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► Decent work results and effectiveness of ILO operations: An ex-post meta-analysis of development cooperation evaluations, 2023



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACTEMP	ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities
ACTRAV	ILO Bureau for Workers' Activities
COVID-19	coronavirus disease
CPO	Country Programme Outcome
CSO	civil society organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DATOS	Data Analysis to Observe Success
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programme
EIIP	Employment-Intensive Investment Programme
EU	European Union
EVAL	ILO Evaluation Office
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FMPT	Free Movement of Persons and Transhumance in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Region
IDP	internally displaced person
IGAD	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
DWCP	Decent Work Country Programmes
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ITC-ILO	International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MiRiDeW	Migrant Rights and Decent Work
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
P&B	Programme and Budget
PBSO	UN Peacebuilding Support Office
PPDP	Public Private Development Partnership
PwD	Person with Disabilities
RBSA	Regular Budget Supplementary Account
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SfP	Skills for Prosperity Programme
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SIYB	Start and Improve Your Business
TNF	Tripartite Negotiating Forum
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VZF	Vision Zero Fund
WIF	Work in Freedom
WURQ	Unified Registry of Work-Related Injuries in Qatar



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As part of its [results-based evaluation strategies 2023–2025](#) the Evaluation Office (EVAL) regularly assesses development cooperation initiatives to obtain quality and reliable information on the Office's effectiveness and operational performance.

Since 2011, EVAL has undertaken these effectiveness assessments based on independent project evaluations. This latest study provides an independent and comprehensive analysis based on project evaluations completed in 2023. An important addition since last year's report is the inclusion of linkages between evaluation projects and policy outcomes, specifically through the connection with Country Programme Outcomes (CPOs). By establishing these linkages, the report seeks to provide insights into the performance of the ILO's efforts by policy outcomes, thus enhancing understanding of the Organization's effectiveness as measured against its results-based framework, namely the Programme and Budget (P&B).

A team composed of Dr Magali Bonne-Moreau (team leader) and Ms Nuria Moya Guzman carried out the meta-analysis. Ms Patricia Vidal Hurtado, Senior Evaluation Officer in EVAL, was the task manager, with support from Ms Amanda Mack, EVAL. Mr Guy Thijs, Director of EVAL, provided oversight, technical inputs and guidance to ensure improved relevance and quality of the meta-analysis. Any errors and omissions are the responsibility of EVAL.



01

► Results at a glance

▶ RESULTS AT A GLANCE

This report presents a meta-analysis of performance results related to the delivery of decent work outcomes from ILO development cooperation interventions, based on an assessment of all final independent evaluations conducted in 2023 (44 in total). It focuses on four main performance categories that are composed of predefined criteria aligned with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)–Development Assistance Committee (DAC) evaluation parameters, as well as ILO cross-cutting policy issues: strategic relevance and coherence, effectiveness, sustainability and impact, and efficiency. It is part of a series of “decent work results” assessments undertaken over the last decade enabling trend analysis and comparison across topics and regions over time. It includes a recent feature that examines performance results based on CPOs and aggregated by policy outcomes and region, to provide a comprehensive overview of average performance within these distinct categories.

KEY FINDINGS ON PERFORMANCE OF INTERVENTIONS EVALUATED IN 2023

Most areas related to strategic relevance and coherence had successful performance (70 per cent of average performance):

- ▶ Interventions evaluated in 2023 were well aligned with the ILO, the United Nations (UN) and national and regional strategic frameworks, and there were clear links between project objectives and P&B outcomes, Decent Work Country Programme (DWCP) outcomes and CPOs.
- ▶ Performance was also positive regarding the contributions of ILO interventions to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and work done in coordination with other agencies under a common UN framework.
- ▶ Results were not as strong regarding the involvement of constituent groups in the project cycle and the ILO's responsiveness to national decent work needs of constituents.
- ▶ An area where progress is needed is the validity of project design/approach, as designs are often overambitious in light of the time and resources available, and core strategies and services are not consistently well defined or linked to one another.

Performance was mixed, but positive, regarding overall effectiveness, with variations (55 per cent of average performance):

- ▶ Most interventions did not fully achieve their expected outputs and immediate objectives in a timely manner; there were delays due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, but also due to internal and other external factors.
- ▶ An area of constant strength which ensures effectiveness of the ILO's work is related to the key types of ILO support and means to achieve results: knowledge development, capacity-building and strategic partnerships.
- ▶ The extent to which cross-cutting policy issues were mainstreamed was variable, with good performance related to normative work and the promotion of international labour standards, and the integration of pro-poor perspectives in project design and implementation.
- ▶ Results were mixed regarding gender responsiveness, the promotion and use of tripartism, and social dialogue.
- ▶ Significant weaknesses in performance were related to disability inclusion and the integration of environmental sustainability for a just transition in ILO interventions.

Sustainability and impact was an area of positive performance overall (60 per cent of average successful performance):

- ▶ Results achieved were of strategic importance by stakeholders and led to progress towards national development outcomes.
- ▶ The ILO's expertise was widely recognized and appreciated by stakeholders and key organizations.
- ▶ Performance was more variable regarding policy influence, prospects for sustainability of results and efforts made to disseminate knowledge from interventions.

Overall efficiency was an area where further progress was needed, and there was important heterogeneity between criteria (47 per cent of average successful performance):

- ▶ The ILO's support to projects and internal coordination were areas of strength, and performance related to implementation management was positive.
- ▶ Major weaknesses were noted in relation to the results-based management and monitoring and reporting frameworks of ILO interventions, leading to challenges in implementation and sustainability.
- ▶ While ILO interventions were found to be cost-efficient, there were important challenges related to the adequacy of resources, especially in terms of the availability of human resources and the delivery of project funds for smooth implementation.
- ▶ There was minimal evidence of resource leveraging overall.

What makes ILO projects successful?

When examining the factors driving the performance of the “most successful” projects based on their average weighted¹ overall effectiveness, the following trends were found:

- ▶ Projects with specific objectives and strategies aimed at improving the lives of those at risk of being left behind, featuring a strong pro-poor focus and evidence of gender-responsiveness.
- ▶ Projects that achieved their main outputs in a timely manner, with demonstrated stakeholder use and evidence of good quality, and showed strong progress towards achieving their immediate objectives.
- ▶ Projects that performed well across most of the ILO's cross-cutting policy areas, with the strongest results linked to normative work and the promotion and application of international labour standards, and social dialogue and tripartism.
- ▶ Projects that consistently generated high-quality research and knowledge development, raising awareness and supporting policy dialogue and key decisions at different levels.
- ▶ Projects that provided capacity-building at both individual and institutional levels, providing ILO constituents and partners with the necessary tools and knowledge to promote sustainability of results.
- ▶ Projects that leveraged and built strong strategic relationships with various groups – including donors, constituent groups, UN agencies, academic institutions and civil society groups, and public and private sector actors – leading to synergies and ensuring sustainability of achievements.
- ▶ Projects that achieved results of high strategic importance and policy influence.
- ▶ Projects that demonstrated good prospects for sustainability of results, with evidence of stakeholder ownership and commitment.

¹ The weighted approach is based on giving more weight to overall effectiveness and core ILO criteria, such as normative work, the use and promotion of tripartism and social dialogue, and other key types of ILO support. It also considers the achievement of immediate objectives, policy sustainability, and the development of knowledge and capacities. See Annex 2 for more detail.

- ▶ Projects with clear implementation management processes, receiving good quality technical, administrative, financial and political support from ILO, as well as strong internal coordination.
- ▶ Projects that were cost-efficient with evidence of good value for money.

Comparing performance in 2023 with performance from previous years revealed similar tendencies:

- ▶ Key areas of strength were related to the alignment of project objectives with P&B outcomes and DWCPs/CPOs, as well as contributions to the SDGs and collaboration with other UN agencies.
- ▶ There was a decrease in performance regarding constituent support in 2023 compared with 2022.
- ▶ Validity of design was an area of weakness, yet results in 2023 were slightly better than in previous years.
- ▶ Effectiveness performance was lower overall in 2023 compared with 2022, except for capacity-building, where projects performed more strongly than in other years.
- ▶ Performance related to the sustainability and impact of the ILO's work was slightly lower in 2023 compared with 2022, but stronger than 2021 and positive overall. There was improvement in 2023 regarding sustainability of results, and in visibility and accessibility of information and knowledge generated through ILO interventions.
- ▶ The areas of strongest performance for efficiency in 2023 were related to (a) the cost-efficiency of ILO projects; (b) the quality of the ILO's technical, programmatic, administrative and financial support to projects; and (c) internal coordination within ILO programmes and units. Similar trends were found in previous years.

Initial findings from the analysis of effectiveness based on CPOs, aggregated by policy outcomes:

- ▶ The strongest weighted average effectiveness performance was noted for interventions linked to policy outcomes 1 and 7, with similar performance for sustainability and impact.
- ▶ Overall effectiveness performance by policy outcome varied across regions.

Opportunities and the way forward:

- ▶ The findings of the meta-analysis highlight the importance of promoting the participation of constituents and other key stakeholders from the planning stages onwards. The ILO should ensure sufficient time in the initial project design phase to guarantee an assessment of local contexts and the validation of assumptions and risks, in order to promote a realistic approach, as well as sustainability and ownership. This should be complemented by having sustainability and exit strategies.
- ▶ Related to this, the ILO should prioritize designing and implementing well-structured results frameworks and monitoring systems, which allow project teams to adapt to changing conditions.
- ▶ The ILO has shown strong collaboration with other UN agencies, building on synergies to achieve common results. Such partnerships should be consolidated and promoted.
- ▶ There should be improvements in recruitment processes, and in the flexibility of financial procedures, to allow the ILO to be more reactive, and to ensure that sufficient human resources are available in a timely manner.

- ▶ While the ILO is able to provide quality results through capacity-building, knowledge development and its strategic relationships, these do not always translate to effective policy influence and strategic outcomes. This is particularly the case for the Employment-Intensive Investment Programme (EIIP) and other local development projects. While livelihood and local economic development projects may be entry points to awareness-raising about international labour standards and normative work, as well as social dialogue and tripartism, the time frame of interventions is often insufficient to achieve results in these areas, and constituents may not share the ILO's priorities. Interventions should be designed to ensure that progress will be made towards the ILO's distinctive comparative advantages, taking a more strategic approach to programming.



02

► Introduction



INTRODUCTION

To better capture the ILO's effectiveness in achieving short and medium-term objectives and advancing decent work, EVAL has conducted a series of regular [meta-analyses of independent project evaluations](#) for over a decade. The evaluative evidence in these reports has been used as a proxy to assess performance of the ILO's development cooperation interventions.

PURPOSE, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

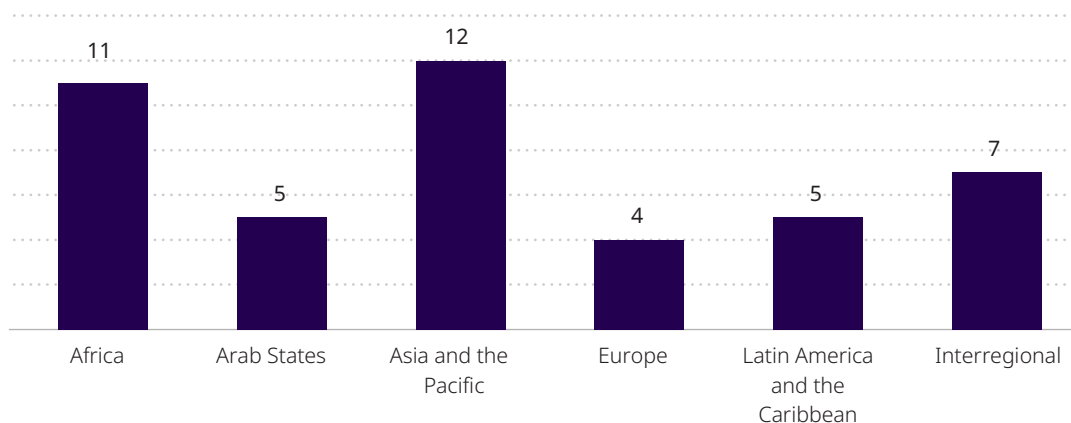
The objective of these meta-studies has been to promote organizational learning regarding development effectiveness in the delivery of decent work results, by focusing on the criteria of relevance, effectiveness and efficiency, with evidence of results supporting achievement of decent work outcomes and projected sustainability of obtained results, as well as ILO cross-cutting policy issues.

The most recent meta-study, which reviewed independent final evaluations from 2022, adopted a new method for aggregating and presenting performance results. This approach aimed to address EVAL's concerns about assessing alignment with the P&B and its policy outcomes. The method was subsequently reviewed in a [Think Piece](#) that examined key performance proxies to assess the effectiveness and results of the ILO's work. The current study employs the same approach. The findings of this analysis will contribute to the ILO's overall accountability and decision-making processes, and as input to other documents, studies, reports and analyses of ILO effectiveness, including the ILO's regular Outcome-Based Work planning exercise.

Forty-four final independent evaluations were conducted in 2023, and form the evidence base for this metasynthesis. All details concerning the methodology used for this study are presented in Annex 2. Some of these evaluations focus on a project in a single country, while others are thematic or cluster evaluations, covering different regions and development contexts.

The regional distribution of evaluations is presented in figure 1. The highest number of evaluations focused on interventions in Asia and the Pacific (12), and in Africa (11), followed by interregional projects (7), interventions in the Arab States (5), in Latin America and the Caribbean (5), and in Europe and Central Asia (4).

FIGURE 1. EVALUATION REPORTS BY REGION, 2023 (N=44)



STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

This report is structured as follows:

- ▶ Chapter 2 presents an overview of performance results of the meta-analysis for 2023 by aggregated performance categories as presented in the following section, followed by a more in-depth analysis of individual performance criteria.
- ▶ Chapter 3 presents the factors contributing to the effectiveness of the most successful projects.
- ▶ Chapter 4 takes a comparative approach looking at the overall effectiveness of ILO interventions over time, using performance criteria results from the past four years (2020–23).
- ▶ Chapter 5 provides insights on the comparative assessment of effectiveness by policy outcome and region, aggregating data to showcase results for the biennium 2022–23.
- ▶ Chapter 6 outlines conclusions based on key findings.
- ▶ Chapter 7 presents opportunities and the way forward.



03

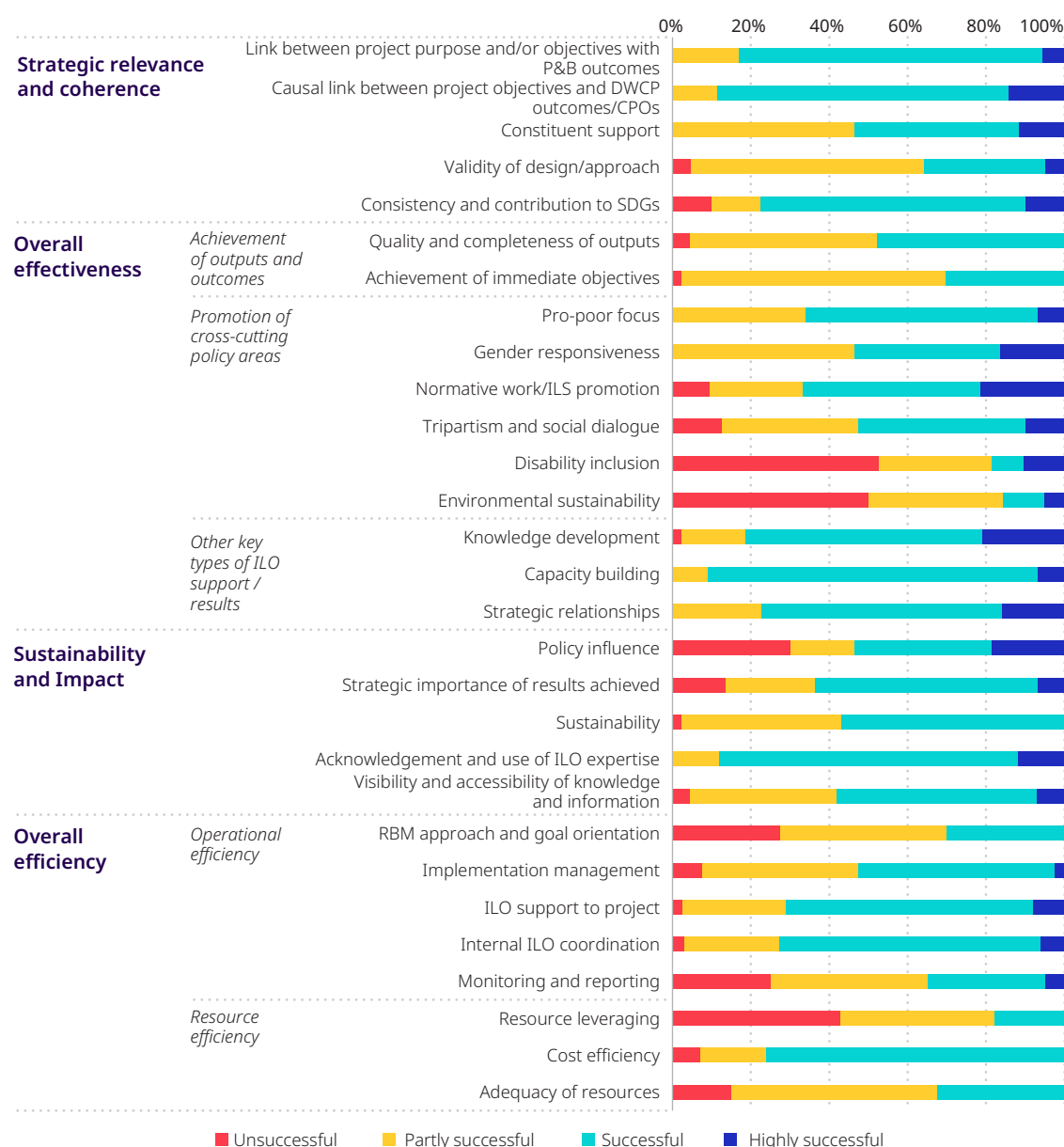
- ▶ Key findings: Effectiveness performance review for 2023

KEY FINDINGS: EFFECTIVENESS PERFORMANCE REVIEW FOR 2023

OVERVIEW OF RESULTS

Performance of development cooperation interventions evaluated in 2023 was mixed, as shown in figure 2. Following a short overview of performance by criteria and aggregated categories, a more detailed discussion of performance is provided in sections 2.2 to 2.5. Coverage of the different criteria in evaluation reports was strong overall, although certain reports did not address all criteria. This is illustrated in the following sections as a confidence level, which provides information on the proportion of reports which addressed criteria in a given performance category.

FIGURE 2. DISTRIBUTION OF SCORES BY PERFORMANCE CRITERIA AND AGGREGATED CATEGORIES, 2023 EVALUATION REPORTS (N=44)

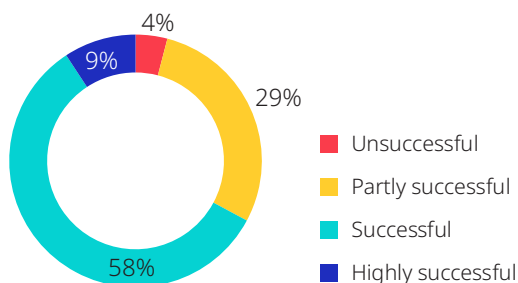


An overview of results by aggregated ratings per performance category is provided below.

Strategic relevance and coherence: Overall good performance was found in most areas related to strategic relevance and coherence.

Key strengths were related to alignment of interventions with the ILO, UN and national and regional strategic frameworks. There was evidence of clear links to P&B outcomes, DWCP outcomes and CPOs. Performance was also positive regarding the contributions of ILO interventions to SDGs and work done in coordination with other agencies under a common UN framework. There was more variability regarding the ILO's responsiveness to national decent work needs of constituents and the involvement of constituent groups in the project cycle. The main area of weakness in this category was the validity of project design/approach, with just over one third of cases performing successfully.

FIGURE 3. AVERAGE DISTRIBUTION OF SCORES: STRATEGIC RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE

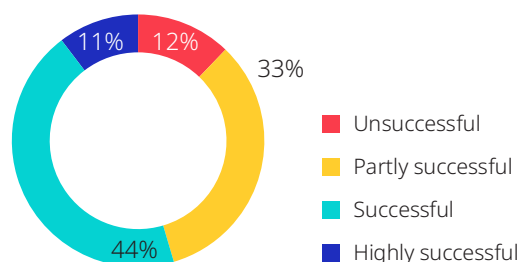


Overall effectiveness: Performance was mixed, but positive, regarding overall effectiveness, with variations.

The strongest performance was found in relation to the key types of ILO support and means to achieve results, with a large majority of interventions performing well in knowledge development, capacity-building and strategic partnerships. The extent to which cross-cutting policy issues were mainstreamed was variable, with good performance related to normative work, the promotion of international labour standards, and the integration of pro-poor perspectives in project

design and implementation. However, results were mixed regarding gender responsiveness, tripartism and social dialogue. Significant weaknesses in performance were identified in relation to disability inclusion and the integration of environmental sustainability for a just transition. Additionally, most interventions did not fully achieve their expected outputs and immediate objectives.

