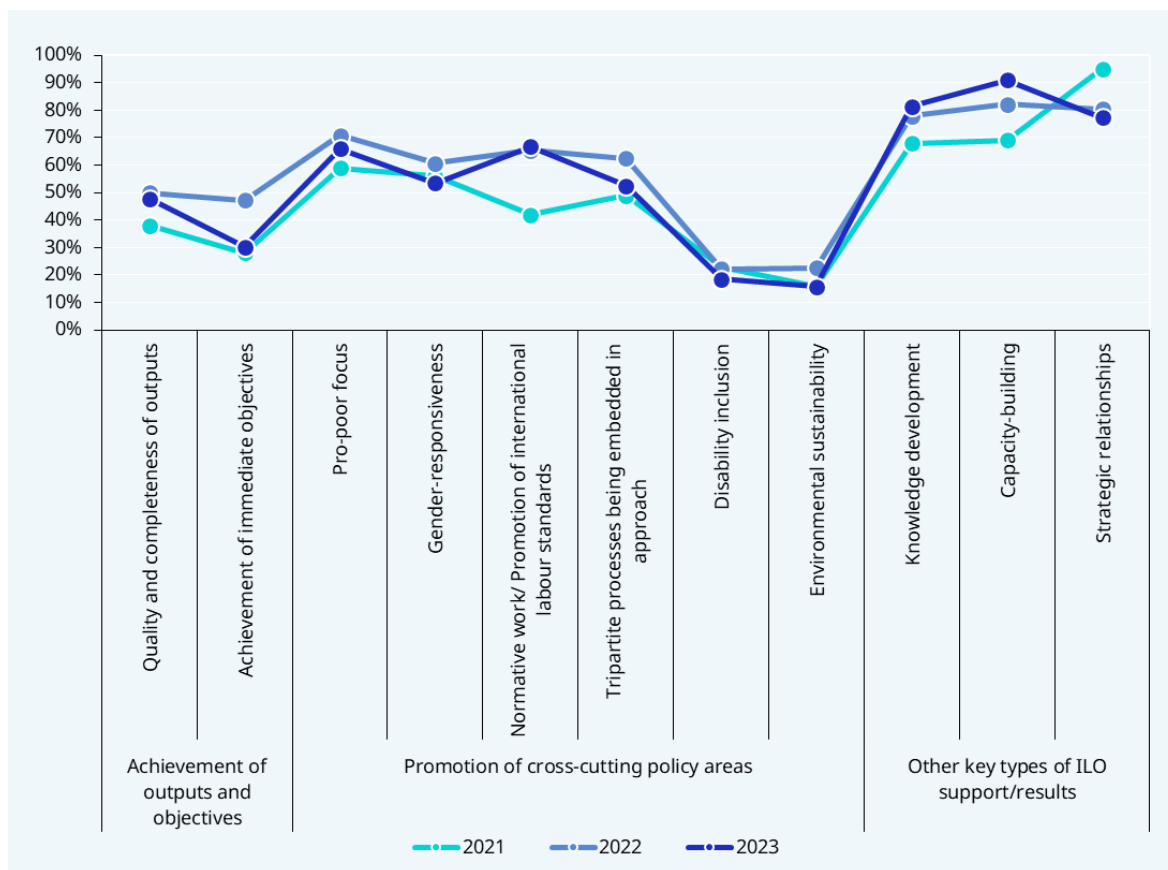
59. The results from 2023 remain consistent with previous years, with very strong performance in interventions' responsiveness to organizational strategies, national decent work priorities and global priorities such as the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, with successful performance in 80 per cent of cases.
60. However, a significant proportion (64 per cent) of ILO development cooperation interventions lacked robust objectives and technical approaches, with designs that were not grounded in theory and lacked internal coherence or synergies across outcomes. Engagement with constituents was successful in slightly more than half of cases, with involvement in project formulation and implementation often limited and the needs of specific constituent groups sometimes neglected.
61. Approximately one third of projects demonstrated a successful design, characterized by clearly defined objectives and technically sound approaches endorsed by stakeholders. These projects featured well-defined strategies and services that were intricately linked and aligned with project objectives.