FIGURE 4. AVERAGE DISTRIBUTION OF SCORES: OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

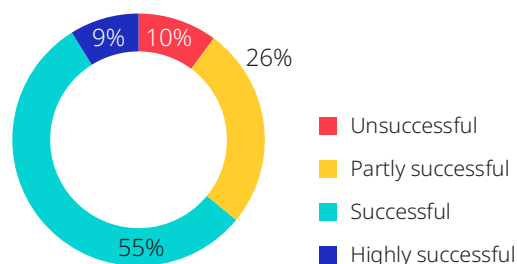


Sustainability and impact: Performance was positive overall for this category, with two thirds of projects obtaining successful and highly successful ratings.

Results achieved were considered to be of strategic importance and led to progress towards national development outcomes, and the ILO's expertise was recognized and appreciated by stakeholders and key organizations.

Although there was evidence of policy influence, prospects for sustainability of results and efforts made to disseminate knowledge from interventions, results were more variable for these criteria.

FIGURE 5. AVERAGE DISTRIBUTION OF SCORES: SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

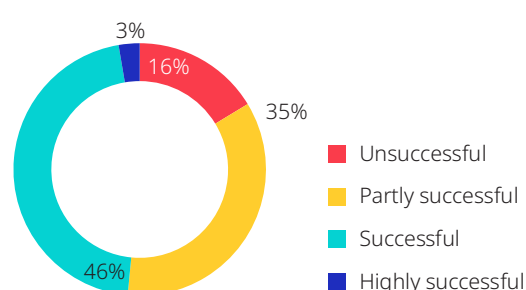


Overall efficiency: Performance was highly variable for this category, with just under 50 per cent of successful ratings.

In terms of operational efficiency, there was evidence of good performance linked to ILO support to projects and internal coordination. Implementation management was also rated as positive. However, there were important weaknesses in the design and implementation of results-based management frameworks and monitoring and reporting mechanisms.

There were mixed results for resource efficiency: while ILO interventions were found to be cost-efficient, there were important challenges related to the adequacy and timeliness of human and financial resources, with only one third of interventions performing successfully. Resource leveraging was also an area of weakness, although this criterion was not consistently covered by evaluations.

FIGURE 6. AVERAGE DISTRIBUTION OF SCORES: OVERALL EFFICIENCY



STRATEGIC RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE OF ILO DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION INTERVENTIONS IN 2023

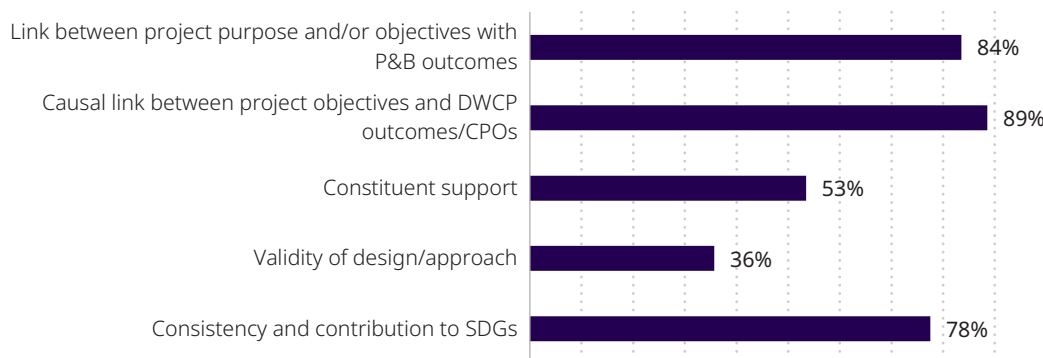
Five performance criteria were used to assess the strategic relevance and coherence of projects under review. These covered (a) the links between intervention objectives and P&B outcomes; (b) links with DWCP outcomes or CPOs; (c) the extent to which projects responded to constituent needs and involved stakeholders in project design and implementation; (d) the validity of the project design and technical approach, and their endorsement by stakeholders; and (e) the extent to which the ILO collaborated with other UN institutions under a common UN system of work, as well as linkages to SDG targets.



Level of confidence of the evidence: high

There were high confidence levels of the evidence identified for most criteria in this category, although the alignment between project objectives with P&B outcomes and with DWCP outcomes/ CPOs could not be rated in about 20 per cent of evaluation reports. When these criteria were covered, performance was successful; this was also the case for linkages to SDGs and collaborations under a common UN system programme of work. Performance was more variable regarding the responsiveness of the ILO to national needs and involvement of constituents. Validity of design was the weakest area, with successful performance in just over one third of cases.

FIGURE 7. STRATEGIC RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE: PERCENTAGE OF MORE SUCCESSFUL SCORES BY PERFORMANCE CRITERIA (2023)



Assessment of the overall relevance and coherence of ILO development cooperation in 2023

Very strong performance was found in relation to the correlation of project objectives and P&B outcomes, with 84 per cent of cases obtaining successful ratings, and no project rated as unsuccessful. Performance was even stronger regarding the links between project objectives and DWCP outcomes, as well as to national decent work priorities and CPOs, with successful performance in 89 per cent of cases.

Successful results were found in many cases, including in a project in Albania that focused on specific P&B outputs, and there was evidence of numerous meetings with tripartite constituents and the ILO senior expert in social dialogue and labour law in advance of the project proposal, to ensure that there was a clear and common understanding of what the project aimed to achieve (2023-41). Good performance was also noted for Regular Budget Supplementary Account (RBSA)-funded projects in Zimbabwe and Zambia, for instance, which were drawn from negotiated DWCPs. Evaluations showed how project objectives contributed to specific DWCP outcomes and CPOs, highlighting how ILO work directly contributed to national priorities and strategies, and shaped priorities for upcoming DWCPs. In certain countries, there was evidence of coordination with other projects to promote synergies, including through joint committees to promote coherence (for



Each country identified and aligned the intervention areas with respective national priorities and DWCPs, which then influenced the choice of implementation partners and target groups, and helped plan activities to achieve optimal results (2023-8).

The project's objectives and focus were found to be aligned with the needs of constituents and with the context of Iraq and the priorities of its authorities. This close alignment was mainly due to the project design being heavily based on the DCWP (2019–23), which has already been agreed upon with constituents and was aligned with national priorities (2023-7).

example, 2023-44). Evaluations also provided evidence of links with the ILO's flagship programmes, including Jobs for Peace and Resilience, Safety+Health For All, Better Work, and frameworks such as the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), among others.

There was variability in the extent to which ILO interventions reflected national decent work needs as expressed by constituents. Over half of interventions (53 per cent) had successful performance, with evidence showing that constituents were actively involved in project formulation and implementation, as well as monitoring and reporting. Certain projects were drawn from negotiated DWCPs in which tripartite partners had been involved or were based on previous projects, while others responded to specific requests from national tripartite constituent groups or were based on exploratory missions and assessments during the preparatory stages, which aimed to identify the most pressing needs of constituents and inform implementation. In many cases, the ILO encouraged cooperation among different constituent groups and other important stakeholders, and encouraged their participation and contributions, including in targeted project activities. National decent work needs were addressed by aligning ILO outputs and outcomes with national strategic frameworks, and national development plans and policies, and validation exercises were organized to ensure continued relevance. For instance, the investment in strong relationships with stakeholders was noted as a good practice in a project in Ukraine, where regular stakeholder consultations took place to review its assumptions and adapt to emerging needs and new challenges due to the war, thus increasing the legitimacy of the theory of change (2023-16). The ILO's responsiveness and flexibility to accommodate various needs of its constituencies, while creating a space for these stakeholders to voice their interests, was highlighted in several reports.



Although the project was initiated by the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), the definition of the project objectives was the result of extensive consultations with the ILO and the tripartite constituents and resource persons from over ten Asian countries. [...] Each of the project's five outcomes were considered very relevant by stakeholders (2023-1).

Full and meaningful stakeholder participation was the hallmark of implementation of the RBSA projects, which stakeholders and partners appreciated. This included co-designing interventions. The full involvement of partners and stakeholders in the implementation was viewed to be appropriate, valid and realistic. The approach enabled transfer of skills from ILO specialist to local partners, and also allowed the partners to own the interventions. The approach of having the partners lead the implementation of interventions in consultations with the project team was applauded" (2023-14).

Just over one third of projects (36 per cent) were found to have a successful design/approach, with sound objectives and a technical approach endorsed by stakeholders, and well-defined strategies and services that were clearly linked to each other and aligned with project objectives. Strong performance in project design was noted when projects were based on lessons from previous or ongoing projects and evaluations, and on solid evidence-based research, including participatory diagnostic studies and comprehensive needs analyses, and drew from ILO tools and expertise, with validation of their approach through consultation of key actors. Successful projects created synergies with ongoing initiatives, had realistic assumptions, identified measures to mitigate risks,

and took into account the needs and specificities of national contexts or beneficiary groups. These interventions also had well-structured intervention logics and coherent strategies, with objectives that complemented each other, and outcomes and outputs that could be achieved during the implementation period, supported by adequate resource planning and allocations. Often, projects focused different levels and had both upstream and downstream strategies, working both at the policy/normative level, and at the local/community level, in consultation and collaboration with different stakeholder groups (such as 2023-13).

 **The Free Movement of Persons and Transhumance in the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Region (FMPT) project was designed based on a clear problem analysis and based on prior experiences of the ILO. The original project document comprised a detailed description of the socio-economic context of the IGAD region, with a particular focus on the labour migration context and an analysis of the main challenges in this regard. The project document (PRODOC) provides a clear overview of the challenges faced by each stakeholder (migrants, businesses and labour market institutions, among others) as well as lessons learned from previous ILO projects to facilitate labour migration governance. The ILO has implemented various prior projects in the IGAD region, and the PRODOC included a description of the lessons learned from these interventions and how they affected the design of the FMPT project. The value of the first project dimension should be taken into consideration as well. Namely, various project outputs (the FMPT protocol and Djibouti Declaration), as well as changes in the theory of change and its activities, were the result of continuous data collection and knowledge production” (2023-38).**

There were numerous examples of the ILO engaging with tripartite constituents during the planning stages, to ensure that relevant concerns and issues would be incorporated in the project design. 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; this was also linked to the flexibility of donors.

There was strong performance for the ILO’s complementarity and coordination between ILO interventions and other initiatives under a common UN system of work, and most project objectives were linked to SDG targets, both strategically and operationally, with 78 per cent of successful cases.

There was evidence of alignment with United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), with contributions to specific SDGs and reporting under specific SDG indicators. Projects coordinated with other UN agencies, such as UN Women, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the World Health Organization and others; some were also part of ONE UN country initiatives.

This took the form of (a) inter-agency coordination; (b) consultative processes, trainings and high-level meetings; (c) capacity-building events; (d) joint working groups; (e) expert contributions; (f) joint publications; and (g) shared networks and information. Strong performance was noted when each agency drew from its comparative advantage to make progress towards a common objective. These interlinkages helped in promoting the effectiveness and efficiency of project activities and outputs, with examples of resource-sharing and synergies.

One evaluation noted a change in approach in conflict and post-conflict situations, as peacebuilding was seen as a responsibility across all pillars of the UN system after the 2016 UN Sustaining Peace Resolutions. Since then, the ILO was able to position itself as an actor in this field, including through the ILO/ UN Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) programme, where it provided strategic leadership in employment and decent work for peace in global platforms (2023-3). Several projects also aimed to contribute to SDG Target 8.7, and ILO acts as secretariat for Alliance 8.7 (for example, 2023-13, 2023-26).

 **The Programme is aligned and shows the potential to contribute to the achievement of SDGs 1, 5, 8, 10 and 17 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; the UNSDCF of Chile 2019–22 and Mexico 2020–25; and the Programmes/ Frameworks of Strategic Results/Strategic Directions regarding the socio-economic and labour integration of people in human mobility from the ILO, IOM and UNHCR.**

“During the programme’s implementation, there has been a high degree of inter-agency collaboration, which is highly valued in a context of budgetary scarcity, which tends to favour competition between agencies. This inter-agency collaboration has been reflected in the elaboration of the different products within the framework of the programme; in the continuous periodic meetings between the three agencies to discuss the progress of activities and take decisions on the next steps; and in the willingness of all of them to share contact networks and relevant information to improve the effectiveness of the intervention. The evaluation also appreciates the complementarity of the strengths and experiences of each agency and the explicit recognition by each agency of the contributions of the other two.(2023-33)

An overview of the key challenges related to the relevance and coherence of the ILO’s development cooperation

While the majority of ILO interventions evaluated in 2023 had clear links between project objectives and P&B outcomes, there was sometimes a lack of common understanding of what these interventions aimed to achieve, leading to misunderstandings among the different actors and challenges in implementation. This was noted in evaluations of RBSA-funded projects, where a disconnect was noted between what stakeholders believed they needed and what was delivered (for example, 2023-20), and in the Data Analysis to Observe Success (DATOS) project, where limited discussions and reflection between stakeholders led to a contradiction in understanding, and differences in expectations, scope, knowledge and objectives were observed throughout the implementation of the project (2023-24).

Over half of interventions (53 per cent) had partially successful ratings in terms of constituent involvement, with stakeholder groups being involved to limited extents in project formulation and implementation, and projects only addressing the needs of certain constituents. In many of these cases, there was room for improvement regarding systematic involvement of workers' and employers' organizations, and explicit alignment with their policies of such organizations. In the Work in Freedom (WIF) project, despite the programme being relevant for governments, especially from source countries, internal and external factors affected the policy priorities of some governments, leading to variations in support and commitment to the programme over time; in contrast, it was found that WIF mostly aligned with the needs and priorities of trade unions, civil society organizations (CSOs) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (2023-28). Lack of commitment from governments was also noted in other evaluations, and was attributed to their limited involvement in the planning stages.



The evaluation has found that the project had an overambitious design relative to the resources of the project, especially time. Many saw the project actually as two projects in one. While this helped raise the overall efficiency of the project, the efficiency gains came at a cost, which was the high level of workloads and stress experienced by the project team and some project consultants. In some cases, it also resulted in rushing some activities to meet the ambitious targets of the project. Moreover, while the activities implemented in the field were very wide in scope, enabling the project to reach a large number of beneficiaries, the activities were not deep enough to induce any significant change in the working conditions and status of agricultural workers. It is therefore recommended that the design of future projects should be aligned with the resources estimated/requested for the project (2023-7).

Two-thirds of ILO interventions (64 per cent) did not have sound objectives and technical approaches, and there was lack of clarity regarding their endorsement by stakeholders. This is a performance area of recurrent weakness in ILO projects. Projects with the poorest performance were not theory-based and did not have internal coherence or synergies between their different outcomes, with activities perceived by constituents to be fragmented and arbitrary in nature. In one instance, while project design was based on two ILO programme models used previously at the national level and in other countries, there were important gaps in the results frameworks, with missing causal pathways between the different elements of the project and outcomes operated as separate and unrelated programme streams (2023-30). In several cases, projects had components that were nearly independent from one another, yet were under the same agreement and/or budget, with no or scarce evidence of relationships between activities and expected outcomes of different components, which were sometimes managed by different teams (2023-6, 2023-26, 2023-36). This was the case for the French-funded Alliance 8.7 project, where evaluators noted a significant gap between the global-level component and the regional component, with no links reflected in the theory of change and logical framework, and very little communication between the global and national/regional project teams. While the regional component was designed as a national project aimed at increasing the income of host and refugee populations through a "cash-for-work" approach in Niger, a component focusing on SDG 8.7 was added to the project documents (PRODOCs) following a request from headquarters and the donor, yet there was limited revision of the theory of change (2023-26). Other challenges included (a) missing,² incomplete or

² According to an evaluation, theories of change were not mandatory in ILO PRODOCs in 2017.

overambitious theories of change that were not validated by stakeholders or technical experts; (b) changes in the implementation logic and results chain that were not communicated to key actors or were inadequately resourced; (c) inadequate assumptions and risk assessments, and lack of quality review by ILO specialists; (d) overambitious timelines, poor targets or poor timing (such as launching interventions during election years), as well as rushed activities to meet targets; and (e) lack of situational/contextual assessments, with projects developed without taking into account local capacities or realities.

Several evaluations only provided limited evidence of coordination under a common UN system of work, and there was no mention of SDGs. The lack of complementarity and cooperation with other UN agencies and initiatives was noted by various evaluations, including a project promoting social dialogue and industrial relations in Bangladesh (2023-2), an initiative promoting decent work in five supply chains (2023-12), and a job generation and enterprise development intervention in Jordan (2023-30). In one case, although the project had contributed to SDG indicators and was aligned with the UNSDCF, stakeholders had minimal awareness of SDGs, and there was no specific reporting on them (2023-40). Another project was funded by the United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security and implemented by the ILO (lead agency), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and the UNDP, yet the lack of an explicit theory of change led to a sense of fragmentation in implementation, with each implementing agency focusing on its interventions, with limited integration and coordination (2023-36).

EFFECTIVENESS OF ILO DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION INTERVENTIONS IN 2023



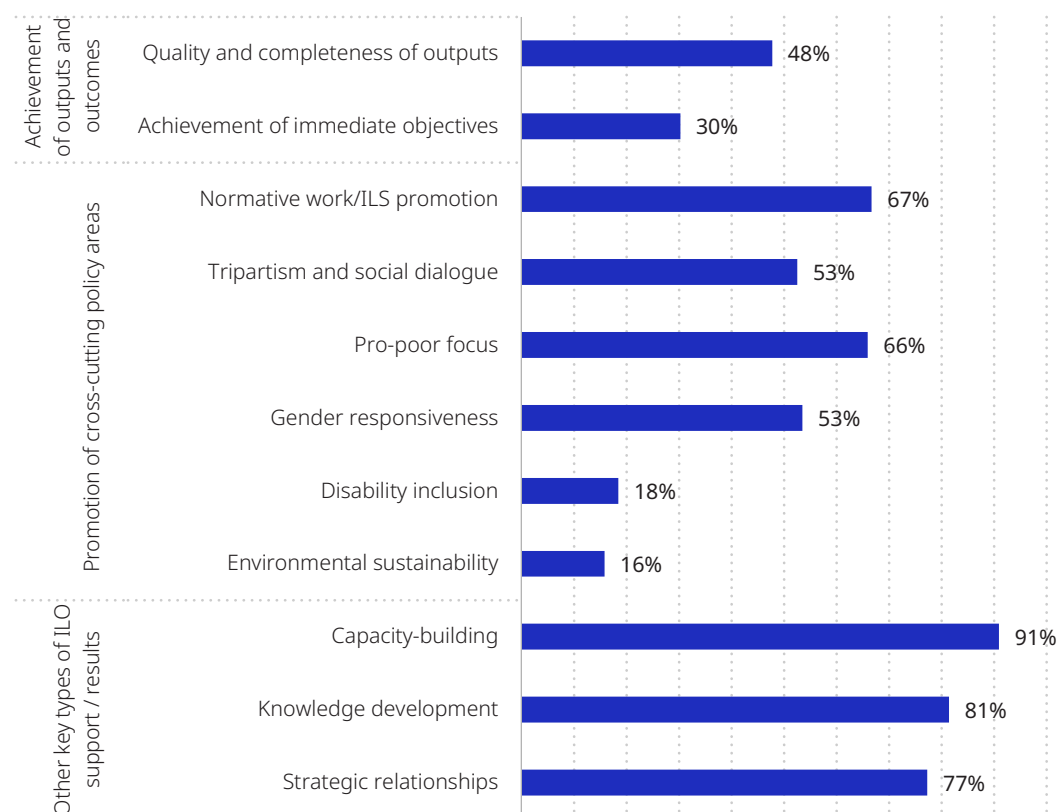
Level of confidence of the evidence: high

Performance related to the effectiveness category is addressed through the three clusters presented in this section, covering the following criteria: (a) achievement of outputs and outcomes (quality and completeness of outputs, achievement of immediate objectives); (b) promotion of ILO cross-cutting policy areas (pro-poor focus, gender responsiveness, normative work and the promotion of international labour standards, social dialogue and tripartism, disability inclusion and environmental sustainability); and (c) other key types of ILO support/means to achieve results (knowledge development, capacity-building and strategic relationships).

Overall, performance was mixed in this category for interventions evaluated in 2023, as shown in figure 8, while coverage was good overall. The strongest performance was related to the key types of ILO support/results, with successful performance noted for capacity-building and the development and use of strategic relationships, as well as knowledge development. While there was more variability in terms of overall performance, the promotion of normative work and international labour standards, and the use of tripartism and social dialogue in design and implementation, were relatively successful, as was the inclusion of a pro-poor and gender-responsive perspective in interventions.

Weaker performance was found related to the achievement of quality outputs and progress towards immediate objectives, with over half of the projects rated as partially successful, although there were no unsuccessful ratings. Disability inclusion and the integration of environmental sustainability also performed poorly, with less than one quarter of interventions obtaining successful ratings.

FIGURE 8. OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS: PERCENTAGE OF MORE SUCCESSFUL SCORES BY PERFORMANCE CRITERIA (2023)



ASSESSMENT OF THE OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION IN 2023

Achieving planned outputs and outcomes

The achievement of outputs and outcomes was an area of variable yet weak performance, with less than half (48 per cent) of interventions achieving their expected outputs in a timely manner, and less than one third (30 per cent) of interventions making good progress towards their intended outcomes.

FIGURE 9. PERCENTAGE OF MORE SUCCESSFUL SCORES BY PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES (2023)



Strong performance was noted when projects achieved or made strong progress on most of their outputs and outcomes, sometimes even exceeding their targets, with evidence of use of results by stakeholders. The COVID-19 pandemic and other external factors sometimes led to delays in

implementation, yet donors were often willing to provide no-cost extensions to provide more time to achieve intended results. In other cases, funds from cancelled activities were reallocated strategically to achieve outputs.

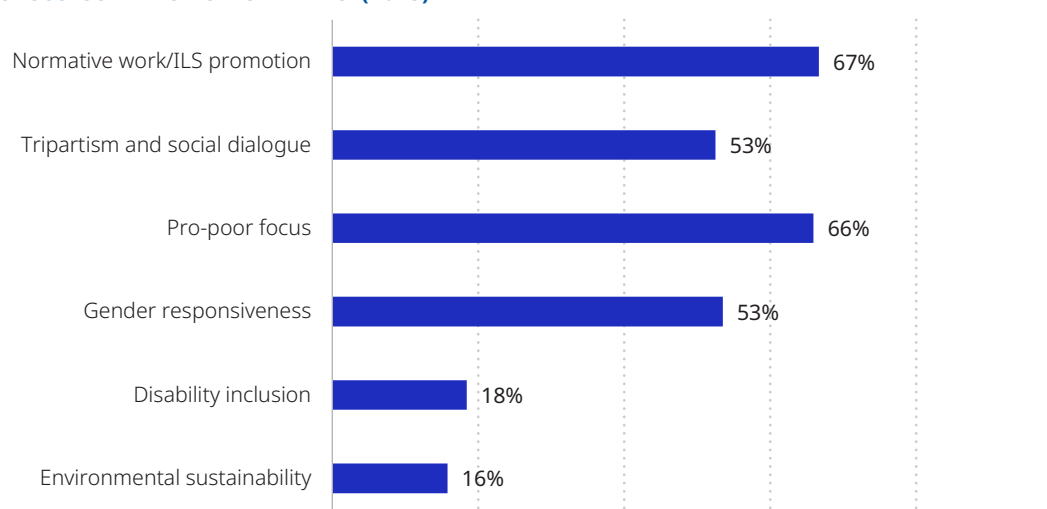
The flexibility of outcome-based funding was noted as an important element in achieving targets and providing timely responses to local priorities, even when those priorities changed over time.

The project was rather successful in delivering planned outputs and achieving its objectives. Hence, it is not surprising that there are high expectations for the project to produce the envisioned impact and contribute to improved job opportunities and safeguarded rights of migrant workers, both those in the region and those leaving the region. Some examples indicating potential impact are already visible. There are some indications of the project's contribution to improved opportunities for regulated labour mobility and decent work within IGAD. The project's focus on awareness-raising on aspects related to labour migration and governance could result in increased labour migration opportunities and more regular migration pathways (2023-38).

ILO cross-cutting policy areas

Performance related to the ILO's cross-cutting policy areas was mixed, with strongest results for pro-poor focus and normative work/international labour standards promotion, average results for gender-responsiveness and tripartism and social dialogue, and important weaknesses in disability inclusion and just transition to environmental sustainability. The following sections present performance details for each cross-cutting policy area relevant to the ILO.

FIGURE 10. PERCENTAGE OF MORE SUCCESSFUL SCORES BY PERFORMANCE CRITERIA FOR THE ILO CROSS-CUTTING POLICY AREAS (2023)



PERFORMANCE OF ILO DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION PROJECTS IN THE PROMOTION OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR STANDARDS AND NORMATIVE WORK IN 2023

Strong performance was found for normative work and the promotion of international labour standards in two thirds (67 per cent) of projects, including very strong performance in one fifth of cases. Successful interventions gave a central place to international labour standards and normative work in their design and approach, and were effective in promoting progress towards the ratification or application of these standards, with activities taking place at the policy and field levels.

There was evidence of strengthened capacities on international labour standards of government officials, social partners, law enforcement agencies, judiciary staff, mediators, trade union representatives, university staff and employers in the export sectors, and of increased awareness of rights at work and decent work principles of beneficiaries. Several interventions focused on strengthening labour inspection capacities and mechanisms, and improved occupational safety and health compliance, as well as collective agreements, addressing gender-based violence, and the rights of migrants and vulnerable workers. There were also interventions addressing the ILO Human Resources Development Recommendation, 2004 (No. 195), while others were linked to international labour standards by promoting access to social security for various groups of workers, and awareness on fundamental principles and rights at work, focusing on combatting discrimination and social inclusion of vulnerable groups at risk of being left behind, as well as at risk of forced labour including child labour, and modern slavery. Another project was aligned to recommendations and international standards related to labour statistics.

The promotion of international labour standards was done through direct capacity-building through virtual and in-person workshops, research on the inclusion and application of international labour standards, as well as on policy gaps, technical reports, policy briefs, the inclusion of content on international labour standards and social dialogue in high school and Vocational Education and Training (VET) manuals and syllabi, the development of specific diploma courses on social dialogue and the strengthening of labour rights, and extensive advocacy work and awareness-raising. This was often done through tripartite social dialogue. Key achievements related to international labour standards and normative work are presented below:

- ▶ To ensure greater support for migrant workers' rights, the ILO, under the framework of the FMPT project, advocated for ratification of international labour Conventions, such as the ILO's Private Employment Agencies Convention, 1997 (No. 181) in Kenya. In Somalia, seven ILO Conventions were ratified. The project also contributed to the development of several important policy frameworks and guidelines, namely the Protocol on Freedom of Movement, and the Djibouti Declaration. The ILO advocated for alignment with international labour standards and the inclusion of a human-rights-based approach to migration in these documents.
- ▶ Nepal decided to be a champion country of objective 6 of the Global Compact on Fair Recruitment during the implementation of the Migrant Rights and Decent Work (MiRiDeW) project, and signed several bilateral labour migration agreements which aimed to align to labour standards, with ILO support.
- ▶ Workers in South Asia achieved significant improvements through advocacy and social dialogue: (a) domestic workers in Pakistan secured reduced social security contributions; (b) plantation workers in India obtained better working conditions; (c) workers in Bangladesh benefited from enhanced support for formalization and decent work, reflected in national policy; and (d) workers in Nepal saw the drafting of a standard employment contract that included labour rights protections and entitlements as per national laws. Awareness trainings and leadership trainings led to better understanding of gender-based rights pertaining to selected sectors (such as the Domestic Workers Convention, 2011 (No. 189)), as well as rights related to key gender equality Conventions, such as, among others, the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100); the Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No. 183); and the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190).

- ▶ The ILO/PBSO programme was one of the ILO's mechanisms to operationalize the Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience Recommendation, 2017 (No. 205), and was primarily related to internal capacity-building and general knowledge creation, including integrating the concept of employment and decent work for peace in the procedures and processes of ILO's global work, and raising awareness among ILO staff for the relevance and importance of the topic and approach (2023-3).
- ▶ In Georgia, various studies, assessments and capacity-building events were conducted to improve and uphold international labour standards compliance, and intensive work was done with the judicial system to raise its knowledge in international labour standards and Labour Code amendments, as well as to foster a collective bargaining culture.
- ▶ In the Republic of Moldova, the institutional capacities of the State Labour Inspectorate and social partners were strengthened to apply legislation on occupational safety and health and achieve better compliance with the Labour Inspection Convention, 1947 (No. 81) and the Labour Inspection (Agriculture) Convention, 1969 (No. 129). Furthermore, when the Government ratified the Occupational Health Services Convention, 1985 (No. 161) and adopted the action plan, the ILO provided technical support that was not initially part of the project design.
- ▶ In Zimbabwe, an RBSA-funded project directly contributed to the Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204) through its support for transitioning informal business units and jobs to the formal economy. Tripartite partners developed an action plan and recommendations to respond to the 2009 request for reporting from Zimbabwe; a case management system was designed to handle labour issues; and the ILO provided support to Zimbabwe to submit reports on Conventions Nos 14, 19, 26, 29, 81, 99, 105, 129, 130, 150, 155, 161, 162, 170, 174, 176 and 182 (in 2020); and Conventions Nos 26, 87, 99, 100 and 111 (in 2021).



Significant progress is made by the project to improve Georgia's compliance with international labour standards. It was confirmed by all stakeholders and specifically by the ILO's constituencies that reform of the regulatory framework of the labour market in Georgia is a breakthrough and it would not be possible without the ILO's technical support, its convening power and its resources.

As a result of this reform, some critical achievements could be noted, such as a stronger legal system to guide labour rights protection in Georgia; increased bargaining capacity of the workers; stronger mandate of the ILO's constituencies with adequate rights and responsibilities; strengthened mandate for labour inspection; establishment of a mediation system and promotion of culture of collective dispute resolution; and many more. These indicate solid changes allowing one to conclude that system-level progress has been achieved within this project. This is a particularly significant advancement when compared with the previous, completely deregulated labour market system in Georgia" (2023-23).

- In Zambia, labour laws were reviewed in line with international labour standards as guided by the comments of the ILO supervisory bodies on the application of the fundamental Conventions ratified by Zambia and the issues paper recommending legislative revisions to address issues related to minimum wages, conditions of employment and collective bargaining. The RBSA-funded project also supported the revision of the Industrial and Labour Relations Act, the repealing and replacing of the 1965 Apprenticeship Act, and the dissemination of the New Employment Code Act 3 of 2019 to workers and employers.

While one project did not achieve quality results, it aimed to support the efforts of the Government of Mexico to implement the commitments related to the Freedom of Association and Protection of the Right to Organise Convention, 1948 (No. 87) and the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98), in the framework of labour reform, by generating data for monitoring progress and creating a platform for public use.

SOCIAL DIALOGUE AND TRIPARTISM IN 2023

Performance related to the integration of social dialogue and tripartism in project design and implementation was mixed, yet positive overall, with evidence of efforts to strengthen tripartite processes and social dialogue mechanisms, namely through capacity-building, in over half the cases (53 per cent). Strong performance was noted when the promotion of social dialogue and tripartism was an integral part of the results frameworks, and was used as a cross-cutting strategy in interventions. There was evidence of positive outcomes when projects created spaces for discussions between tripartite stakeholders and social partners, with evidence of collaboration and consultations to achieve common goals, such as national plans of action. The convening power of the ILO, as a tripartite organization, was highlighted as contributing to building trust and improved social dialogue mechanisms at the bipartite and tripartite levels.

There was evidence of support and cost-sharing with the ILO Bureau for Employers' Activities (ACTEMP), and Bureau for Workers' Activities (ACTRAV). In some cases, the International Trade Union Confederation and the International Organization of Employers were involved in the design and inception of projects, as well as other Global Union Federations, such as IndustriALL and the International Transport Federation (for example, 2023-12).

Social dialogue was institutionalized in different manners, including through (a) the establishment of National Tripartite Consultative Councils and tripartite advisory committees; (b) joint commitments and joint action plans; (c) the establishment of tripartite coordination mechanisms; (d) the development of guidelines to support social dialogue; (e) participation of tripartite constituents in national and regional meetings and trainings, including on the various models that can be employed for effective social dialogue; and (f) study visits to other countries or regions. In some cases, support was provided at the tripartite or bipartite level, as well as separately for each constituent group. Projects increased the capacities of workers' and employers' organizations to participate in policy discussions and ensure that the voices and needs of the members were considered. Social dialogue took place at the workplace level through the establishment of bipartite committees of worker and employer representatives. Capacity development was achieved through trainings and by including content on social dialogue in training manuals and in various media productions, as well as through the establishment of Workers' Resource Centres. The promotion of social dialogue and tripartism was used to ensure sustainability of results achieved.

Certain projects focused on the development of social dialogue mechanisms and relations between employers and workers. This was the case for interventions related to labour dispute resolutions. For instance, the development of thematic working groups including social partners allowed the ILO to initiate social dialogue at the national level around Alternative Labour Dispute Resolution in Albania (2023-41). There had been tripartite meetings organized in advance of the project proposal, with the help of the ILO senior expert in social dialogue and labour law, and there were tripartite workshops at the national and regional levels, and study visits during the implementation phase.

There was extensive advocacy by the ILO to ensure that labour migration was incorporated in the Decent Work Agenda in Mexico, with a local integration round table established. This was made up of 13 organizations, including Mexico City ministries, employers' organizations, workers' organizations, workers, civil society organizations and United Nations organizations, where there were exchanges on best practices and lessons learned in local migration governance (2023-33). In the IGAD region, the promotion of social dialogue and tripartism was an integral part of the FMPT project, allowing partners to discuss forced displacement at the national and regional levels. Two key achievements were the creation of a regional employers' union, the Confederation of IGAD Employers, and support provided to the Confederation and Horn of Africa Confederation of Trade Unions in their capacity-building and planning. The regional tripartite dialogue between governmental institutions, workers' organizations and trade unions led to a draft protocol on the Free Movement of Persons (2023-38).

 **The main lessons learned of the programme has been that tripartism is complicated in certain contexts. As mentioned in the introduction, tripartite structures were not always present in the countries. For instance, employers of domestic workers were not organized into any institutions, or constituents, such as trade unions, and did not function as true representative bodies for women's labour migrants. Therefore, the programme did not focus on following tripartism and did not always include trade unions and employers' organizations as the core partners. Instead, it searched for other organizations to represent migrants' needs. However, the WIF programme contributed to building relationships between actors, and involved employers and governments in round table discussions that focused on sensitive policy issues (2023-28).**

An ILO project in Iraq contributed to social dialogue on three levels, through the child labour monitoring system, at the policy level, and through awareness-raising of stakeholders involved in child labour issues. In Zimbabwe, an ILO project supported foundational work for the Tripartite Negotiating Forum (TNF) by financially and technically supporting the establishment of operating procedure, systems and organizational structure for the TNF that operationalize the TNF Act, and a specific budget allocated for the TNF (2023-14). In Afghanistan, a tripartite forum served as the platform for the Government and social partners to engage on international labour standards, reporting and labour law issues. This contrasted with findings related to the dysfunctionality of two formal tripartite mechanisms established under the DWCP (2023-20).

PRO-POOR FOCUS IN ILO INTERVENTIONS IN 2023

Strong performance was noted in two thirds (66 per cent) of cases, with evaluations providing evidence of ILO interventions aiming to "leave no one behind" and improve the lives of the poorest through the promotion of decent work. Successful interventions conducted participatory diagnoses and studies to identify vulnerable workers and define vulnerability profiles, as well as the needs of beneficiaries (for example, 2023-10, 2023-11). Specific measures were used to reach beneficiary groups, which included refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities; returnees; migrant workers; rural poor and those living in remote areas; indigenous people; informal workers, including those engaged in illegal activities and those at risk of slavery; NEET individuals (those not in education, employment or training); children, young women and men at risk of irregular migration or at risk of being involved in banditry; ex-combatants; persons with disabilities (PwDs); female-headed households; women entrepreneurs; and the elderly. One project also targeted the needs of vulnerable, non-unionized workers, as they were not able to access dispute resolution systems (2023-41).

Approaches used included (a) support for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in informal sectors, and the promotion of social protection for informal workers; (b) promoting the rights of migrant workers and their families; (c) improvements in labour migration governance, youth employment and skills development; (d) the protection of children involved in or at risk of child labour and their families; (e) gender equality and women's empowerment, through entrepreneurship support, occupational safety and health, capacity-building, and policy and institutional development.

Several projects aimed to advance formalization and promote decent work, addressing knowledge gaps and capacity constraints to support access to social protection and the transition from the informal to the formal economy, both at the level of vulnerable workers and informal enterprises, as well as at the level of policymakers (2023-8, 2023-14). There was work to promote occupational safety and health in the coffee sector, which is mostly informal. There were interventions targeting children in or at risk of the worst forms of child labour and their families, including IDPs, refugees and vulnerable host communities, since these groups are disproportionately impacted by child labour. In one project, youth-led small businesses were supported to grow and become more inclusive of economically vulnerable young women and men, thus giving them a reason to stay in their communities (2023-36). In Kenya, the Public Private Development Partnership (PPDP) project focused on addressing poverty, exclusion, lack of employable skills, gender inequality and inadequate public services in rural areas in the Great Rift Valley. The project took a demand-driven approach to prioritize the needs and interests of beneficiaries, to ensure that programming was locally relevant and sustainable, by closely engaging with local communities. As a result of the project, the ultimate beneficiaries benefited from improved access to rights-based services, and there was evidence of policy influence at the national and county levels to address their specific needs, including access to clean potable water, improved healthcare services, and literacy programmes, with evidence of vulnerable groups becoming actively involved in entrepreneurial endeavours (2023-39).

Several interventions focused on women entrepreneurs, including in rural regions in Tunisia (2023-11). There were also projects focusing on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills-training for youth, including host communities and refugees. In one instance, a programme focused on the goal of an inclusive skills system that met the lower-level skills needs of people previously excluded from TVET, through pilot programmes that responded to specific needs related to equity of access (2023-44). In Afghanistan, a market systems development approach was used to support access to livelihood opportunities and entrepreneurship for low-income communities, specifically targeting women IDPs and returnees (2023-17). There were also projects targeting migrant workers and their families to ensure that they had access to decent working conditions abroad.

 **Improved rural road infrastructure created long-term employment and economic development benefits to communities and their people and businesses. In terms of wages, the ILO took the lead in ensuring that workers be paid the legislated minimum wage. The cash put into workers' hands through the project undoubtedly had an impact on their lives at the time. In the evaluation's field visits, many examples were given of how these wages were used to enhance quality of life (such as housing, education and medicine) and livelihoods (such as investing in agriculture and small businesses).**

For some, this may have been a temporary supplement to their regular income, but the project's investment in skills development of contractors seems also to have had a positive impact on the longer-term employment prospects of some trainees. The Joint Contractor Tracer Study found that 62 per cent of the people it surveyed were still employed in the road construction sector" (2023-9).

ILO projects were sometimes implemented in post-conflict situations in contexts of high unemployment and civil unrest, using EIIP approaches. This was the case in Timor Leste, where the lack of quality infrastructure in rural areas was seen as a major challenge to local economic and social development, leading to the implementation of the Road for Development (R4D) Programme, supporting the Government's rural roads development programme. The evaluation found that supporting Timor Leste using this approach provided a platform to advance decent work and social justice in rural communities, with evidence of improved compliance with workplace safety standards, promotion of fair and inclusive labour practices, promoting social protection for workers, contributing to the elimination of child labour and implementing safeguards for environmental protection (2023-9). In Sudan, ILO support led to improved access to water and road rehabilitation, combined with vocational training and occupational safety and health training, and income for 500 vulnerable families for the duration of the project (2023-19). Another "cash for work" project was in Niger, where the project was designed to increase the income of host and refugee populations in a region affected by insecurity, through land recovery activities: 2,700 beneficiaries benefited from temporary employment and social cohesion between hosts and refugees was promoted (2023-26).

GENDER RESPONSIVENESS OF ILO DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION INTERVENTIONS IN 2023

The extent to which ILO interventions were gender-responsive varied, yet results were positive overall in over half (53 per cent) of cases, and there was no unsuccessful performance.

Highly successful interventions were designed and implemented to be gender-responsive, with dedicated outcomes, and some took a nexus approach, integrating multiple variables such as gender, inclusion of PwDs, youth and marginalized groups. Gender mainstreaming was prioritized, ensuring women's active involvement in all project activities and providing training to project staff and key stakeholders for effective gender consideration in project management. Projects also took into consideration gender representation in the constitution of project teams and in beneficiary populations, and formed alliances with organizations promoting gender rights as well as women's cooperatives.

Strong performance was noted when projects took a gender lens during design and implementation to ensure equity and inclusivity. Results achieved included improved decent working conditions, increased autonomy and influence of women, and changed attitudes towards

women's access to leadership roles and in decision-making processes. Factors of success included evidence-based research conducted before and during projects to identify specific gender-related needs and obstacles, and the use of gender-sensitive tools during implementation, monitoring and reporting. There were inclusive capacity-building initiatives, through training and awareness-raising, including for constituents, partners and service providers, and these went beyond women to include youths and male stakeholders, to foster a more supportive environment to reduce gender inequalities. The inclusion of men among female trainees in Kenya was found to be "an innovative way of building a team of male gender champions, particularly in the predominantly Maasai regions, that tend to be relatively more conservative of gender roles" (2023-39).

Some projects supported advocacy and policy dialogues to reform directives targeting women, and led to the development of key policy documents. There was also evidence of participation of key stakeholders in national, regional and global events. The participation of women in non-traditional sectors, such as construction and maritime work, was promoted in several instances, and equal pay was promoted. In Ukraine, the gender dimension was tackled in a draft occupational safety and health law, and professions considered as exclusive to men in previous legislation were declared as open to both women and men (2023-16). After Georgia became one of the first members to join the Equal Pay International Coalition (EPIC) in 2021, the ILO accommodated a request for support with developing labour costs assessment methodology and policy recommendations to improve compliance with the Equal Remuneration Convention, 1951 (No. 100). Moreover, various assessments were conducted with partners such as UN Women and the Georgian Trade Union Confederation, including a regulatory impact assessment, a gender pay gap assessment, and two comprehensive social protection assessments (2023-23).

Gender-based violence was addressed by certain interventions. For instance, in Kenya, advocacy at the community level led to the generation and enactment of a Policy on Female Genital Mutilation. In Georgia, preparation work was completed for the ratification of the Violence and Harassment Convention, 2019 (No. 190). There were also trainings and guidelines related to sexual harassment and violence in several interventions.