The capacity of the ILO to adapt and address changing priorities over time, including between project phases, was an important element of good performance, especially in politically volatile situations and when faced with restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

⁴ A strength of evidence rating is provided for each cluster of performance criteria, using the following scale: 4 – performance consistently observed through multiple levels of evidence (in 80 to 100 per cent of evaluations); 3 – performance observed through multiple levels of evidence (in 50 to 79 per cent of evaluations); 2 – performance rarely observed (in 30 to 49 per cent of evaluations); or 1 – performance not observed or weak (in 0 to 29 per cent of evaluations).

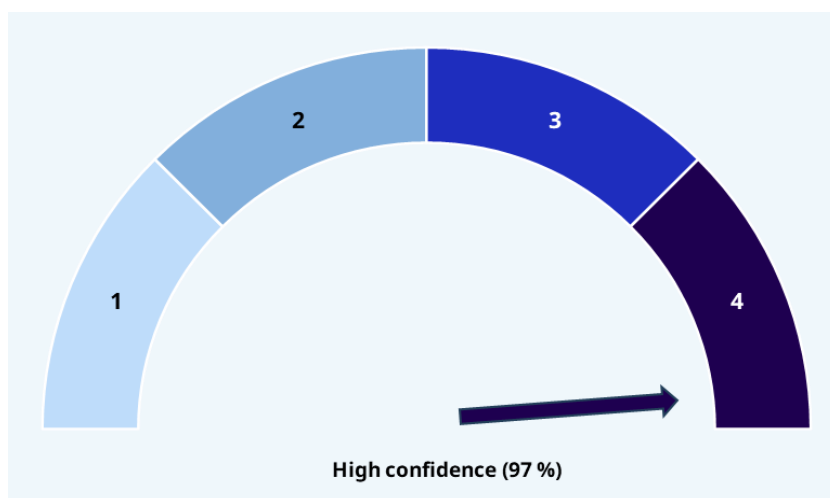
2.1.3. Did ILO development cooperation operations lead to effective results in 2023?

► **Figure 12. Percentage of interventions with scores of “highly successful” or “successful” for effectiveness, 2021–23**



In 2023, performance trends matched those of the previous year overall, although weaker results were noted in the achievement of immediate objectives and across key cross-cutting policy areas, including tripartism and social dialogue, pro-poor initiatives, gender-responsiveness, disability inclusion and the transition to environmentally sustainable practices (figure 12).

► Figure 13. Confidence of evidence



62. The overall effectiveness of ILO development cooperation operations varied in 2023. Close to one third of interventions demonstrated successful performance in achieving their intended objectives, while less than half achieved their respective objectives successfully.

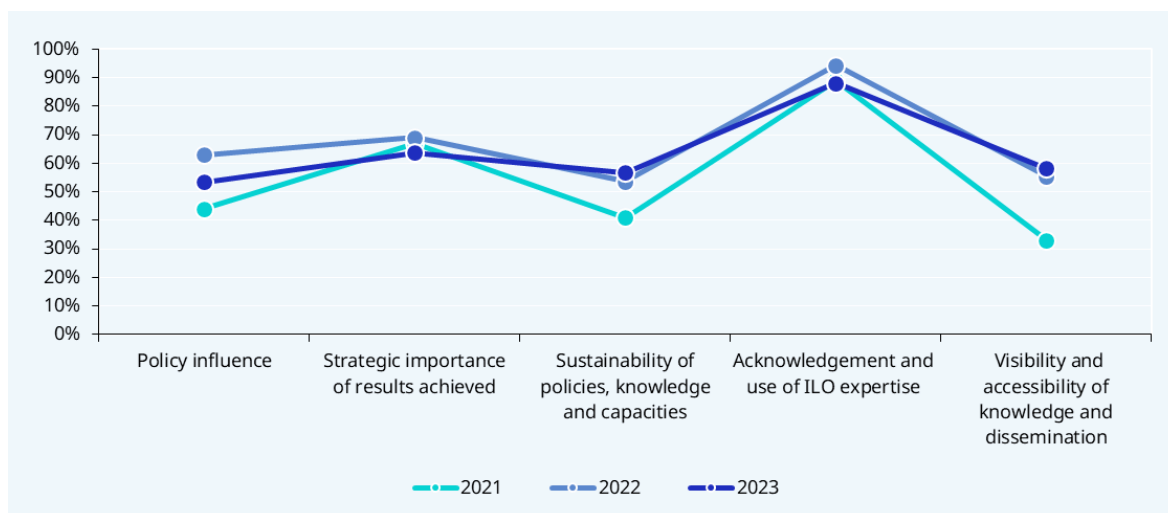
The flexibility of outcome-based funding was noted as an important element in achieving targets and providing timely responses to local priorities, even when these priorities changed over time.