Specific tools were used, such as the Gender Sensitive Business Management Programme, Women's Entrepreneurship Development and Women's Entrepreneurship Self Check and GET Ahead. Gender-disaggregated data were collected and analysed to contribute to studies and technical notes, and for monitoring and reporting purposes. In some cases, projects took a new approach to economically empower women, and provided them with tools and machines instead of cash incentives, to encourage them to participate in activities, combined with business skills development, leading to an increase in women micro-entrepreneurs (2023-37). There was extensive evidence of data produced related to gender gaps and needs. The project "Closing the Gender Data Gap on unpaid care and domestic work to support monitoring the 2030 Agenda" focused specifically on data generation, as it aimed to develop, test and refine a method with which low- and middle-income countries could effectively, efficiently and regularly collect data on unpaid domestic and care work. The project developed a survey module to be attached to countries' Labour Force Survey, and several countries have started the process of integrating the module into their upcoming Labour Force Survey (2023-4).

There were many examples of effective interventions, including the following:

- ▶ The AFERE project aimed to economically empower rural women in Tunisia by integrating gender-sensitive tools and approaches, and improving women's knowledge of and access to financial services and economic resources. As a result, women were provided with skills and knowledge to seize business opportunities and influence decision-making at local and national levels, and there was raised awareness among microfinance institutions about the specific needs of women (2023-11).
- ▶ The MiRiDew project effectively addressed the needs of women migrant workers in Nepal, by targeting policy gaps, advocating for mobility rights and promoting gender-sensitive labour migration governance. The project also supported a policy review paper on gender-sensitive labour migration, and developed an advocacy plan and supported formation of a national consortium for sustained advocacy for a gender-responsive migration policy in Nepal (2023-22).

- ▶ The WIF project integrated gender perspectives in its design and implementation, contributing to gender equality and women's empowerment in labour migration. The project raised the visibility of domestic work and contributed to the understanding of structural discrimination against migrant and other workers, through comprehensive research. Results achieved improved women's access to decent working conditions, while also strengthening legal and policy frameworks for their protection. The project raised awareness, reduced vulnerability to exploitation, and influenced the attitudes of government officials and trade unions, resulting in a more supportive environment for female labour migrants. Additionally, the project achieved unexpected positive impacts by fostering networking and empowerment through migrant centres in Jordan and Lebanon, leading to the creation of new organizations (2023-8).
- ▶ The Skills for Prosperity Programme (SfP) for Southeast Asia had a strong focus on gender equality, disability and social inclusion, in line with the Prosperity Fund's Gender and Inclusion Framework, and about 30 per cent of financial resources were allocated to achieve results related to the Equity Pillar, which strongly focused on the needs of women. The intervention aimed to address gender and inclusion at multiple levels, including at the TVET institutional level, at the sector and workplace level, and at the national and subnational TVET systems level. It also considered gender and inclusion through a geographical lens, responding to the different levels and types of disadvantages and exclusion in rural, remote and indigenous communities. Each SfP country produced Gender Equity and Social Inclusion Action Plans, which were closely monitored and reviewed every quarter. There were pilot initiatives to support national agencies and institutions to better address the needs of vulnerable groups, including women, and to promote inclusiveness in TVET delivery. Lectures, publications and guidelines promoted gender equality and the prevention of sexual harassment and violence, including in the maritime and higher education sectors (2023-44).

INTEGRATION OF DISABILITY INCLUSION IN ILO INTERVENTIONS IN 2023

Less than one fifth of interventions (18 per cent) had a disability inclusion perspective or specific components targeting beneficiary groups with disabilities.

Projects that were successful addressed disability inclusion in their design and had specific targets for participation of persons with disabilities, with measures to support institutional awareness and capacity-building to improve equity and collaborated with groups and NGOs promoting the rights of PwDs. Some evaluations noted that interventions were in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and some took a wider inclusion approach, focusing on mainstreaming gender equality, disability and social inclusion. There was evidence of interventions promoting the use of sign language to make services more accessible for PwDs, and the distribution of disability-friendly equipment for workers, and the promotion of disability-accessible sites in teaching campuses. There were also measures to promote equitable access for PwDs through the Disability Resources and Information Centre, leading to participation of PwDs in county government committees, school management and health facility boards (2023-39). Similarly, a skills programme included pilots to demonstrate how access for PwDs can be improved, and offered direct support to enhance equity in national TVET policies (2023-44), while another promoted partnerships with disability and business development services organizations, leading to two pilot projects targeting vulnerable women entrepreneurs and PwDs (2023-42). A regional component of a project in Niger paid particular attention to the inclusion of PwDs in land reclamation activities, with an inclusive and fair recruitment process, where people with disabilities were recruited on the same basis as those without disabilities, with arrangements made to facilitate their access to activities; this created a change in mentality and promoted an inclusive culture (2023-26).



“The inclusion of marginalized men and women and people with disabilities is particularly commended by Government of Sri Lanka agencies, as there are only a few programmes focusing on these categories of people. The Northern Provincial Department of Social Services has drafted a policy on PwDs for the Northern Province based on the project’s interventions, which is expected to be replicated elsewhere in the country. Equally, work supporting the use of sign language for PwDs is particularly welcomed as a very relevant intervention. The project’s interventions are also in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities” (2023-40).

There were specific outputs to promote disability inclusion, such as disability inclusion assessments, a Road for Development related Guidance Note for Disability Inclusive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E), which reinforced the message that staff needed to ensure the project “supports the equal right of all persons to access the benefits created by the rehabilitation and maintenance projects implemented by the R4D programme”, including not only employment but also “access to decision-making processes that affect implementation” and “equal opportunity to enjoy social and economic benefits”(2023-9). There was a draft policy on PwDs for the Northern Province in Sri Lanka, which was expected to be replicated elsewhere in the country (2023-40).

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY IN ILO INTERVENTIONS IN 2023

Less than one fifth (16 per cent) of ILO interventions included issues related to the just transition to environmental sustainability in their design and implementation.

Projects with good performance (a) included environmental sustainability as an outcome; (b) promoted green jobs and green economic activities, sustainable environmental management and conservation; and (c) aimed to enhance environmental resilience. Many of these interventions, however, did not achieve results of strategic importance, and tended to work at the community level.

The Decent Work in the Garment Sector Supply Chains in Asia project had a specific outcome on environmental sustainability, and outputs included knowledge products such as the Just Transition Toolkit, including videos to disseminate knowledge and workshops to discuss country-level sustainability road maps; and a working paper “Turning up the heat: Exploring potential links between climate change and gender-based violence and harassment in the garment sector” (2023-1), as well as academic research on the topic. Another project in Kenya conducted an assessment on climate change and the environment, leading to action plans developed with local community members (2023-39), while the ILO provided technical input for the development of a voluntary Code of Conduct on environmentally responsible business practices for the coffee supply chain, thereby seeking greater industry, and regional and national commitment to improve compliance with occupational safety and health standards in the coffee subsector (2023-10).

There were sensitization campaigns on environmental conservation and adaptation, and measures such as tree planting and structures set up to reduce conflicts over natural resources. There was also (a) evidence of green jobs creation, focusing on selling and repairing solar energy products; (b) small-scale hydroponics farming projects; (c) the promotion of a circular economy through the promotion of recycling and environmentally friendly waste management; and (d) capacity-building on sustainable land management practices. The use of clean energy and local construction materials was also put forward as contributing to the just transition by evaluators.

BUILDING CAPACITIES, DEVELOPING KNOWLEDGE AND ESTABLISHING STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS IN 2023

Very strong performance was found for all criteria, especially for capacity-building.

Figure 11. Percentage of more successful scores by performance criteria for building capacities, developing knowledge and establishing strategic relationships (2023)



CAPACITY-BUILDING IN 2023

There was extensive evidence of strong, impactful performance related to the ILO's capacity-building efforts at the individual level, and at the level of public and private institutions, based on targeted needs assessments, with 91 per cent of projects having successful or very successful performance. Specific good practices were identified in evaluation reports, and the ILO's flexibility and adaptation to adapt to COVID-19 restrictions were often highlighted.

Capacities of ILO stakeholders were built through courses, workshops, training of trainers, demonstration pilots on farms, training and orientation programmes on cooperatives and solidarity enterprise management, soft skills training, practical trainings, round tables, participation in conferences and workshops, and study trips. There were specific measures targeting vulnerable groups, including women, youth, children, PwDs, and migrant workers, as well as isolated and indigenous communities.

ILO methodologies were used, including WIND, WISE, SOLVE, Training for Rural Economic Empowerment (TREE), Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB), Think.COOP and Start.COOP, Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification, Factory Improvement Toolset pilots, GET Ahead, SCREAM, SCORE, Training for Employment (T4E), Business Development Services (BDS), Making Microfinance Work (MMW), Sustainable and resilient enterprise (SURE) training, in collaboration with GIZ, and the Rural Academy through the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization (ITC-ILO). There was also certification training on Business and Human Rights, training on recognition of prior learning assessments for migrant and/or informal workers, and training in basic competences in reading, writing, mathematics and digital skills. A project focusing on the creation and use of labour indicators provided training courses on labour statistics and specialized software.

Psychosocial awareness and training were provided in several ILO technical cooperation projects. This was the case in the Republic of Moldova, where a project targeted labour inspectors, social partners, the private sector, public institutions and professional sectors that were traditionally under a high level of psychological pressure, such as sea transport, providing space for workers to talk openly about mental health challenges (2023-16).

There were innovative approaches and the development of new programmes, such as the "*Emprede Hoy*" entrepreneurship and social mobility programme and a training on interculturality in Chile. In Indonesia, gender-based violence and harassment were addressed in Better Work factories through the use of bodyswaps in the context of a virtual reality scenario training. In Iraq, a five-day training was conducted to introduce a new global inter-agency child labour toolkit, bringing together representatives from national and international organizations across the countries,

working in the field of child protection and child labour. There were also online and in-person training for government officials, labour inspectors, academics, NGOs and UN organizations on the Worst Forms of Child Labour. The same project used an ILO-supported Child Labour Monitoring System to identify families with the most urgent cases of child labour, to provide trainings related to skills development and income generation activities for older siblings of working age and caretakers, and ensure that they would have sufficient income to support children's return to school (2023-13). In Malaysia, ILO support focused on "future readiness" of the national TVET strategy, incorporating digital talent development, science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) and "Fourth Industrial Revolution" skills, and improving opportunities within the TVET system for lifelong learning. (2023-44).

 **Virtual training and virtual communication in general have made it easier to establish a first contact with new partners and institutions because it is quicker and easier. However, it must be considered that connectivity is not the same in all places and this obviously makes virtual communication difficult: in some areas, especially those in rural areas farther away from cities, there is no internet, it is intermittent or slow, or the people to whom the training is addressed do not have a computer. This meant that, for example, in the first virtual courses in Colombia aimed at coffee farmers, the dropout rate was high, at around 40 per cent. However, given this circumstance, the alternative of redesigning the courses and offering them via WhatsApp, a virtual mechanism that coffee growers could access with simple mobile phones, was very effective" (2023-10).**

Many ILO projects partnered with universities and other academic and vocational institutions to incorporate part of the content of ILO tools and courses in their curricula. This was highlighted as a good practice in Colombia through the Vision Zero Fund (VZF) Latin America component of the VZF project, where partnerships with universities at the undergraduate, specialization and master's levels allowed for the inclusion of training on occupational safety and health hazards, occupational safety and health management and quality, and integrated management (2023-10). Furthermore, partnerships with the private sector, public institutions, agricultural extension centres and cooperatives enabled farm owners, managers and workers to improve their risk assessment and management capacities. Similarly, the SfP-Southeast Asia project contributed to making TVET more equitable and inclusive, by building the capacity of TVET institutions, conducting regional and sectoral pilots, and guiding the development and implementation of national policies and programmes (2023-44).

The ILO's ability to develop networks between different stakeholders and foster exchange of knowledge, lessons learned and good practices was highly valued. Partnerships in the context of capacity-building were created with public institutions, the private sector, agricultural extension centres and cooperatives. An ILO project also conducted online training of journalists to promote accurate and balanced reporting of labour migration. Certain ILO toolkits, such as Factory Improvement Toolset modules, were used by global brands (Amazon and Dick's Sporting Goods). In the context of the ILO/PBSO programme, there was engagement with Geneva-based organizations to help mainstream decent work and employment in sustainable peace strategies, and trainings organized for key stakeholders at ILO regional and country offices. The DATOS project organized a four-day exchange between the Mexican *Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social* and the United States Department of Labour on experiences in the implementation of labour inspections (2023-24). The Alliance 8.7 secretariat organized online trainings and regional webinars in English, French

and Spanish, and bilateral meetings, to provide guidance to national focal points in pioneering countries on coordinating and monitoring action at the national level, in line with their established priorities (2023-26). Support from partners took different forms, including reviewing training content and materials, facilitating training workshops, convening participants, participation in task forces and discussion groups, piloting new approaches within their institutions, and providing funds for training and technical assistance.

Specific aspects of trainings and capacity-building were highlighted as very positive by participants: (a) the use of clear, simple, non-academic language, adapted to beneficiaries; (b) access to materials in local languages and the translation of existing work into other languages; (c) the quality of the materials provided, including practical aspects that could easily be applied in their practices; and (d) the skills of trainers. In a project promoting labour rights and social dialogue, participants appreciated the pedagogical innovation involved in the e-learning model with flexible access to content, timetables and tutor support, and the support for those with limited skills in the use of materials and virtual platforms. The central role of ITC-ILO was also noted in many instances. For example, in the context of a project in Lebanon, the ILO provided extensive capacity-building to project partners to improve the quality of labour market information, through tailored training for over 35 organizations (government institutions, NGOs, UN agencies and others involved in the delivery of TVET) in collaboration with the ITC-ILO. This was supplemented by the Skills Academy, an online training package and coaching services, with inputs from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation and UNICEF, establishing a basis to design and deliver relevant formal and non-formal competency-based training programmes in line with market demands and towards enhanced employability of youth (2023-18).

The use of online technology was a factor of success: there were online self-study training courses through public learning platforms, and access to virtual platforms. The e-learning platform developed in the Republic of Moldova for the Employers' Confederation and its members represented an interactive communication and capacity development tool. WhatsApp was used for communication and capacity-building in several interventions, especially for workers in the informal sector. There was also evidence of adaptability in situations where virtual training modalities were not possible, including allowances for internet and transport services to promote participation of beneficiaries with limited resources (for example, 2023-31).

KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT IN 2023

ILO development cooperation projects were successful in 81 per cent of cases, as they developed a strong knowledge base covering various topics, which responded to information needs of constituents and partners, raised awareness of key decent work issues and influenced policy decisions and the development of strategies and action plans.

Knowledge was generated through different means and took different forms, including through conducting diagnostic studies, contextual assessments, country profiles, community-based assessments, labour market studies, rapid market appraisals, social protection assessments, assessments of compliance with international labour standards, value-chain analyses, audits, tracer studies, surveys, technical studies related to construction and infrastructure, functional reviews of government departments, and briefs summarizing key findings and policy recommendations, among others. Some projects mapped and integrated information from different sources and databases, such as the DATOS project, which proposed qualitative and quantitative indicators to monitor the implementation and results of the labour reform, with the objective of making this information available on a publicly accessible digital platform (2023-24).

Strong performance was noted when outputs were used to inform project design and implementation, for advocacy purposes, and to support key decisions and promote evidence-based changes in laws and policy development, as well as ratification of international labour

standards. Successful contributions were institutionalized, and when there was evidence of their use beyond the lifecycle of a project. For instance, the FMPT project produced migration-related knowledge which significantly contributed to improving the competencies of relevant stakeholders on labour migration processes and helped draft the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, and informed resulting discussions and negotiations. Stakeholders also produced knowledge that could be used for awareness-raising and drafting evidence-based labour migration policies (202338). There were also examples of training modules and curricula developed using knowledge generated through ILO projects.

 **To position the issue and generate knowledge globally, the project in Latin America compiled all the guidelines, protocols, case studies and methodologies validated in various interventions in Mexico, Colombia and Honduras, and designed and published the first occupational safety and health toolkit for the global coffee chain. Almost 60 per cent of the knowledge products developed by the project were translated into English, and around 95 per cent of the knowledge products included in the toolkit developed by the VZF secretariat for coffee have been produced by the project. This toolkit was sent to all project partners in the three countries and regional and global organizations, constituting more than 500 actors in the global coffee chain.**

Notably, the ILO Regional Office for Latin America recognized the toolkit as the best innovative intervention of the 2020–21 biennium” (2023-10).

There were also examples of the development of materials to support stakeholders to engage in regional and global policy dialogues, including preparation of background papers and technical inputs covering legal reviews, review of good practices, and recommendations. Research and advocacy work was an important component of the WIF programme, and there was evidence of extensive research and publication of books, research papers, discussions and briefings, which contributed to the effectiveness and impact of the programme, through improved understanding of challenges and opportunities for migrant women workers, with clear links of such contributions to changes in policies, practices and workplace relations (2023-28). In Iraq, the ILO enhanced the child labour rights knowledge base to inform advocacy and programme planning of stakeholders, established a child labour monitoring system to identify children at risk, and embedded child labour indicators in surveys (2023-13).

Support materials for stakeholders and beneficiaries included guides in simplified language, brochures, videos, mobile applications, weekly newsletters and community media platforms. Mobile applications were developed to provide easy access to guides and manuals. The ILO also supported the development of information systems, statistical databases and programmes. Many of these materials were available in English and in local languages, and most were available online, to reach a wide audience. Exchange of good practices and lessons learned between countries and projects was facilitated through various means, including publications, communities of practice, knowledge-sharing events and study visits, and were consistently appreciated.

Research and studies often benefited from the active participation and support of stakeholders and other partners, during the data collection and analysis stages, and for validation and dissemination purposes. There were also collaborations with other institutions, and work commissioned to external consultants.

STRATEGIC RELATIONSHIPS

Most ILO interventions (77 per cent) built and maintained strong relationships with constituent groups, UN organizations and donors, as well as the private sector and civil society organizations, promoting the achievement of results. The promotion of social dialogue processes played a significant role in having different key actors contribute to and collaborate on ILO initiatives. Many evaluations highlighted the good relations of trust between the ILO and its partners.

Collaborations included participation in meetings, working groups, organizations of multi-stakeholder forums, joint donor committees, shared research projects, advocacy round tables and capacity-building initiatives. Partners provided inputs to the design of projects, facilitated access to beneficiaries, supported implementation, participated in validation exercises, and disseminated knowledge generated by ILO interventions. There was evidence of joint policy development and cooperation with various partners in the field of labour statistics. Partnerships also led to synergies and efficiencies in implementation, and fostered ownership of project results. There were efforts to ensure that positive engagement with other institutions was institutional, rather than personal, to mitigate risks and enhance sustainability prospects.

One successful example was in Lebanon, where the ILO – jointly with UNICEF, UNDP and UNFPA – brought together key stakeholders in the country and supported their engagement in the 2022 MENA (Middle East–North Africa) Regional High-Level Meeting on Young People’s Learning, Skilling, Social Inclusion and Transition to Decent Work. This resulted in national commitments to address learning bottlenecks in decent work transition, through a participatory and consultative process. The ILO, UNICEF and the World Bank formed the Skills Development Working Group, which includes various development partners to jointly address key challenges in skills, and to provide strategic guidance to the Government of Lebanon and civil society actors. NGOs and development agencies such as the European Union, the World Bank, and GIZ have also supported the ILO’s efforts in vocational training and skills development in Lebanon (2023-18). The ILO/Korea project worked in close cooperation with the tripartite partners and several partner institutions of the Republic of Korea, as well as the World Health Organization and different donors, enhancing effectiveness and impact (2023-43).

There were several interventions which took a public-private development partnership approach. A project in Egypt worked with employers as partners and funders. The project worked closely and built good relations with employers, trade unions, local authorities and national partners, and this partnership model was seen as a critical enabler of its success (2023-37). In Kenya, an ILO project sought to engage with the private sector as a strategic partner with the public sector to address specific development challenges, and brought together various partners, including government departments and institutions, private sector actors, labour unions, training institutes and community members. The ILO partnered with a Swedish NGO for community engagement and with the Technical University of Kenya for research, development, capacity-building and incubation of vocational training centres (2023-39). In Sri Lanka, partnerships with government agencies and the private sector were also found to contribute to successful performance (2023-40). Such collaborations helped strengthen policy frameworks and institutionalize and sustain achieved results. A good practice identified in the VZF projects in Latin America and in Viet Nam was the way in which the projects identified and convened a range of public and private actors from government, employers’ and workers’ organizations, academia, women’s organizations and other international organizations in the different activities developed. This was valued by stakeholders as an effective mechanism for identifying and defining objectives and activities to be prioritized.

An overview of the key challenges concerning the overall effectiveness of development cooperation interventions in 2023

DELAYS, PARTIAL PROGRESS AND QUALITY ISSUES IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

Regarding the achievement of outputs and outcomes, over half of development cooperation interventions did not achieve their expected outputs in a timely manner, and over two thirds only made partial progress towards their intended outcomes. In many cases, certain outputs were not fully achieved, were delayed or cancelled and/or were of poor quality, or there was only partial progress towards outcomes, leading to partly successful performance. Poor performance was found for an EIIP project in Jordan, where the evaluation provided extensive evidence of outputs which were of poor quality, or of little use to stakeholders and beneficiaries (2023-30).

LIMITED ATTENTION IN INTERVENTION DESIGN AND MISSED OPPORTUNITIES IN THE PROMOTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF ILO'S CROSS-CUTTING POLICY AREAS

The weakest performance related to the ILO's cross-cutting policy areas was found for disability inclusion and the transition to environmental sustainability, reflecting an area where progress is needed. There were also missed opportunities related to the promotion of international labour standards, social dialogue and tripartism, gender responsiveness, and promoting decent working and living conditions for vulnerable groups.

Disability inclusion was an area of very poor performance. Overall, the issue of disability inclusion did not receive targeted attention, even when there were opportunities to do so. In most cases, consideration of inclusion strategies or specific measures targeting PwDs were not explicitly included in project design or implementation, leading to poor performance. This was echoed in the findings of the final independent evaluation of the ILO's Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy (2020-23).



To fully achieve the ILO's goal on disability inclusion, the strategy must be implemented throughout the Organization's offices and not just at headquarters. This requires regional and country offices to ensure that DWCPs and CPOs are disability-inclusive, pursue funding opportunities with donors who are proactive on disability inclusion, meaningfully engage with OPDs, and ensure projects effectively mainstream disability in both design and implementation. Additionally, the offices need to effectively engage tripartite constituents and other partners on disability inclusion. It also, though, requires that the operational and organizational culture elements of the strategy are implemented as well, including – among others – ensuring accessible offices and meeting spaces, the recruitment of persons with disabilities and provision of reasonable accommodation, and building the capacity of all staff on disability inclusion. The evaluation found that, while progress has been made to an extent in regional and country offices, this is inconsistent, and progress has been more marked at headquarters. Accountability for implementing disability-inclusive goals is less clear cut outside of Geneva.

Final independent evaluation of ILO Disability Inclusion Policy and Strategy (2020-23)

Performance was also very weak for the inclusion of elements supporting a just transition to environmental sustainability, revealing an area where improvement is needed. Often, environmental concerns were not considered systematically in intervention designs and implementation, and these missed opportunities were noted in evaluation reports. In one case, the national component of a project had a strong environmental component, while the global-level component did not address this criterion. Half of cases did not include any elements of environmental sustainability.

In some cases, while international labour standards underpinned the intervention logic and results framework, they were not explicitly promoted, or there was variability in the extent to which normative work and international labour standards were incorporated and implemented in projects. A cluster evaluation of RBSA-funded COVID-19-response projects found that normative work and international labour standards did not play a central role in the interventions, revealing a missed opportunity.

Challenges were noted when the culture of social dialogue was not established among social partners, requiring strong longer-term effort, or engagement with different groups, in the case of migrant workers, or informal workers, for instance. In some cases, although social dialogue was encouraged, consultation processes took time and led to delays. A few interventions had little engagement from one or several constituent groups, due to project design, and/or lack of interest, political will or low capacities of social partners and national governments, as well as absence of social partner organizations, leading to poor performance. Several evaluations found that there were missed opportunities to promote and strengthen tripartite social dialogue. In the case of the DATOS project, although the project was based on the implementation of results obtained from tripartite negotiations, it neglected the creation of spaces for tripartite social dialogue to validate the indicators from the perspective of workers and employers, missing an important strategic opportunity to have their inputs during the discussion, definition and adjustment of indicators and data intended to be public and used by all actors (2023-24). The evaluation of an EIIP project in Jordan focusing on green infrastructure and targeting Jordanians and refugees noted that the design did not include tripartite social dialogue, as this was not relevant to the project (2023-30).

In Egypt, although there was limited participation from workers' organizations in the EYE-RAWABET project, 11 unions got together to develop and validate joint inputs for the 2022 Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27) (2023-25). In Latin America, social dialogue processes facilitated by the VZF resulted in the identification of intervention models that guided the project's work in Mexico and Honduras. While there was good participation from public institutions, employers' organizations and social organizations, there was less participation from workers' organizations, especially in Mexico, due to the lack of well-organized trade unions in the coffee subsector (2023-10). Weaker organizational capacities of workers' organizations were also noted in other countries, sometimes causing imbalances in social dialogue. This was found to be an important bottleneck in achieving sector-level changes through social dialogue on decent work in supply chains (2023-12).

Weak performance was associated with projects that did not perform gender analysis or did not have a gender strategy to address gender in project outcomes, outputs or activities. There were variations in the use and definition of gender-specific indicators. In some cases, while gender responsiveness was not included in project design, project implementation teams added elements to address this. In other cases, while specific outputs were planned, these did not materialize, due to lack of contextual assessments or lack of dedicated budgets. A few evaluations noted that an intersectional analysis of specific groups, women in particular, was missing, and some interventions were likely to improve the living standards of vulnerable groups, based on the nature of the intervention. Projects with partly successful performance often targeted institutions or systems, and vulnerable groups were seen as indirect beneficiaries.

Quality issues and poor relevance of capacity-building and knowledge development efforts: limited efforts to leverage strategic relationships

There was partly successful performance for capacity-building in 9 per cent of reports, including for EIIP projects, such as R4D, where the donor was concerned the project prioritized road construction over building government capacity, although positive impact was noted for the project's investment in skills development of contractors (2023-9). Certain interventions did not perform capacity development needs assessments or develop long-term capacity-development strategies or frameworks. There was also evidence of uneven quality of training and effectiveness of capacity-building, although this was only noted in a few evaluation reports.

Interventions with weak performance in terms of knowledge development generated outputs of poor quality, or with limited relevance or outreach; this was so for less than one fifth of cases. In one intervention, a diagnostic study was conducted in one region, yet the intervention was carried out in other regions. In another, an assessment of economic opportunities for rural communities was conducted, but was not shared with stakeholders, so findings could not be used for strategic decision-making. Several projects aimed to conduct studies and create outputs, but this did not take place. For instance, the Alliance 8.7 project planned to produce a global report of pioneer countries, with periodic updates, yet the deliverable was replaced by a presentation of the pioneer countries on the website, which did not provide information on results achieved at a global level (2023-26). In Egypt, a situational study was to be conducted to capture the labour market challenges and opportunities for young people, and to inform project implementation, but it was replaced by other interventions at the request of the Ministry of Labour (2023-37).

In less than one quarter of cases (23 per cent), further efforts were needed to leverage strategic relationships, leading to partly successful performance. For instance, the ILO/PBSO programme facilitated inter-agency initiatives and participated in various platforms to shape UN systemwide coherence on the topic of employment and decent work for peace, but did not fully use the ILO's convening power to rally its social partners around the "employment and decent work for peace" agenda and could have better collaborated with partner agencies at country level (2023-3). Other missed opportunities were also noted. For instance, in Niger, the regional component of the French-funded Alliance 8.7 project collaborated closely with UNHCR but did not link with UNICEF and FAO. Moreover, although various national NGOs supported work on SDG 8.7, the project did not interact with these structures, and it is not a pioneer country of Alliance 8.7. At the global level as well as in the pioneering countries, there was partial coordination between the different initiatives led by the ILO, despite support from associated UN agencies (2023-26). While Better Work Jordan has a strong relationship and partnership with the Ministry of Labour, this was not extended to a European Union (EU)/ILO project (2023-6). The ILO successfully strengthened its role in the skills ecosystem and fostered tripartism and multi-stakeholder engagement, with evidence of significant progress made in building coherence with national and international programmes, leading to fruitful collaborations with ITC-ILO, the United Nations Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Trade Union Confederation and the International Organization of Employers. Despite these successes, more proactive participation in donor-facilitated skills platforms was needed to optimize synergies and leverage initiatives, and there was evidence of power imbalances and resource mobilization competition between partners such as GIZ (2023-42). A few projects had weak or episodic engagement of key partners, such as in Colombia, where lack of strategic alliances development put the progress achieved in the capacity-building of constituent at risk (2023-5).

SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT OF ILO DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION INTERVENTIONS IN 2023

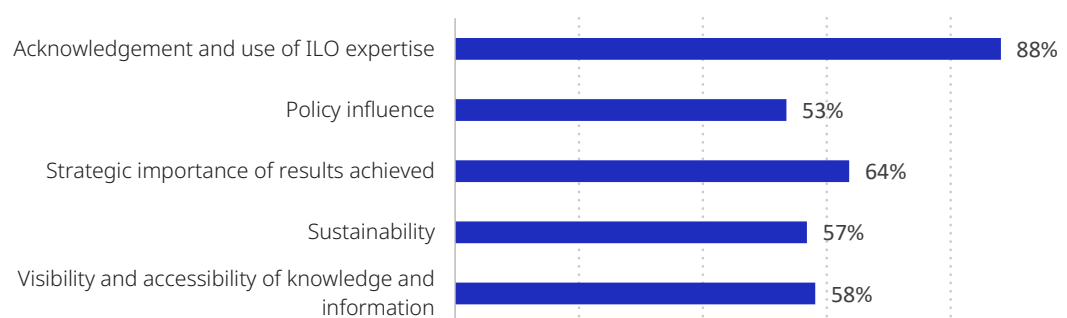
The aggregated category of sustainability and impact included five criteria: (a) policy influence; (b) strategic importance of achieved results; (c) sustainability of policies, knowledge and capacities; (d) acknowledgement and use of ILO expertise; and (e) visibility and accessibility of knowledge and information.



Level of confidence of the evidence: high

Overall, ILO actions showed positive performance on sustainability and impact orientation with all criteria obtaining ratings over 50 per cent, as shown in figure 12. The strongest performance was related to the appreciation and use of the ILO's expertise, which received successful ratings in nearly all reports. Another strong area was the strategic importance of results achieved, with two thirds of projects performing well. There was variable but successful performance regarding the ILO's efforts to document and disseminate information knowledge from interventions, sustainability of results, and the extent to which the ILO's work led to policy influence.

FIGURE 12. SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT: PERCENTAGE OF MORE SUCCESSFUL SCORES BY PERFORMANCE CRITERIA (2023)



Assessment of the overall performance to promote sustainability and impact of development cooperation interventions in 2023

There was widespread acknowledgement of the ILO's expertise and contributions. In many instances, the ILO was perceived to be an impartial convener that facilitated tripartite exchanges, created space for social dialogue and had the trust of its partners. It was perceived as a key leading actor in different fields, including for TVET, skills development, small business development, social entrepreneurship, fundamental principles and rights at work, occupational safety and health, social dialogue, international labour standards, gender equity and diversity, labour rights, promoting decent work opportunities and improving the livelihoods of vulnerable groups. Recognition of the ILO's comparative advantage was also demonstrated through the partnerships developed with constituent groups, civil society organizations, UN agencies and donors, and there was evidence of the ILO using its international presence and networks to promote the Decent Work Agenda through its interventions. In one case, the ILO's expertise in labour issues led to donors requesting its support to conceive a project to accompany a labour reform process.

Performance related to policy influence as a result of ILO projects was mixed, with very strong performance in nearly one fifth of cases. There was good performance related to the strategic use of intervention results by stakeholders, with nearly two thirds positive results.

Evaluations provided evidence of policy influence at local, national, regional and international levels, leading to the development or adoption of national strategic frameworks and related action plans, as well as policy reforms. Factors of good performance included (a) the development

of a strong evidence base to support key decisions; (b) targeted regional, national and local capacity-building and technical support; and (c) the engagement of tripartite social partners and other relevant stakeholders in the design and implementation of projects, as well as a conducive enabling environment. ILO support led to the improvement of legal and regulatory frameworks, and in the design and implementation of public policies, programmes, strategies and action plans. The promotion of social dialogue in this context was important, as it allowed different groups to collaborate and participate in policy discussions, and encouraged common understanding and agreement on key issues and ways forward.

The reform of the regulatory framework of the labour market in Georgia is a breakthrough, and it would not be possible without the ILO's technical support, its convening power and its resources. [...] With regards to increasing compliance with international labour standards, the project holds quite a unique position in the landscape of development activities in Georgia. The ILO remains the main international partner of the Government of Georgia in shaping Georgian labour market regulation and increasing compliance with international labour standards. This position is defined by the unique mandate of the ILO, but also its expertise and reputation among its constituencies, who expressed strong support to the ILO's presence and heightened expectations towards continuation of its efforts in Georgia (2023-23).

The ILO has demonstrated high external coherence by playing an active role in agenda-setting and coordination in international networks and mechanisms on employment and decent work for peace. It has positioned itself to provide strategic leadership in employment and decent work for peace in global platforms (2023-3).

The ILO has a strong tactical presence in Senegal in a policy advisory role, with the good reputation as a thought leader and for building up interest in critical areas and fostering policy dialogue (2023-42).

There were numerous examples of improvements linked to the development and application of policies, including those related to decent working conditions for domestic workers, labour migration, occupational safety and health, business and human rights (2023-15), forced labour, the formalization of the informal sector, TVET, the employability of young people, pension reform and social insurance governance, among others. ILO support also led to major achievements in shaping the strategic context for labour rights protection in Georgia and promoted decent work in Timor-Leste.

In some cases, although policy-level work took place in interventions, policy outputs were not captured in the project logframe or results frameworks. This was the case in Bangladesh, where ILO support led to the development of a Governing Body road map and a National Action Plan, as well as Standard Operating Procedures, which were included in the amended Bangladesh Labour Act (2023-2).

Many results were achieved by ILO interventions in the context of policy influence and strategic work, including the following:

- ▶ In close consultations with tripartite constituents, ILO supported the development of a National Action Plan against Child Labour in Iraq, in line with international labour standards, and established a national level WFCL steering committee, which assisted in the development of the Plan. Awareness-raising workshops and trainings also focused on other policy frameworks such as the Hazardous Work List and the Child Protection Policy (2023-13).
- ▶ One intervention contributed to the improvement of national legal and regulatory frameworks, on the enforcement of regulations and/or on the design and/or implementation of national public policies/programmes/strategies to promote occupational safety and health in the supply chains of coffee workers, including informal workers. In Colombia, the occupational safety and health regulatory framework was adjusted to the characteristics and demands of agriculture. The Agreement “For an occupational safety and health culture in the coffee sector” (April 2019) – signed between the Ministry of Labour, the Colombian Coffee Growers Federation and the ILO – ratifies the commitment of national institutions to promote occupational safety and health in the coffee sector (2023-10).
- ▶ ILO support made valuable contributions to policy development, the improvement and harmonization of training contents and procedures, and the coordination of strategic investments in the TVET sector in Lebanon. The ILO Skills projects provided technical assistance in the elaboration of the National Strategic Framework for TVET (2018–22) and the draft Framework 2023–30 in Lebanon, in collaboration with UNICEF. The project also developed a proposal for the reform of the National Employment Office, and conducted a functional review for the Education and Extension Service Department of the Ministry of Agriculture, which was used to inform the development of the National Agriculture Strategy for 2020–25 (2023-18).
- ▶ The influence of regional and global policy dialogues and the ILO’s technical support was reflected in the Government of Nepal’s policy adaptations in the area of labour migration, including results related to gender-sensitive labour migration (2023-22).
- ▶ Evidence-based national policies for labour inspection and occupational safety and health were developed in Iraq using an inclusive approach with tripartite constituents and endorsed by the Government. This included the first Code of Conduct for Fair Recruitment in Agriculture, which was signed by both the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs in Federal Iraq and KRI. It was endorsed by social partners and signed by 23 private sector recruiters, and a labour inspection code of practice for inspections in the agriculture sector was reviewed and endorsed by social partners, and signed by 13 labour inspectors (2023-7).
- ▶ The AFERE project built on synergies with initiatives funded by other donors related to social protection and social dialogue to revise legislation, leading to social security coverage for rural women in Tunisia (2023-11).
- ▶ There were contributions to policy adaptations in the area of labour migration, the development of the Djibouti Declaration, the Protocol of Free Movement of Persons and Transhumance, and guidelines on BLAs to ensure better conditions for migrant workers in the IGAD region (2023-38).

The WIF programme aimed to strengthen legal systems, policies and practices on decent work, but this was not fully achieved in most programme countries, as the policy environment was unfavourable and showed a deteriorating trend. Nevertheless, the programme was able to influence the revision or dismantling of certain laws and policies that would have been especially damaging (2023-28).

Performance related to sustainability was mixed, but positive overall. Sustainability was promoted through the active engagement of tripartite stakeholders and other partners and beneficiaries to ensure ownership and commitment to project results. Established partnerships and alliances were often found to be durable and led to a sense of ownership, especially at the institutional level, where political commitments were an important factor in ensuring sustainability.

Some projects developed sustainability plans and concept papers in consultation with constituents and other stakeholders, and established sustainability committees, as well as workshops. This was the case for the PPDP project, which implemented an exit strategy that fostered replication and scaling up of interventions by partners, and integrated achieved results into national institutions, focusing particularly on capacity-building and involvement of stakeholders throughout the project life cycle, including in decision-making and resource allocations (2023-39). In Egypt, SIYB, as one of the critical project interventions of the EYE project, had a sustainability plan, and an Entrepreneurship Centre was established within a local university to provide courses, training and tools to help businesses and entrepreneurs, with a dedicated fund, trained staff under the project on the SIYB programme, and the ILO commitment to providing the necessary technical support (2023-37).

Successful projects contributed to the achievement of outcomes in DWCPs and were aligned with national priorities, and there was evidence of project results being embedded as components of other projects or taken up by different ILO departments, as well as by national and regional offices, and by constituents. Tripartite social dialogue was found to be a pillar of sustainability in Latin America, as was the collaboration with CSOs (2023-33).

Targeted, effective capacity-building efforts and awareness-raising often led to good uptake of project results. Building institutional capacities were factors of success. This was promoted through various training programmes and the development of support materials; the training of trainers approach was also found to be effective. There was also evidence of project partners taking up products developed through ILO projects and using and adapting them to their own needs.

The ILO's advocacy efforts were another element promoting sustainability of results, as was the development and adoption of evidence-based policies, legislative frameworks and national action plans in full consultation with tripartite constituents. However, these elements were not sufficient to ensure sustainability of results, as capacities of stakeholders to follow up on achievements were found to be one of the most critical factors. In skills projects in Africa, deeper thematic understanding and increased capacities to collaborate led to joint policy revisions, and strategic partnerships led to the continuation of pilot activities and contributed towards the institutionalization of results and larger-scale interventions, with a memorandum of understanding signed between the ILO and other partners in one of the project countries to build on results (2023-42).

ILO support contributed to the development of new projects, based on project results and methodologies developed, and some projects were able to mobilize resources to build on achievements in future phases or projects, including some of the RBSA-funded interventions (2023-27). Project teams developed proposals for follow-up interventions and submitted concept notes to donors. Often, the sustainability of projects was directly subject to the need for additional funding.

There was mixed performance regarding the ILO's efforts to document and disseminate knowledge internally and externally. Good performance was linked to the development and implementation of communication strategies, with projects aiming to promote sharing of information and promoting visibility of project outputs, and to leave behind technical manuals, tools and systems that would help institutionalize practices and consolidate knowledge. Certain interventions had dedicated communications and knowledge officers, to enhance global communication efforts and support country-level communication needs. There was sometimes a distinction between performance related to external, versus internal, communication.

Communication materials packages were produced, including promotional and informative videos, documentaries, billboard promotion campaigns, printed materials (such as leaflets, flyers, briefs,

posters and flipcharts), photo essays, podcasts, radio soap operas, as well as jingles and audio messages that could be used in factory production floors. There were social media campaigns, newspaper articles and dedicated YouTube channels, as well as the use of WhatsApp platforms, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter) and TikTok to promote online communities of practice. Some projects also developed online applications.

Various face-to-face and online events were organized or attended – including high-level webinars; inter-agency events; multi-stakeholder forums; press conferences; global, regional, national and enterprise-level workshops; working group meetings; and community dialogue conferences – with youth and their families involved in interactive theatre. Case studies were developed and disseminated during conferences. There were also media briefing workshops for advocacy, especially to support progress towards the ratification and implementation of international labour standards. Field visits were another way to contribute to knowledge-sharing. Websites shared training materials and publications, and were also used to facilitate access to job vacancies and training opportunities; this was also done through the development of dedicated online platforms (for example, 2023-20, 2023-6). Digitization of global products and guides were also found to be an effective means to share knowledge generated by interventions, as was their dissemination via the ILO's website. At local level, visibility of projects was promoted through communication products such as caps, calendars, t-shirts, bracelets, key rings, notepads and banners. In one project, information was also disseminated via youth organizations and rural libraries; this was seen as a good practice and an important factor of success (2023-29).

Examples of particularly successful interventions include the following:

- ▶ The Decent Work in the Garment Sector Supply Chains in Asia project had a communication plan that took an inclusive and gender-sensitive approach to articulating core project messages, influencing and guiding key stakeholders, and building impact and visibility of project activities and results. The project's consistent use of various communication channels – including social media, project branding and a well-maintained website – ensured broad dissemination and visibility of information. This was reinforced through regular meetings with technical experts, and the use of the Asia Garment Hub, which promoted systematic regional knowledge-sharing. In addition, strategic partnerships – such as those with Cornell University and Better Work, and participation in key regional and global events – increased stakeholder engagement and impact (2023-1).
- ▶ A project in Ukraine took a multifaceted approach to implementation that included a communication/public awareness track. It was found to be very active in terms of external communication, through wide diversity of events and products, including the project Facebook page, which was one of the main tools for maintaining visibility; newsletters; project factsheets; a dedicated website and YouTube channel; as well as an online "Social Festival". The "Go to Light" campaign had a strong impact on the targeted audience (employers, workers and students). The project actively communicated with many stakeholder groups, including the public, including through advocacy round tables, participation in parliamentary discussions and through frequent informal interactions with social partners (2023-16).
- ▶ The MiRiDeW project supported project partners in Nepal to create a platform for Nepali missions and diaspora organizations to disseminate information around the rights of migrant workers in countries of destination. It also conducted online training of Nepali journalists to produce accurate and balanced reporting on labour migration. One good practice was the engagement of community media platforms in countries of destination, municipalities and Migration Resource Centres, which led to wider dissemination of messages among migrant workers. Information was also published on the relevant social media platforms and government websites, and there were weekly newsletters on the issue of labour migration, which reduced the information gap related to policy level changes on a real-time basis. The project also provided support to governments to engage in regional and global policy dialogues through participation in regional and global events. It also conducted online training of Nepali journalists to produce accurate and balanced reporting on labour migration (2023-22).