63. In practice, there was very strong capacity-building and knowledge generation, with over 85 per cent of projects performing successfully or very successfully. The ILO performed effectively in normative work and the promotion of international labour standards in 67 per cent of cases. Performance relating to social dialogue and tripartism initiatives was moderate (53 per cent of initiatives received successful ratings), as was performance in efforts targeting poverty alleviation and gender equality, with strong outcomes observed in over 60 and 50 per cent of cases, respectively. These areas, however, experienced a 10 per cent decline in performance compared with 2022.
64. Very poor performance was seen in disability inclusion, with less than one fifth of development cooperation-funded interventions (18 per cent) adopting a disability inclusion perspective or including specific components targeting beneficiary groups with disabilities. Similarly, performance was very weak in the inclusion of elements supporting a just transition to environmental sustainability, with 16 per cent of measured development cooperation operations considering these issues in their design and implementation, making it an area where improvement is needed.

To fully achieve the ILO's goal on disability inclusion, the Strategy must be implemented throughout the ILO's offices and not just at headquarters. This requires regional and country offices to ensure that DWCPs and country programme outcomes are disability inclusive, the pursuit of funding opportunities on disability inclusion, and ensuring that projects effectively mainstream disability in both design and implementation.

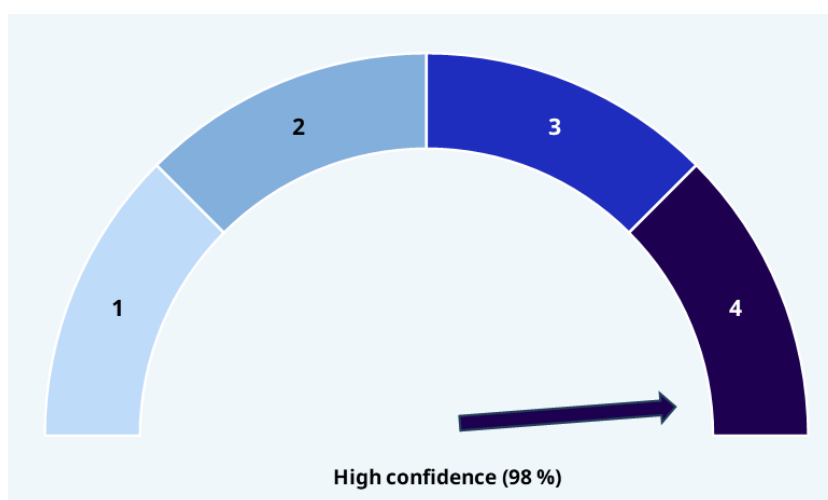
2.1.4. How sustainable and impactful were ILO development cooperation interventions in 2023?

► **Figure 14. Percentage of interventions with scores of “highly successful” or “successful” for sustainability and impact, 2021–23**



The results achieved by the ILO demonstrate positive performance in 2023, with an average of 60 per cent of interventions performing successfully. The strongest performance was related to the acknowledgement and use of the ILO’s expertise, which received successful ratings in 88 per cent of cases (figure 14). Another area of success was the strategic importance of the results achieved, with 65 per cent of initiatives performing well in this regard. However, there remains a need to improve the visibility of the ILO’s work and its capacity to influence policies.