There was also evidence of interventions ensuring the visibility of donors, and donors promoting ILO projects through the use of social media and by having representatives in project activities. Projects were able to make use of the communication channels of partner agencies and social partners.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE KEY CHALLENGES RELATED TO SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT OF THE ILO'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION INTERVENTIONS IN 2023

Nearly one third of projects (30 per cent) did not achieve any policy-influencing results, and a slightly higher proportion (37 per cent) had limited strategic results. Many interventions associated with EIIP approaches and local economic development had weak performance related to the achievement of policy-influencing and strategic results, although there were a few exceptions. The performance of interventions focusing on the generation of instruments to collect and analyse data on the progress of labour reform and unpaid domestic and care work, and to strengthen information systems, was also limited in terms of policy influence. The DATOS platform in particular had not been released for public use, and there was no evidence of strategic use. Overall poor results were found for RBSA-funded interventions in the context of the 2020–21 COVID response round, and mixed performance was found for RBSA-funded interventions aiming to promote international labour standards in Asia and the Pacific.

Hurdles to sustainability were noted in 43 per cent of cases, and included weak capacities, or lack of interest from stakeholders and the perception that projects had little value for beneficiaries compared to previous or ongoing projects (for example, 2023-6). One EIIP intervention in Jordan was found to be unsustainable, as none of the officials involved in the project thought their municipality would use the EIIP method again, unless international project funding were available, and there was no exit strategy. Reasons cited included (a) the high labour costs and productive inefficiency of the model relative to contractors; (b) limits on the types of infrastructure that the model could deliver; and (c) concerns about the quality and durability of deliverables. Furthermore, there was limited evidence of attribution between the project and employment, although participating workers received a temporary income boost (2023-30).

There was often an absence of clear, actionable plans for handover or sustainability or exit strategies, and certain projects were conceived to be one-year interventions, which left little time to reinforce results achieved. This was also an issue for projects that had experienced long delays in implementation. Overcoming budget and other resource constraints was an important challenge to ensure continued use of results and scaling up of project achievements, despite indications of ownership by project stakeholders.

In several cases, it was noted that the sustainability of projects was dependent on factors external to ILO projects, such as socio-economic developments and political stability. This was a challenge for the WIF project, where the lack of strong policy systems for migrants meant that achievements could be reversed or lose momentum if the ILO and its partners changed their focus and priorities (2023-28). Similarly, it was deemed critical in Georgia that the momentum achieved by the project in terms of policy reform be sustained (2023-23).

There were limitations to internal and external knowledge-sharing and dissemination in 42 per cent of cases: projects did not have well-structured engagement, sharing and dissemination strategies, and/or limited budget to carry out activities. In some cases, while communication products were developed, their dissemination and reach were not always adequate, leading to partly successful performance. In one case, dissemination was restricted by the government, as it considered

some of the information to be sensitive. Some interventions did not provide documents in the main language of a country: for instance, in Mexico, most documents – including the PRODOC, theory of change and quarterly progress reports – were in English, and Spanish translations were not provided. This led to challenges for project partners to understand the objectives, scope and desired impact of the project (2023-24).

In a few instances, websites had been set up but were not updated on a regular basis, limiting their usefulness. While the French-funded project in support of the Alliance 8.7 secretariat had specific activities to make the Alliance better known, especially through a newsletter distributed to over 7,500 people, annual meetings of pioneer countries, and a website, it was noted that the latter lacked consistency, was not up to date, and was mainly in English, thus limiting accessibility for French and Spanish speakers. A positive action was the association of Alliance 8.7 with the launch of the International Year of the Elimination of Child Labour 2021 and the World Day Against Child Labour 2021, leading to more than 300 pledges for action being reviewed, verified, drafted, uploaded to the website and translated. Nevertheless, one of the evaluation recommendations was that the Alliance 8.7 secretariat should strengthen the visibility of Alliance 8.7 (2023-26).

While the ILO maintains the need to disclose statistical data to promote evidence-based social dialogue, Mintrabajo considers protocols that restrict access to information due to the security risks associated with the disclosure of sensitive information. The desk review confirmed limited access to information on collective agreements and union contracts. This reduces the potential of the Union Archive Information System (SIAS) to promote research by universities interested in trade union labour rights, limits the possibilities of access to information for employers interested in showing results in relation to international agreements, and reduces the possibilities for trade union empowerment.

The coherence of the project activities with the improvement of the DVI of collective agreements and trade union contracts implies the democratization of relevant information to qualify the social dialogue between the constituents; therefore, the scope of the project outputs in terms of results is limited by the lack of dissemination of statistical information in the SIAS (2023 5).

OVERALL EFFICIENCY OF ILO DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION INTERVENTIONS IN 2023

Overall efficiency was addressed through eight criteria categorized into two groups: (a) operational efficiency (results-based management approach and goal orientation, implementation management, ILO support to project, internal ILO coordination, and monitoring and reporting); and (b) resource efficiency (cost-efficiency, adequacy of resources, and resource leveraging). This performance category had variable performance across the different criteria, as shown in figure 13, with good coverage overall, aside from resource leveraging, where only 64 per cent of reports could be assessed.

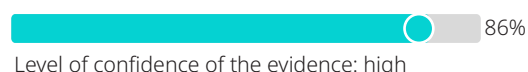


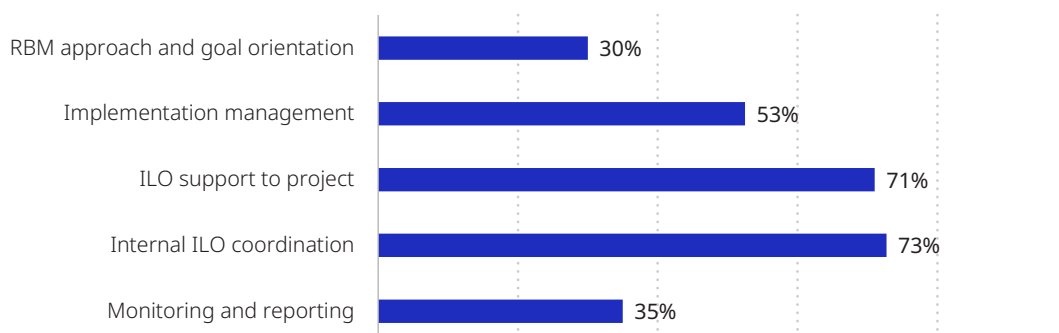
FIGURE 13. OVERALL EFFICIENCY: PERCENTAGE OF MORE SUCCESSFUL SCORES BY PERFORMANCE CRITERIA (2023)



Assessment of the overall efficiency of ILO development cooperation in 2023

OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

FIGURE 14. PERCENTAGE OF MORE SUCCESSFUL SCORES BY PERFORMANCE CRITERIA ON OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY (2023)



Strong performance was found for the quality and extent of ILO support to interventions (71 per cent), and for internal coordination (73 per cent). Positive results were noted when ILO projects were able to capitalize on the availability of ILO technical expertise at headquarters and in the field, including from decent work teams, and when departments mobilized specific specialists and external consultants as needed during an intervention (for example, 2023-38). There was evidence of in-kind support from headquarters and decent work teams/country offices to ensure quality control and to implement ILO methodologies and procedures. Intensive administrative support was also provided to certain projects by regional and country offices (for example, 2023-7, 2023-41). Some evaluations also highlighted the importance of political support provided by the ILO, such as in the Andean Countries Office and in the Bogota Country Office in Colombia (2023-5).

 The project was able to effectively leverage the ILO's global tools, resources and guidance to complete a wide range of activities within a limited period of time. In addition to the heavy technical and administrative support received by the project from the ILO Regional Office for Arab States and headquarters, as well as the cooperation made with the ILO–ITC, the project utilized and adapted a significant number of ILO global tools in its implementation of field activities, including the ILO's Career Guidance and Employment Services Tool, GetAhead, SIYB, COOP tools, and the strategic compliance model. The evaluation found that this leveraging of existing resources has raised the efficiency and effectiveness of project implementation.

One institutional unintended positive consequence for the ILO from this project has been to better position itself inside Iraq. In other words, the project's experience of working in Basra highlighted the need for the ILO to have an active presence there, and therefore contributed to the ILO's decision to establish an operational office inside the governorate of Basra. This means that the ILO is now present across the whole of Iraq, in the north, middle and south (2023-7).

Support from technical experts located in project countries was a factor of success. For instance, the presence of an informal economy expert within the Zimbabwe Country Office working across all projects supporting formalization within the Country Office enhanced synergies across projects and helped the transfer of lessons learned (2023-14). Support from ITC–ILO in terms of capacity-building was also seen as positive by evaluations.

 During the project period, there were other ILO projects on labour migration in Nepal such as SEP, FAIR, WIF and GOALS, and the focal points of these projects under the leadership of the Country Director worked as a single 'Migration Team'. As already detailed in the Coherence section, the project also collaborated with other projects and stakeholders – such as SaMI, NHRC, UN Women, IOM and NNSM – on various activities. This extra effort by the project helped in attaining efficiency, avoided duplication of efforts and also enhanced the effectiveness of the activities. This also led to delivering unplanned results such as the Labour Migration Report, policy advocacy around gender-sensitive labour migration governance, and effective engagement in the regional and global policy dialogues (2023-22).

In terms of internal coordination, the most successful projects had smooth, fluid communication with other ILO interventions, units and offices. They were designed to complement other ongoing ILO projects, identifying areas of coordination and potential synergies and interlinkages, leading to efficiencies in resource use and improved coherence and potential sustainability of results. There were many examples of this, including of projects on labour migration (for example, 2023-22, 2023-28), or projects linking with Better Work (for example, 2023-1, 2023-2, 2023-12, 2023-25, 2023-28).

One cluster evaluation focused on projects that were implemented in a coordinated manner by one team to create synergies and cost-efficiencies, with activities designed to complement each other, and evidence of collaboration with other ILO initiatives (2023-18). In other cases, several proposals were developed simultaneously, and the resulting interventions had jointly financed activities, with multi-stakeholder discussions organized to ensure coherence and alignment. There were also joint studies to identify gaps and issues to work on. Such coherence was also found when project managers and NPCs were part of country teams or other project teams, leading to enhanced coordination and limiting duplication of efforts, as was the case in the Lao People's Democratic Republic between projects on social protection and occupational safety and health (2023-43).

Implementation management had mixed performance, with just over half (53 per cent) of interventions performing well. Factors of success included solid management structures with clearly defined roles and responsibilities within project teams, but also with partners and stakeholders, consolidated through good coordination. There was an emphasis on regular communication, to promote common understanding of project objectives and discussions of opportunities and hurdles. This was enhanced when there were frequent exchanges with teams and technical experts in regional offices and headquarters, and when projects were well embedded in local structures and country offices. In cases where project teams were lean, the involvement of partners and experts from regional offices, as well as external consultants and local implementing partners, allowed for smooth implementation. The dedication, in-depth knowledge of local institutions, experience and networking capacity of team members were often put forward in evaluations as important factors of success that fostered flexibility and responsiveness, and led to effective results. Projects that were designed to be implemented in close alignment and synergy with other ILO interventions, or other UN or donor-funded projects were able to build on previous outputs and draw from expertise in these other projects (for example, 2023-11, 2023-12). Certain projects had advisory or steering committees that provided oversight and strategic direction to project management teams, and sometimes ensured coordination and monitored progress, and technical groups were set up to guide specific areas of projects. There were also instances where there were separate structures to engage with the donor and with national stakeholders; this was seen as a successful approach in China (2023-21).

 **The project team's individual investment and dedication is a large part of the explanation of a project that shows flexibility, responsiveness and availability to adjust to the changes the Ukrainian context has gone through, but also to navigate in a complex context, requiring a constant advocacy effort. [...] The project has done more than attending to the psychological needs of workers and employers directly or indirectly affected by the war. It has developed technical, capacitive content (training), raised awareness, and introduced the topics in the discussion among constituents (2023-16).**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, certain projects had to shift to a remote management approach, with online consultations, exchanges and events. This was also the case for a project in Ukraine, when the war broke out and the PM and CO were evacuated, yet the project continued and was able to address emerging needs and support stakeholders (2023-16).

The majority of interventions had important weaknesses in their results-based management approach and goal orientation, as well as their monitoring and reporting frameworks, with good performance in about one third of projects (30 per cent and 35 per cent, respectively). Successful interventions had results frameworks that clearly defined outcomes, outputs and activities that contributed to project objectives, were properly linked, and complemented each other, with indicators at different levels; and there were defined targets, assumptions and means

of verification. While many projects tended to have mainly quantitative indicators, there were also examples of qualitative indicators, with the option of providing a contextual/analytical explanation on progress towards achievement of results (for example, 2023-16). Evaluations noted that indicators were often SMART (specific, measurable, attainable, realistic (or relevant) and time-bound) and sound from a RACER (relevant, accepted, credible, easy to monitor and robust) perspective. Strategic objectives were interdependent and complemented each other to achieve the main goal of the project.

Certain projects had strong monitoring and reporting mechanisms, and drew on these to adjust their approach and maximize potential impact. There was evidence of interventions relying on existing studies and assessments, mid-term evaluations, evaluability assessments, monitoring and evaluation plans, verification missions, and monthly updates from stakeholders and implementing partners to assess project progress and goals, and adjust planning. For instance, the FMPT project team changed its objectives and goals and the way it operated based on monitoring data and lessons learned and recommendations from the mid-term evaluation to improve the project and ensure impact (2023-38). Interventions reported on progress through various means – including quarterly, biannual and annual technical and financial progress reports, using the ILO's template for Development Cooperation Projects – as well as donor reporting templates and partner templates in the case of joint programmes and inter-agency initiatives. Monitoring data were collected from the field, including through partners, and monitoring missions were organized for donors. There were sometimes dedicated monitoring officers for projects, and data collected were used by projects, donors and other UN partners. Phase II of the WIF programme was found to have insufficient programme management and monitoring at its onset, posing a major risk to implementation, according to the evaluation. However, improvements over the course of the project cycle were noted, including a stakeholder consultation system to ensure that implementing partners provided regular updates to the WIF team, who verified the information and informed the donor; this was particularly useful during the COVID-19 pandemic, and there was evidence of active efforts to ensure that the programme remained relevant to beneficiaries throughout the implementation period (2023-28).



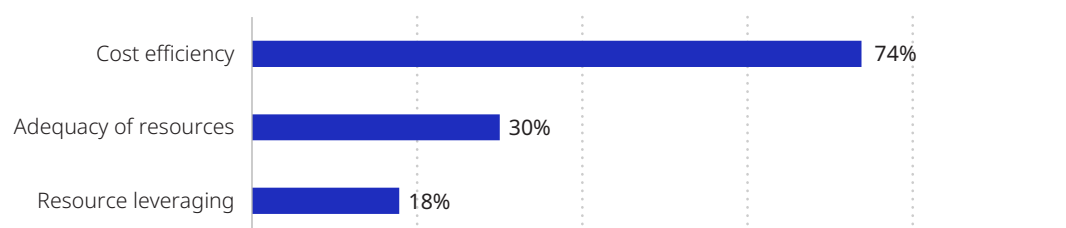
A comprehensive monitoring system has been used to help keep the project on track. The project's approach to monitoring and evaluation is based on the results-based management principles aimed at maximizing impact by continuously learning from experience and making constructive and progressive adaptations accordingly. [...]

The monitoring framework is linked to both the logical framework and the results framework that has enabled the project coordinator and ILO Decent Work Team/Country Office to assess progress against the stated objectives. Reporting to the Swedish Embassy/Sida has been done as per agreed procedures and timelines, by submitting the inception report, draft and final annual work plans, and semi-annual certified financial report. Compliance of the project with ILO procedures, financial and otherwise, is monitored by the ILO Decent Work Team/Country Office Budapest on a continuous basis. Monitoring data have also been included in PSC agendas, thus enabling them to advise the project management accordingly in light of real-time evidence. There is evidence that the project has responded to changing needs, such as responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. [...]

In addition, the project has commissioned independent monitoring reports on specific aspects of the project, for example on the optional module on prevention of disputes in working environments (2023-41).

RESOURCE EFFICIENCY

FIGURE 15. PERCENTAGE OF MORE SUCCESSFUL SCORES BY PERFORMANCE CRITERIA ON RESOURCE EFFICIENCY (2023)



A majority of ILO interventions (74 per cent) were cost-efficient, with successful performance noted for three quarters of cases. There was evidence of strategic allocations and efficient use of financial resources and other inputs to achieve project outputs and outcomes, and cost-sharing with other projects, leveraging key partnerships.

Although the COVID-19 pandemic brought about challenges, there were also opportunities, with savings made by undertaking activities online, and the flexibility of project teams led to resource optimization. Savings were also achieved due to currency changes, and through pooling of resources with other ILO interventions, as well as by executing activities through national NGOs and local workforce.

Some evaluators noted that projects used guidelines on expenditure to ensure that allocated funds were only used on project activities, with no major budget shifts, or under/overspending. In one case, sequenced annual budget reductions were introduced, with 80 per cent of the original budget delivered. However, most targets were reached, and the programme was able to make progress with the resources available, reflecting the good management of financial resources (2023-28). Some evaluations noted that a detailed analysis of cost-efficiency was not possible, due to insufficient financial data available.

Less than one third (30 per cent) of ILO interventions were successful in terms of adequacy of resources. Factors of success included adequate financial resources, and teams with sufficient, qualified staff for smooth project implementation, as well as timely release of funds, according to agreed activity budgets. Collaboration with other ILO staff and stakeholders, and building on synergies with other projects, also led to good performance. In some cases, projects were able to bridge human resource gaps with internal resources, with some obtaining “on request” support from headquarters or regional offices, and using the technical expertise of staff when local capacities were not adequate. There were also examples of partner agencies in inter-agency projects funding additional staff and/or designating permanent staff from their offices to support specific actions. Implementing partners also provided technical expertise in various fields.

 **The Sustainable Supply Chains to Build Forward Better project was designed as a project to be implemented in close alignment and synergy with other ILO interventions in the countries of implementation, such as the Better Work Programme in Madagascar and in Viet Nam. In Colombia, synergy was found with the Zero Fund Initiative and in Malaysia the project synergized with the Bridge project on migrant labour in Southeast Asia. In Viet Nam and Madagascar, the ILO applied a cluster planning approach to ensure joint strategizing and planning of their different decent work and supply chain related interventions. At headquarters level, the project synergized with sector experts at the SECTOR department level and with other departments within the organizations. As a result, the project has been able to bank upon previous deliverables and expertise in other ILO projects. In this way, a significant amount of other in-kind and staffing resources was mobilized by the ILO in addition to a small cash contribution to match the European Commission's external contribution to the project. This has enabled a generally cost-efficient project implementation (2023-12).**

Good performance related to resource leveraging was noted in less than one fifth (18 per cent) of projects, and reports often provided limited information regarding the amounts and types of contributions obtained – financial, or in-kind. There were a few positive examples of interventions mobilizing additional funds, as was the case for RBSA-funded projects in Asia and the Pacific. For instance, in Bangladesh, the demonstration effect of the RBSA intervention led to two new development cooperation projects: an ILO-FAO UN Joint Programme funded by the Netherlands (US\$ 2.3 million) and another UN Joint Programme with a total budget of CAD 44 million, led by the ILO, in partnership with UNHCR, IOM, UNDP and BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee); interventions in other countries often led to enhanced cooperation among stakeholders, creating synergies with existing projects, and extending the impact of the initial interventions by laying the groundwork for continued support, either through new phases or through new projects (2023-27). There was also evidence of financial and non-financial contributions in other interventions, including from the private sector. In Kenya, the PPDP project obtained financial support from the county governments, while private sector actors provided internship opportunities and instructors (2023-39). In Sri Lanka, resource leveraging efforts were made at all levels of implementation. Project implementation was largely through third party contracts, and there were significant financial and human resources contributions by partners; beneficiaries also had to provide counterpart funding for the assistance they received. Fifty per cent of start-up funds were provided by the Government, and private sector partners provided key equipment, machinery and extension services to beneficiaries (2023-40). Other interventions also leveraged partners for additional human and financial resources, and there was evidence of co-financing with other projects or partners. In some cases, human resources were provided to support specific actions.

An overview of the key challenges to the efficiency of the ILO's development cooperation

Just over one quarter of reports noted difficulties related to ILO support to projects and internal coordination. Weaker performance was found when there were missed opportunities for collaborating with other relevant ILO initiatives, or when initiatives operated in silos. The unavailability and non-responsiveness of certain technical specialists led to frustrations and poor results. Similar findings were found when there was a lack of dedicated human resources or focal points at regional and country levels, leading to challenges in obtaining support. In countries where the ILO did not have offices, delays were often reported due to administrative and financial procedures. In some cases, such as the ILO Regional Office for Arab States Programme Unit, staff were overwhelmed with requests for administrative support from throughout the region, especially as certain key staff were absent, leading to a strain on available resources (2023-13). In other cases, while projects received timely, good quality administrative support, technical support was lacking due to limited technical capacity for backstopping.