► **Figure 15. Confidence of evidence**



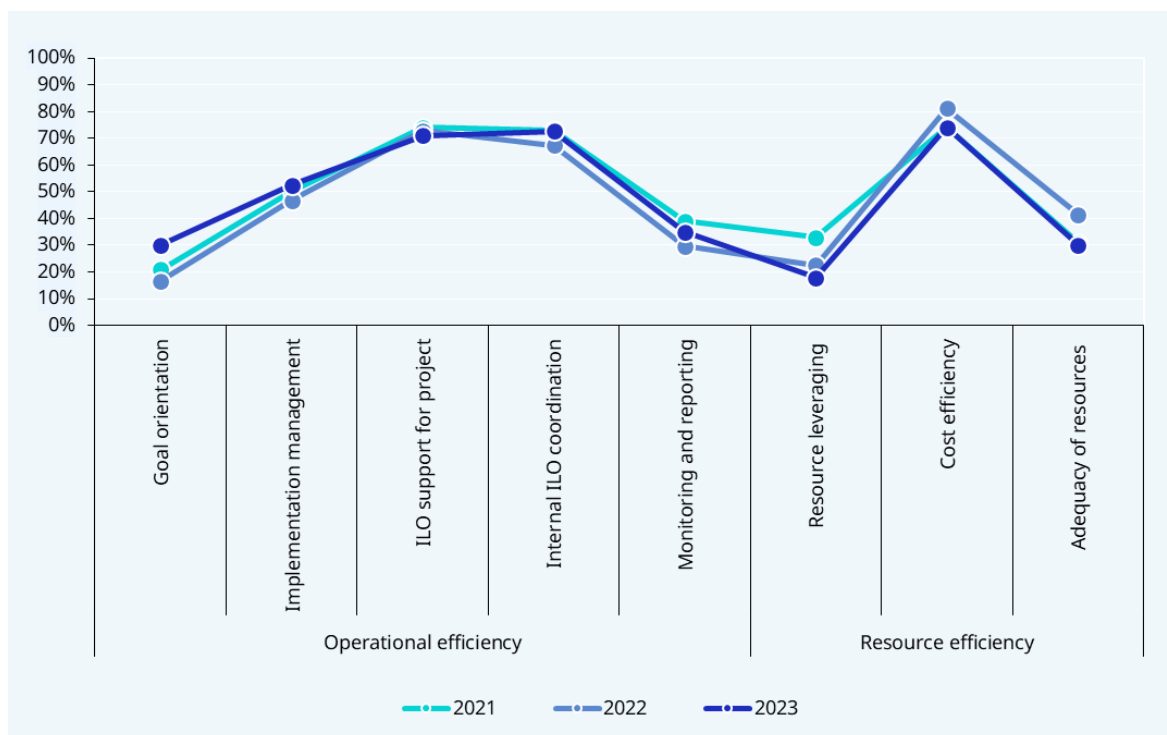
65. In 2023, the ILO was widely recognized for its expertise and contributions and often seen as an impartial facilitator that promoted tripartite exchanges and created spaces for social dialogue. In fact, the effective use of the results of ILO development cooperation interventions was rated positively, with satisfactory performance in over 60 per cent of cases.

66. The ILO's ability to influence policies and make its work more visible and accessible was only partly satisfactory, however, with strong performance in around half of the cases assessed. Additionally, moderate performance was observed for the long-term sustainability of outcomes (satisfactory performance in 57 per cent of cases).

ILO development cooperation interventions allowed for improvements and/or adaptations in national policies and strategies, through focused work with stakeholders and beneficiaries. In some cases, interventions aimed to strengthen individual capacities, as well as institutional capacities, to participate in policy influencing activities.

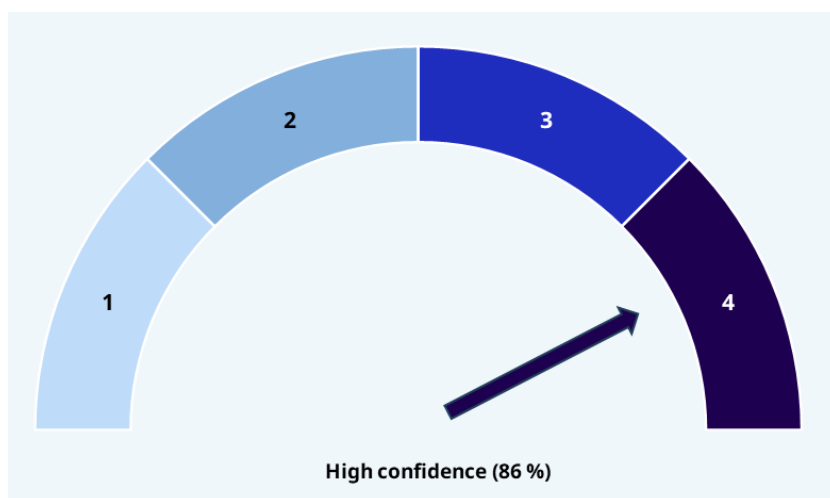
2.1.5. How efficient was the ILO in 2023?

- **Figure 16. Percentage of interventions with scores of “highly successful” or “successful” for efficiency, 2021–23**



Overall performance in relation to efficiency continued to be low in 2023, with less than 50 per cent of interventions achieving “successful” or “highly successful” scores (figure 16).

► Figure 17. Confidence of evidence



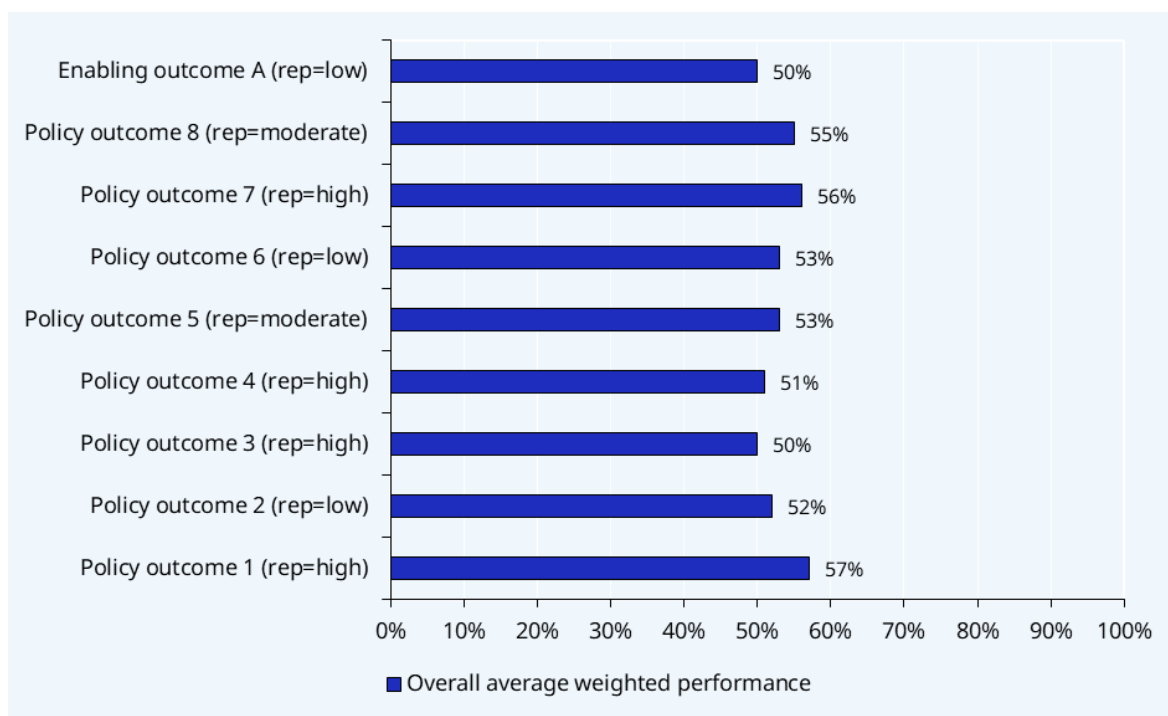
67. The ILO performed strongly in providing effective support for interventions and coordinating internally, with successful performance in 70 per cent of assessed cases. Positive performance was noted when ILO development cooperation operations were able to capitalize on the availability of ILO technical expertise at headquarters and in the field.
68. As in previous years, however, a mixed trend was detected in implementation management in 2023, with slightly more than half of interventions performing well. The weakest area was in applying a results-based management approach and establishing monitoring and reporting frameworks, in relation to which only 30 per cent of interventions performed well.

Inadequate performance was noted when there was high management turnover over the project life cycle. In countries where collaboration with constituents and partners was often based on personal relationships, this turnover affected project delivery rates. This was exacerbated when there were no field offices to coordinate implementation, and there was poor monitoring and reporting.

69. Regarding resource management, 30 per cent of development cooperation interventions were partly successful in terms of resource adequacy, and fewer than 20 per cent effectively leveraged available resources. Despite this, over 70 per cent of ILO interventions were considered cost-efficient, as they identified opportunities for cost-sharing with other projects, leveraged strategic partnerships and demonstrated an efficient use of financial resources.

2.2. Performance trends by policy outcome, country programme outcome and region for the 2022–23 biennium

70. This section outlines the performance results of project interventions for the 2022–23 biennium, evaluated at both the policy outcome and regional levels, according to the associated country programme outcomes. Although the findings are based on a substantial sample of 100 project evaluations, individual results should be interpreted with caution. Overall, the variability in the performance of projects across outcomes was minimal, with the lowest weighted performance recorded at 50 per cent and the highest at 57 per cent.