 **Working in a country without a project officer present is a great challenge, it can be difficult to navigate the local context and effectively implement the project's activities. This is because there may be unique cultural, social and political factors at play that require specific knowledge and expertise to address. Furthermore, without a project officer on the ground, it can be challenging to establish strong relationships with local stakeholders, including government officials, civil society organizations and community members. These relationships are crucial for ensuring the success of the project and for building long-term sustainability.**

However, having the support of the ILO national office can help to mitigate these challenges. This support can come in the form of providing local knowledge, resources and connections to key stakeholders. Unfortunately, in some countries, it may not be possible to receive this support, which can make the project even more challenging to implement. In addition, the lack of personnel in a country is a disadvantage for taking advantage of windows of opportunity (2023-15).

Inadequate or partially adequate performance related to implementation management was found in nearly half of the projects. Challenges were found when there was high management turnover, with some projects having four or five different managers/CTAs over their life cycles. In countries where collaboration with constituents and partners was often based on personal relationships, this turnover affected project delivery rates, as time was needed to rebuild rapport by new managers. This was exacerbated when there were no field offices to coordinate implementation, and when there was poor monitoring and reporting.

In one case, a project was integrated into the ILO's Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work Branch (FUNDAMENTALS) without the establishment of an ad hoc governance structure, and no dedicated project manager was recruited. The roles and responsibilities of FUNDAMENTALS staff members assigned to the project were unclear, the relationships between actors were not mapped, and staff had difficulties adapting to the increased workload linked to supporting the secretariat of Alliance 8.7 over time. Moreover, technical coordination between the staff at headquarters and the regional component of the project was non-existent, and there was no evidence of synergies (2023-26).

The DATOS project in Mexico also faced important challenges, as it began operating at a difficult time for the ILO office in Mexico. The office had to be vacated for external reasons, shortly before the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving staff logistically unprepared. There was no Country Office Director at the start of the project, leading to delays in the recruitment of the project management team, and implementation started without specific responsibilities and human capacities for implementation – the project team was staffed six months into implementation. Furthermore, the project was developed based on the technical capacities of external collaborators who did not coordinate with each other, and were not aware of the programme logic, with no quality review from the ILO. Also, none of the key project documents were in English, limiting the shared understanding of project objectives, scope and desired impact of stakeholders and implementing partners (2023-24).

Other challenges were noted when there were complex management arrangements and lines of accountability, as well as lack of clarity about decentralization and responsibilities, staffing and resource constraints. For instance, the Deputy Regional Director in the Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific was responsible for overseeing a project team, yet the outcome leads were embedded in the ILO Decent Work Team in Bangkok and were not accountable to the Project Manager or to the project (2023-1). In another project, there was evidence of internal communication breakdown between certain teams and their CTA, affecting staff morale and programme efficiency and effectiveness (2023-44). In some countries, such as in Timor Leste, ILO programmes embedded project staff within the Government to build local capacities, yet there were also reports of lack of transparency in the allocation of (non-programme) contracts, thus threatening the credibility of the ILO's efforts (2023-9). In Jordan, while the Better Work Jordan contributed to the capacity-building of the Ministry of Labour inspectors, the evaluation found that two of the best-performing Ministry of Labour Inspectors had subsequently been hired by Better Work Jordan, leading to brain drain (2023-6). Furthermore, the lack of a management committee overseeing the EU/ILO project in Jordan was noted as problematic by an evaluator: "It is common to have a Steering Committee made up of stakeholders that would include ILO Jordan staff, Regional Office for Arab States, the EU, the Ministry of Labour and MOITS. The evaluation team thinks that the ILO and the EU should be concerned about their reputation in the wake of allegations such as those made regarding the workplace and the behaviour of its staff. The evaluation found that it is important that the project undergo a review of its management practices to overcome the prevailing hostile work environment at the ESC. The project would benefit from a positive presence of the ILO managers inside the ESC through regular visits and a better communication strategy" (2023-6).

There were many instances (40 per cent) where performance related to monitoring and reporting was partially successful, and unsuccessful performance in one quarter of cases. Challenges were noted when results frameworks were poorly designed and did not allow for an adequate monitoring system to inform project decisions. This was an important challenge in the ILO/PBSO project, as the ILO results frameworks and monitoring systems were not able to adequately measure and demonstrate results related to "employment and decent work for peace" (2023-3). In other cases, frameworks existed, but there were inadequacies in the reporting and quality of data collected, as well as frameworks with mismatches between baselines and targets, or missing baselines, and others which had output-oriented logical frameworks, with a focus on activity and output levels, thus constraining efforts to assess progress towards outcomes (2023-30, 2023-36). The need for indicators to measure progress was recommended in several evaluation reports. In the context of RBSA-funded projects, an evaluation noted that the lack of an operational M&E framework made projects rely on individual staff for project knowledge, which posed a serious risk to continuity if those staff left, as was the case in Zimbabwe, especially since ILO country offices did not have the capacity to implement the M&E plan that had initially been developed (2023-14). In another case, a project was to apply a Comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy methodology, under which an internal mid-term evaluation was to be carried out. The internal

evaluation took the form of an extremely succinct SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis which does not meet ILO's quality standards for evaluations (2023-26). The lack of dedicated M&E staff and inadequate resources allocated to monitoring was also underlined as a weakness in several evaluations.

An important area of weakness was related to the goal orientation and results-based management frameworks of ILO interventions, with 70 per cent of reports noting unsuccessful or partly successful ratings. There were many instances of results frameworks that did not clearly show the logical relationships between outputs and outcomes, or that did not adequately capture the work that was intended to be done by the project. Some projects collected data at the activity and output levels, and outcome-level data were simply an aggregation of output-level data. Lack of outcome-level indicators was a weakness in several interventions. In some cases, theories of change were weak or non-existent, and erroneous assumptions led to incomplete or inadequate logical frameworks or irrelevant indicators, and there were attribution gaps, making it difficult to assess project progress and achievements. Badly defined, irrelevant targets also contributed to poor ratings. There were also frameworks that were developed, but not used by project teams (2023-36). In one case, the evaluation found that each project outcome represented an independent project, without any joint or connected activities, and as such, it was not possible to assess the project as a whole (2023-6).

While projects generally aimed to use resources efficiently, one quarter had inadequate allocations and financial support for certain activities, and outputs did not always result in tangible results (for example, 2024-26, 2023-35). ILO projects financed housing and equipment, such as a Workers Resource Centre in Bangladesh (2023-2), and certain projects made important financial investments with costly maintenance costs, which were not commensurate with results achieved (2023-5, 2023-39, 2023-40). Some of these projects also made incorrect assumptions about the involvement of partners and the contribution of funds, which led to inefficiencies.

Weak performance was noted in several projects. In the case of COVID-19 humanitarian response projects, interventions did not attempt to adopt a "value-for-money" approach (2024-8). The Road to Decent Jobs for All Afghans (R2DJ4ALL) project exhibited significant inefficiencies, particularly in the allocation and expenditure of funds for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Only 10 per cent of the total budget was spent on these enterprises, and discrepancies between budgeted and actual spending were unexplained. The loss of financial records and impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic further complicated financial tracking and management. Evaluators rated the project's efficiency as low due to these issues (2023-17). In Iraq, there was extensive evidence of wasted funds, and deviations from the project concept note and bill of quantities, which appeared to have been agreed with the ILO. Resources were allocated to repairs on private property and low-quality construction work, and there was a high mortality rate for planted trees. In one project site, the infrastructure delivered was not usable, and the municipality intended to redo the works. Municipalities noted that the use of unqualified labour led to delays and unsatisfactory results, indicating a preference for skilled labour over the labour-intensive models used, and there was evidence that the municipal council's first interest was infrastructure and not employment creation (2023-30). In the EYE multi-agency project in Egypt, financial management was hampered by coordination issues among UN partners and differing financial systems, and evaluators noted that the ILO's financial department did not conduct periodic reviews of the budget with the project manager. The parallel funding mechanism and lack of periodic budget reviews contributed to delays in project implementation and low expenditure rates. Frequent staff turnover and delayed government approvals also impacted financial efficiency, highlighting the need for improved financial management and coordination to ensure effective use of resources (2023-36). In another

case, the donor required that funds be fully liquidated before additional payments were made. This meant the ILO was only able to enter into short-term agreements with its implementation partners. This affected efficiency, as it was administratively more time-consuming and less efficient from a programme management perspective (2023-44).

 **In terms of human resources, the project design document allocated one Chief Technical Advisor and one full-time administrative assistant in Iraq, both based in Erbil, with technical and other backstopping from ILO Regional Office for Arab States and headquarters as appropriate. In practice, there were difficulties in recruitment and retention for the administrative assistant position (including type and length of contract), so overall there was a total gap of 15 months without anyone filling this post, which impacted the workload on the remaining staff member.**

Multiple key informants noted the quality of the Chief Technical Advisor, and the advantage of having a staff member who was familiar with both international and national contexts, and fluent in Arabic and Kurdish, who had good contacts and experience working in the federal Government and knew how to navigate the space, where to push and how to engage. However, the administrative burden imposed on the Chief Technical Advisor due to the insufficient support by an appropriately available administrative assistant meant that use of the Chief Technical Advisor's time was not always the most efficient (2023-13).

There were many projects that did not allocate sufficient financial or human resources to implement the large number of planned products and services, with challenges found in 70 per cent of cases. Cost-effectiveness strategies adopted by projects, with shared positions, often created tensions, as this led to high workloads and stress for staff, limiting the ability to provide quality assurance. This was exacerbated by resignations of team members (for example, 2023-18). Project structures were sometimes found to be inadequate, when staff did not have sufficient seniority to effectively engage with the highest levels of government, or in the absence of key personnel, such as global programme managers or technical specialists (for example, 2023-42). Delays in staff recruitment and high staff turnover negatively affected projects. In the IGAD region, project staff often had to work overtime and on weekends, despite the ILO making use of interim consultants to address understaffing (2023-38). In Iraq, there were difficulties in recruitment and retention for a project with two staff members, leading to a gap of 15 months without one of the staff members, which impacted the workload on the remaining staff member. The ability to attract and retain project staff was affected by ILO payment rates that were not competitive with other UN agencies, which tended to offer higher graded posts for work of a similar nature. This was compounded by lengthy ILO payment processes, which were not commensurate with ILO associated demands for timely delivery, and was off-putting to some stakeholders (2023-13). In other contexts, project teams prematurely left, leading to difficulties when closing projects. Some interventions could have benefited from having full-time posts and expertise in specific areas, with several evaluations noting that funds should have been allocated to M&E positions.

 **The multi-layered procurement process within the ILO caused delays in purchasing material for the project implementation. Therefore, the ILO needs to revise its procurement procedure in the emergency programme as humanitarian responses need immediate intervention, supported by emergency response procedures and regulations” (2023-19).**

Challenges were also noted regarding the time taken by the ILO to streamline agreements with implementation partners and to disburse funds to stakeholders. In Sudan, the ILO did not have its own bank account for international transactions, which caused it to be dependent on UNDP, causing delays in accessing funds (2023-19). In Niger, delays in disbursements due to bureaucratic hurdles linked to the ILO’s financial system sometimes led NGOs and workers to suspend activities (2023-26). The administrative reliance on the Algiers regional office for the Mauritania ILO Country Office led to delays in decision-making, recruitment and payments, creating difficulties for implementing partners that did not have self-financing capacities; this was compounded by a freeze in disbursements for several months due to the migration of information systems in the Africa region (2023-32). In the context of the PAERCA project in Niger, it took a year to award a contract for a fish farm, due to lengthy procurement procedures and administrative red tape associated with awarding ILO contracts, and at the time of its final evaluation, the *Fonds d’Appui à la Formation Professionnelle et à l’Apprentissage* (FAFPA) had been waiting for five months for its second tranche of funds to be disbursed (60 per cent of resources), with one month to go before project closure. Certain refugee and host beneficiaries ended up leaving the project, as they were not being paid or compensated for their work (2023-35). Prefinancing of activities by implementing partners due to delays in disbursements was also requested by ILO in the Democratic Republic of the Congo two weeks before project closure, although this was not agreed upon in collaboration contracts (2023-34). Short funding modalities and instalments based on outcomes posed challenges for field operations (2023-42, 2023-44).

While financial resources were usually sufficient to achieve expected results, this was not always the case. Several activities associated with the Alliance 8.7 secretariat were discontinued due to lack of resources (2023-26). In the project aiming to strengthen the Union Archive Information System (SIAS II) of the Ministry of Labour of Colombia, project funds were insufficient to conduct the scanning, digitization and storage of historical files, thus limiting results achieved (2023-5). In the ILO–Republic of Korea project, Decent Work Team/Country Office experts were expected to backstop projects and to drive progress forward, as the technical experts and the budget did not allow hiring experienced international consultants, leading to important pressure on staff (2023-43). In Timor Leste, budget reductions and a budget freeze were coupled with slow disbursements and inadequate human resources, leading to poor performance (2023-9).

Resource leveraging was an area of weakness, with unsuccessful results in 43 per cent of cases, and partly successful performance in 39 per cent of cases. There were different factors associated with poor performance. Political instability in Lebanon led to resource mobilization challenges, as few donors were willing to invest in the country (2023-18). Donors were also reluctant to support the Alliance 8.7 secretariat due to lack of visibility of results, and due to the lack of financial support from other United Nations agencies to the secretariat (2023-26). There were also challenges related to the SFP-SEA project due to budget cuts, leading implementation partners and the ILO to use their own funding to fill gaps to implement planned activities. Despite efforts to mitigate these cuts by using their own funding and securing additional funds, these attempts were undermined when donor representatives reduced the original budget accordingly. This strained relationships and reputational risks, as partners perceived the ILO to be unreliable, attributing the budget cuts directly to the Organization (2023-44).



04

- Factors contributing to the effectiveness of the most successful projects

▶ FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MOST SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

Eight projects evaluated in 2023 were identified as the “most successful projects” based on their average weighted performance. They all obtained performance ratings of 75 per cent and above for overall effectiveness.

In line with the methods being piloted in 2022 to better report on effectiveness, the selection of the “most successful projects” for 2023 is based on the new weighted approach to assess performance of ILO development cooperation projects.³ This resulted in the selection of eight projects.⁴

These high-performing projects were associated with various policy outcomes and CPOs in Africa (three), the Arab States (two), Europe (two), and interregional (one) interventions. They covered topics related to social protection, migration, decent work, formalization, youth employment and entrepreneurship, and responsible supply chains. Specific factors that consistently contributed to the strong effectiveness of the selected projects were identified, although all projects had one or two areas of weakness, and coverage of some performance criteria was uneven.

RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE

- (a) High ratings were obtained regarding the link between project objectives and ILO P&B outcomes, as well as links to DWCP outcomes and/or CPOs, revealing that these projects were aligned with ILO strategic priorities as well as national development frameworks and priorities.
- (b) All but one of the projects reflected national decent work needs as expressed by constituents, with evidence of stakeholder involvement in project formulation and implementation, as well as evidence of intended use of project results by constituents.
- (c) Most projects had a valid design and had involved different constituent groups in the planning stages of the intervention. Designs were informed by previous ILO work, lessons learned and good practices, as well as research, situation analyses and assessments conducted early in the project cycle. This allowed interventions to be realistic and adapted to local contexts. Project designs were supported by theories of change and logical frameworks, and there were clear links between project components.
- (d) There was consistent evidence of collaboration and coordination under a common UN system of work and clear linkages between project objectives and SDG targets, and evidence of contributions to these targets.

EFFECTIVENESS

- (a) A majority of projects achieved their main outputs in a timely manner, with indication of use by stakeholders and evidence of good quality. All but one of the projects made strong progress towards achieving their immediate objectives.
- (b) There was strong performance related to most of the ILO’s cross-cutting policy area, with the strongest results linked to normative work and the promotion and application of international labour standards, with most other projects performing well. There was also evidence of strong results related to social dialogue and tripartism in all cases.

³ Projects with overall weighted effectiveness of 75 per cent and above.

⁴ ALB/18/03/SWE, GEO/17/01/DNK, IRQ/20/03/EUR, KEN/17/01/SWE, LBN/16/08/CEF and LBN/18/04/ITA, RAF/16/06/EUR, RLA/18/08/EUR & VNM/20/01/DEU, TUN/18/01/CAN.

- (c) Most projects aimed to improve the living standards of populations at risk of being left behind, with a pro-poor perspective included in their design. They were gender-responsive for the most part, with specific strategies, outputs and outcomes promoting and considering the specific needs of women, youth and other vulnerable groups.
- (d) Interventions in this group consistently generated high-quality research and knowledge development that raised awareness and supported policy dialogue and key decisions at different levels, with six out of eight projects obtaining top ratings. There was also extensive evidence of capacity-building at individual and institutional levels, thus providing ILO constituents and partners with the requisite tools and knowledge to promote sustainability of results achieved.
- (e) Successful projects leveraged and built strong strategic relationships with different groups, including donors, constituent groups, UN agencies, academic institutions and other civil society groups, and public and private sector actors in specific sectors, leading to synergies and ensuring sustainability of achievements.

SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

- (a) All projects achieved results of high to very high strategic importance, with good progress towards achieving national development outcomes and evidence of the development of national development plans of action. “Very successful” ratings were obtained in half of these cases, and results included the development of policies and the adoption of National Action Plans and strategies, and drafting and ratification of laws and decrees at different levels.
- (b) Policy influence was also an area of strong performance, with over half of projects obtaining very successful ratings, and evidence of interventions improving legal and regulatory frameworks, with stakeholders engaging in effective policymaking and reform at local, national, regional and global levels.
- (c) A majority of the most successful projects showed good possibilities of maintaining or scaling up results achieved, with evidence of ownership and commitment from stakeholders, including through awareness-building, with some projects having sustainability plans and clear exit strategies, thus promoting sustainability of project results.
- (d) The ILO’s expertise was acknowledged and appreciated in all projects, and the ILO built on its comparative advantage to engage with prominent organizations.

EFFICIENCY

- (a) Clear implementation management processes were in place, and there was good quality technical, administrative, financial and political support from the ILO to projects, both from headquarters and from regional and/or country offices. Similarly, there was good performance in terms of internal coordination overall.
- (b) Projects were cost-efficient and there was evidence of good value for money.



05

- ▶ Comparison of meta-analysis findings over time

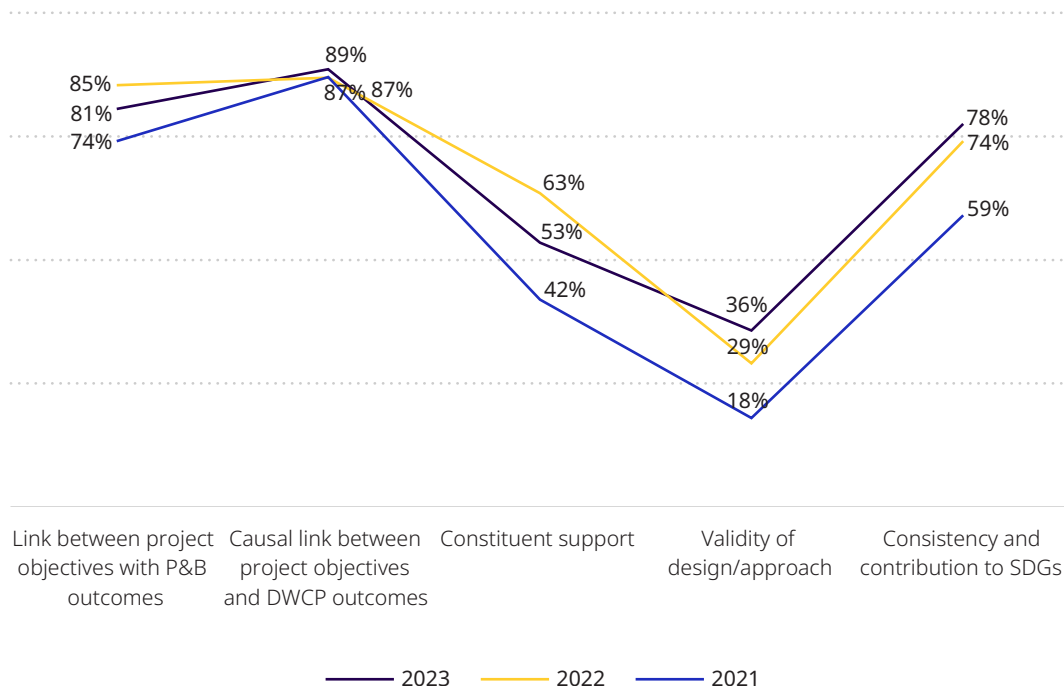
COMPARISON OF META-ANALYSIS FINDINGS OVER TIME

This section compares ratings related to the ILO's development cooperation performance over the last three years, using the revised performance categories to show "successful" and "highly successful" scores, based on relevant criteria.

STRATEGIC RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE

Results related to relevance and coherence showed similar trends over time, as shown in figure 16. A consistent area of high performance across all years was the presence of links between project objectives with P&B outcomes, and the alignment of project objectives with DWCP outcomes and CPOs. Another strong area in 2023 was related to consistency and contributions to SDGs, similar to 2022, and in contrast to the two previous years. There were positive, yet variable, results regarding constituent support, with a 10 per cent decrease in performance between 2022 and 2023, and the weakest performance in 2021. The weakest performance over time was the validity of project design and approach, although there was improvement in 2023 compared with 2022 and 2021.