► **Figure 18. Average weighted performance by policy outcome in 2022–23**

The ILO's work aimed at strengthening tripartite constituents and ensuring inclusive social dialogue (policy outcome 1 of the Programme and Budget for 2022–23) demonstrated the strongest performance in 2022–23, notably in the Asia and the Pacific region. Furthermore, ILO projects performed strongly in relation to effective protection at work for all (policy outcome 7), especially in the Asia and the Pacific region and in interregional actions (figure 18).

- 71.** While overall performance was satisfactory for all policy and enabling outcomes, the Organization's work on policy outcome 1 (strong tripartite constituents and influential and inclusive social dialogue) showed the strongest performance,⁵ particularly in the Asia and the Pacific region. Overall, country programme outcomes linked to this policy outcome performed strongly in terms of both attaining and sustaining results. These interventions aimed to promote social dialogue and harmonious industrial relations, decent work in the garment and coffee supply chains, occupational safety and health regulatory frameworks, safe and declared work, international labour standards and inclusive labour markets. Key performance areas were related to knowledge development, capacity-building, normative work and the promotion of international labour standards.
- 72.** Another area of strong performance was effective protection at work (policy outcome 7), both in terms of the achievement of results and their sustainability. Successful initiatives focused mostly on decent work and rights for migrant workers, refugees, forcibly displaced persons and host communities. Within these projects, the promotion of international labour standards

⁵ For reporting purposes, a sample's level of representativeness ("rep") is considered to indicate the extent to which the reported performance is observed in multiple evidence sources, allowing extrapolation of the pattern to all interventions. Samples comprising between 1 and 10 evaluation reports were classified as having low representativeness, between 10 and 15 as moderate representativeness and 15 and above high representativeness. The lower the representativeness, the lower the evidence confidence. The findings reported in this section are limited to samples categorized as having "high" representativeness.

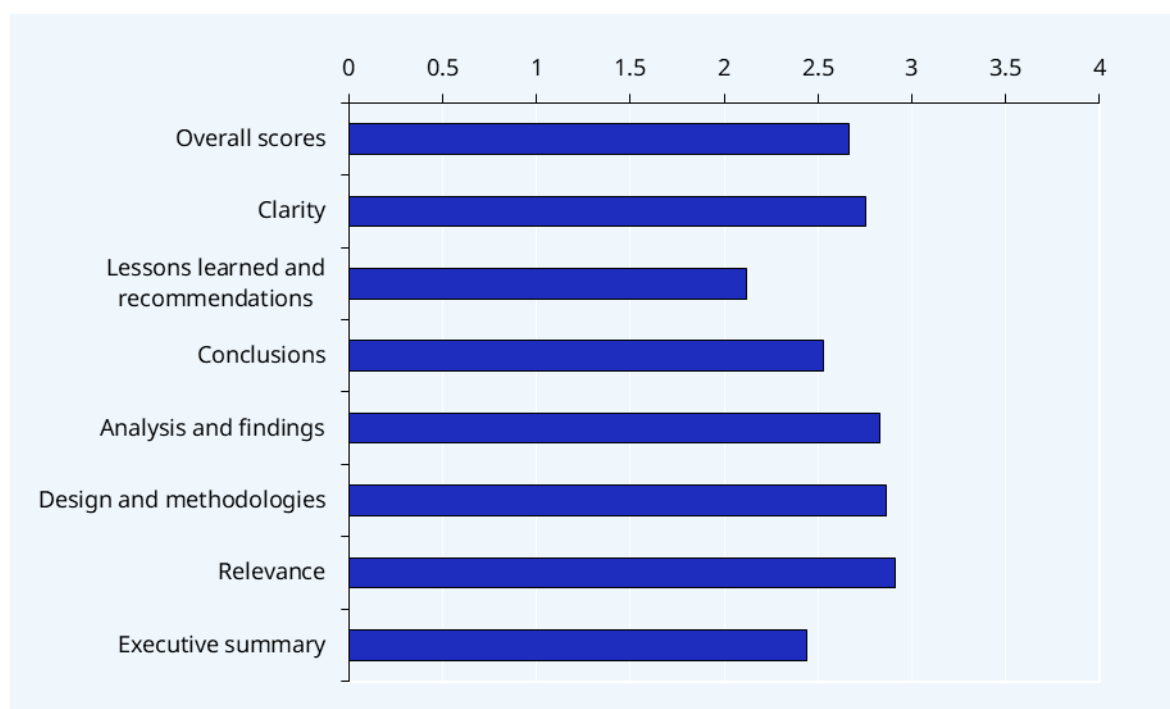
and normative work was an area of strength. Furthermore, projects successfully promoted and drew on social dialogue and tripartism. The work that performed most strongly in that regard was undertaken in the Asia and the Pacific region and as part of interregional initiatives. Among those initiatives, strong performance was observed in relation to the ILO's capacity to generate knowledge, promote tripartism and social dialogue, build capacities and advance normative work.

73. Policy outcome 3, on employment, saw moderate performance, with 50 per cent of initiatives being successful or very successful. The strongest results were seen in Asia and the Pacific, followed by the Arab States and Africa. Overall, capacity-building for employment promotion was an area of strength in Asia and the Pacific and Africa, with particular focus on local economic and sustainable livelihood opportunities.
74. Policy outcome 4, on sustainable enterprises, saw a similar level of performance, with 51 per cent of initiatives successful or very successful. Interventions performed particularly well in Africa and Asia and the Pacific; both regions showed good results in capacity-building and strategic partnerships. There was high variability in other areas, however, including poor performance in policy influence and strategic results, especially in projects evaluated in 2023.
75. The performance patterns for the remaining policy outcomes are not included in this report because data are limited to a few project evaluations, resulting in lower representativeness and weaker confidence in the evidence.

2.3. An overview of the results of the independent ex post quality review of impact studies and evaluations at the ILO, 2013–21

76. Impact evaluations are an integral part of effective policy interventions. To assess their quality at the ILO, EVAL commissioned a specialized firm to conduct an ex post quality review of impact studies and evaluations in 2013–21. The team developed an impact evaluation assessment tool through a thorough desk review of existing quality assessment tools, standards and guidance for impact evaluation at EVAL. Using this tool, the team reviewed 18 reports, sampled both randomly and purposefully, from a total of 74 studies categorized as impact evaluations in the ILO impact evaluation inventory.
77. The findings (see figure 19) indicate that the ILO's impact evaluations only moderately comply with global quality standards, albeit with significant heterogeneity in their quality. Strengths include robust methodologies, clear and comprehensive findings and relevance to specific contexts and needs. Some weaknesses were identified, however, including:
 - limited focus on the sustainability of outcomes (long-term impact) and scalability;
 - often, a lack of well-formulated lessons learned, recommendations and executive summaries, hindering the utilization of evaluation findings and limiting their full potential to influence policy;
 - limited emphasis on ethical standards, data quality control and explanations of the limitations and constraints of the methodologies used;
 - the absence of impact evaluations in the project programming and budgeting stages, further limiting their use.

► Figure 19. Average report ratings by section



Score: 1 – Unsatisfactory; 2 – Fair; 3 – Satisfactory; 4 – Good.

78. Based on the findings, EVAL will:

- **develop a workable impact evaluation strategy:** establish a group dedicated to impact evaluation tasks with allocated financial and human resources to systematize impact evaluation policy. One approach is to create an impact evaluation segment in the IETF for technical departments to utilize when conducting impact evaluations;
- **promote a culture of evidence:** build a community of practice around impact evaluations, showcase exemplary impact evaluations and enhance capacity at all levels of the ILO to promote them as key instruments for evidence-based policy;
- **improve impact evaluation inventory access and usability:** regularly update the impact evaluation inventory and connect it to a dissemination-oriented website on impact evaluations within the ILO to boost their usability;
- **ensure strong quality control:** build staff capacity on impact evaluation, conduct spot checks at the study design stage and perform ex post quality assessments for all impact evaluation reports;
- **incorporate best practices in terms of reference:** ensure that terms of reference include a complete evaluation framework and the requirement to disclose full methodologies in all reports and to link the design to relevant ILO indicators and results frameworks;
- **improve reports' user-friendliness:** standardize the report structure to include executive summaries, clear conclusions and actionable recommendations. Additionally, create user-friendly impact evaluation briefs for wider dissemination.

- 79. Recommendation 3: Invest in developing more robust monitoring and reporting mechanisms throughout the results-based framework. This will enhance effectiveness and accountability and significantly improve the Office's ability to measure the impact and success of its interventions.**

► Draft decision

- 80. The Governing Body endorsed the recommendations of the Annual Evaluation Report 2023–24 (paragraphs 15, 48 and 79) for implementation by the Office.**