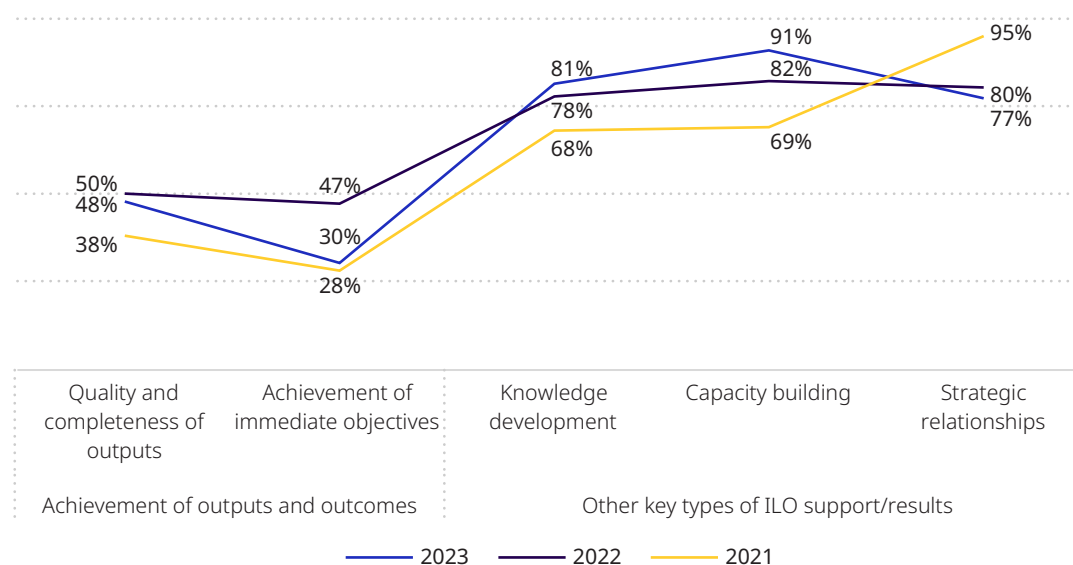
FIGURE 16. PERCENTAGE OF "SUCCESSFUL" AND "HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL" SCORES BY PERFORMANCE CRITERIA AND BY YEAR: STRATEGIC RELEVANCE AND COHERENCE



OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Overall effectiveness is categorized as follows: achievement of outputs and outcomes, promotion of cross-cutting policy areas, and other key types of ILO support/means to achieve results. Results were heterogeneous, with similar trends throughout all years, as shown in figure 17 and figure 18.

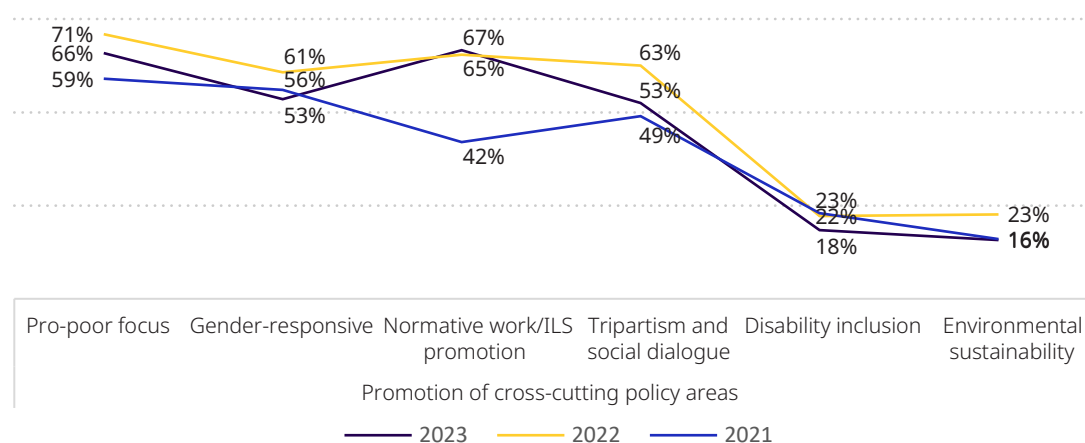
FIGURE 17. PERCENTAGE OF “SUCCESSFUL” AND “HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL” SCORES BY PERFORMANCE CRITERIA AND BY YEAR: OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS – ACHIEVEMENT OF OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES, AND KEY TYPES OF ILO SUPPORT/RESULTS



Challenges were found regarding the achievement of outputs and outcomes across all years, often due to delays and cancellations of activities and outputs, with the lowest ratings in 2021. In 2023, performance noted for the quality and completeness of outputs was partly successful, with slightly lower results than in 2022, in contrast with weak performance related to the achievement of immediate objectives, with similar ratings in 2021.

Strong performance across all years was noted for the key types of ILO support/means to achieve results, with particularly strong results in 2023 for capacity-building and knowledge development, and high ratings for strategic relationships, although performance in 2023 for the last criterion was slightly under that of 2022 and 2021.

FIGURE 18. PERCENTAGE OF “SUCCESSFUL” AND “HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL” SCORES BY PERFORMANCE CRITERIA AND BY YEAR: OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS – THE ILO’S CROSS-CUTTING POLICY AREAS

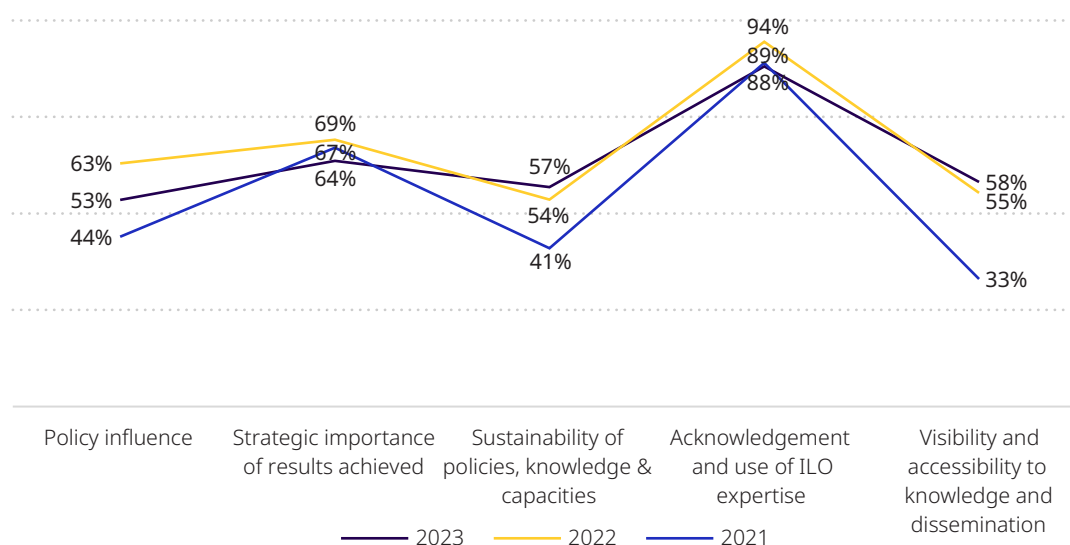


Performance related to the promotion of the ILO's cross-cutting policy areas was highly variable, with good performance related to improving decent work and living conditions of vulnerable groups in 2022 and 2023, but weak results related to disability inclusion and environmental sustainability, with less than one quarter of projects performing well over all years, and particularly poor performance in 2023. Gender-responsiveness was positive overall, although performance in 2023 was weaker than in previous years. There was evidence that tripartite processes and social dialogue were embedded in project approaches, although there was room for improvement, and performance in 2023 was lower than in 2022. One area of strong performance in 2023 was related to the promotion and application of international labour standards and normative work, with two thirds of projects obtaining successful ratings, similarly to 2022, and in contrast to 2021, where this was an area of weakness.

SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

Results related to sustainability and impact were variable, yet there were clear trends over time, as shown in figure 19.

FIGURE 19. PERCENTAGE OF "SUCCESSFUL" AND "HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL" SCORES BY PERFORMANCE CRITERIA AND BY YEAR: SUSTAINABILITY AND IMPACT

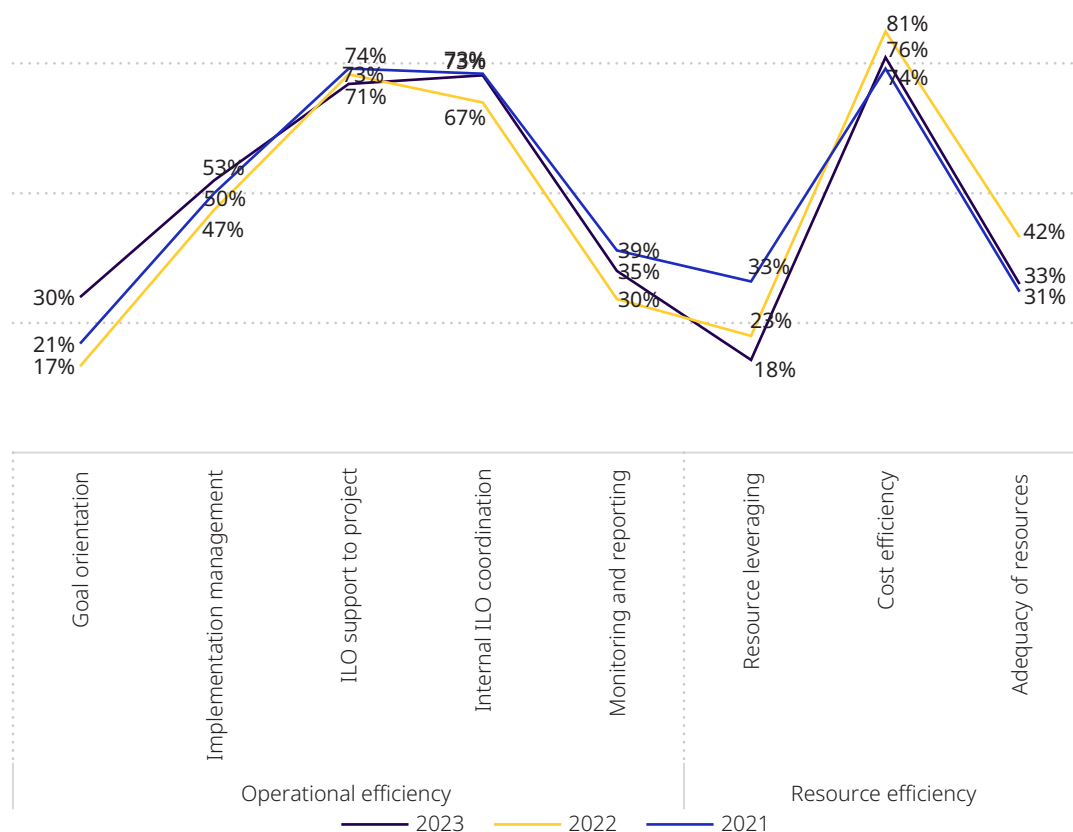


Performance related to sustainability and impact was slightly lower in 2023 compared with 2022, but stronger than in 2021 and positive overall: there was improvement in 2023 regarding sustainability of results, and in visibility and accessibility of information and knowledge generated through ILO interventions. One area where there was a regression in 2023 compared with 2022 was related to policy influence, with a 10 per cent difference between both years; yet results in 2021 were weaker. Despite this, intervention results were found to have strategic importance in the past three years, and the ILO's expertise was widely acknowledged over time.

OVERALL EFFICIENCY

Success was mixed for operational and resource efficiency, with similar trends over the years, as shown in figure 20.

FIGURE 20. PERCENTAGE OF “SUCCESSFUL” AND “HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL” SCORES BY PERFORMANCE CRITERIA AND BY YEAR: OVERALL EFFICIENCY



The areas of strongest performance in 2023 were related to (a) the cost-efficiency of ILO projects; (b) the quality of the ILO’s technical, programmatic, administrative and financial support to projects; and (c) internal coordination within ILO programmes and units. Similar trends were found in previous years. There were positive but variable performance trends regarding implementation management, with half of interventions rated as successful over time. In contrast, goal orientation of projects, monitoring and reporting and adequacy of resources were areas of weakness over time, although results were slightly higher for the first criterion in 2023. The weakest performance in 2023 was associated with resource leveraging; this was also an area of poor performance in previous years.



06

- ▶ Key highlights from the comparison of effectiveness results by CPO and policy outcome, for the biennium 2022–23

▶ KEY HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE COMPARISON OF EFFECTIVENESS RESULTS BY CPO AND POLICY OUTCOME, FOR THE BIENNIUM 2022–23

This chapter presents the results of a comparative assessment of average weighted performance⁵ ratings of interventions, based on their CPOs, aggregated by policy outcome and region. Results are presented for overall performance, overall effectiveness, and sustainability and impact, aggregated for the biennium 2022–23, and organized by level of representativeness. Due to the heterogeneous distribution of reports across the different outcomes, and limited sample size, results should be approached with careful consideration, taking into account these levels of representativeness. For ease of comparison, when evaluation reports were associated with several CPOs and corresponding policy outcomes, their performance rating was included in each policy outcome.

TABLE 1. POLICY OUTCOMES (2022-23)⁶

POLICY OUTCOME 1	Strong tripartite constituents and influential and inclusive social dialogue
POLICY OUTCOME 2	International labour standards and authoritative and effective supervision
POLICY OUTCOME 3	Economic, social and environmental transitions for full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all
POLICY OUTCOME 4	Sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work
POLICY OUTCOME 5	Skills and lifelong learning to facilitate access to and transitions in the labour market
POLICY OUTCOME 6	Gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment in the world of work
POLICY OUTCOME 7	Adequate and effective protection at work for all
POLICY OUTCOME 8	Comprehensive and sustainable social protection for all
ENABLING OUTCOME A	Improved knowledge and influence for promoting decent work

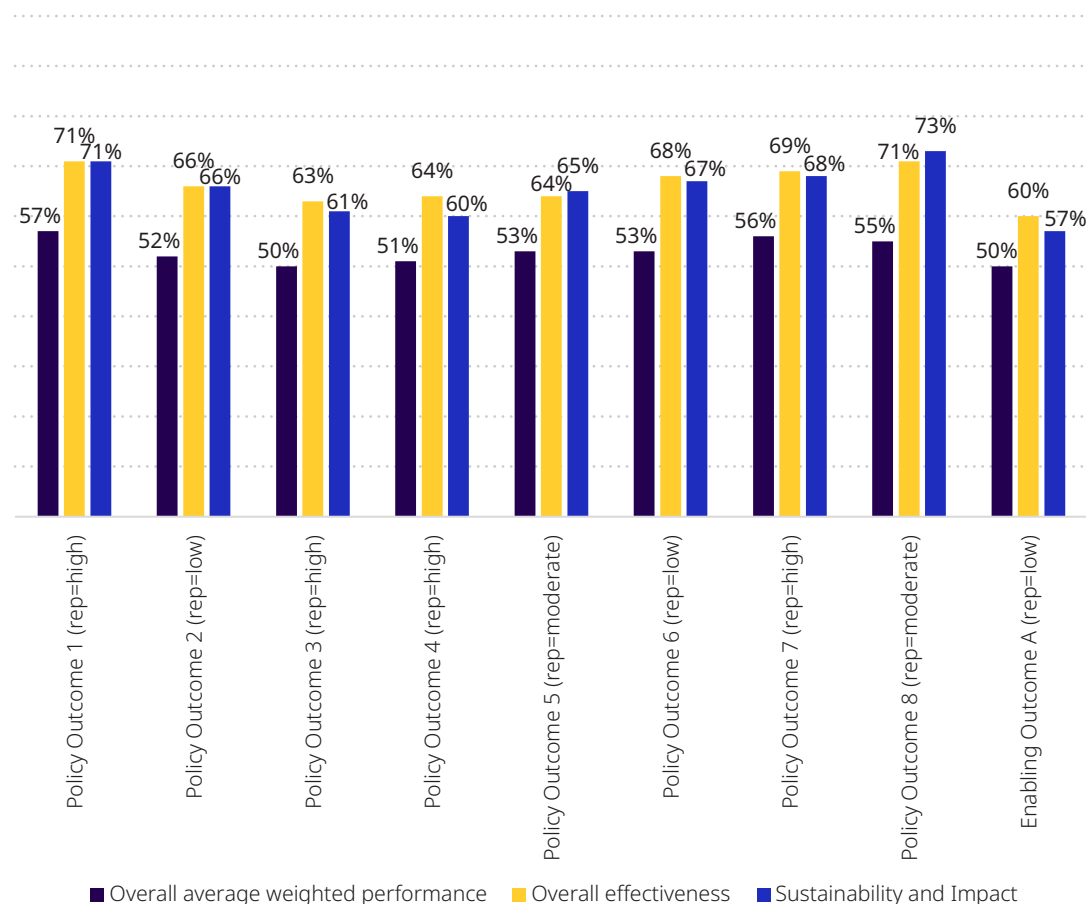
AGGREGATED RESULTS FOR 2022 AND 2023

The majority of CPOs linked to ILO policy and enabling outcomes for 2022 and 2023 had positive overall average weighted performance, with stronger overall average weighted performance and good representativeness for development cooperation interventions associated with policy outcomes 1 and 7, as seen in figure 21. Performance was average or slightly lower than average for those related to policy outcome 3, and enabling outcome A. Performance across all outcomes was positive when looking specifically at the overall effectiveness and sustainability and impact categories.

⁵ See Annex 2 for a description of average performance weightings.

⁶ Source: [ILO Programme and budget for the biennium 2022–23](#).

FIGURE 21. AVERAGE WEIGHTED PERFORMANCE FOR POLICY OUTCOMES BY SELECTED PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES AND SUBCATEGORIES (2022-23)⁷



Focusing on the average overall effectiveness of ILO development interventions evaluated in 2022 and 2023, performance based on their associated CPOs, and aggregated by policy/enabling outcome and region is presented in table 2.⁸ Policy outcomes with high representativeness are highlighted in darker blue, those with moderate representativeness are highlighted in lighter blue, and those with low representativeness are in white. The following discussion is organized based on these three levels of representativeness; as such, interpretation of findings for policy outcomes with moderate and low representativeness needs to be done with caution.

⁷ The figure contains the level of representativeness ("rep") of the sample for each policy outcome to indicate the extent reported performance results can be extrapolated to the universe. Counts from 1 to 10 were classified as having low representativeness; from 10 and 15 as "moderate" representativeness, and from 15 and above as "high" representativeness. The lower the representativeness, the lower the generalizability of results.

⁸ When there are six projects or more, the number is in bold, to show increased reliability of findings.

TABLE 2. OVERALL AVERAGE WEIGHTED EFFECTIVENESS PERFORMANCE IN 2022 AND 2023 (N=100)

POLICY OUTCOME	AFRICA	ARAB STATES	ASIA AND THE PACIFIC	EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA	LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN	INTER-REGIONAL	AVERAGE PERFORMANCE	TOTAL REPORTS
Policy outcome 1	82%	64%	63%	74%	66%	80%	71%	17
Policy outcome 2	N/A	84%	58%	76%	N/A	60%	66%	6
Policy outcome 3	61%	61%	65%	70%	71%	60%	63%	31
Policy outcome 4	67%	39%	66%	70%	67%	51%	64%	25
Policy outcome 5	57%	84%	64%	N/A	60%	72%	64%	15
Policy outcome 6	N/A	N/A	68%	N/A	71%	67%	68%	4
Policy outcome 7	75%	65%	72%	71%	67%	66%	69%	28
Policy outcome 8	61%	72%	71%	N/A	72%	76%	71%	14
Enabling outcome A	N/A	57%	63%	N/A	49%	63%	60%	8

High representativeness: outcomes 1, 3, 4 and 7

One area of strong effectiveness performance across all regions was associated with policy outcome 1: “Strong tripartite constituents and influential and inclusive social dialogue”. There were particularly strong results in Africa (two reports), Europe and Central Asia (three reports), and interregional projects (three reports); performance was lower, yet positive, in Asia and the Pacific (six reports), in the Arab States (one report) and in Latin America and the Caribbean (two reports). Performance related to sustainability and impact followed similar trends. These interventions aimed to promote social dialogue and harmonious industrial relations, decent work in the garment and coffee supply chains, safe and declared work, international labour standards and inclusive labour markets, as well as EIIP, among others. Key performance areas were related to knowledge development, capacity-building, and normative work and the promotion of international labour standards. ILO interventions led to progress on (a) the occupational safety and health regulatory framework in the coffee sector in Colombia and Mexico; (b) work on the alignment of relevant Ukrainian legislation with international labour standards, occupational safety and health, labour relations and labour inspections; and (c) on ILO compliance in Georgia.

Social dialogue and tripartism were important areas of success in many cases, although three interventions in Asia and the Pacific had weak results (two of these were associated with CPO RAS127). There was also widespread evidence of results of strategic importance to stakeholders.

EXAMPLES OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH OUTCOME 1 INCLUDED:

- ▶ A project in Albania helped to establish a technical working group including members of Government and representatives of social partners to initiate social dialogue at the national level around a new by law on the Amicable Labour Dispute Resolution of collective disputes. Six regional tripartite workshops on collective bargaining and the Resolution were held involving the social partners, and the endorsement of policy recommendations was approved in a tripartite national workshop. The project also promoted the establishment of bipartite committees of worker and employer representatives to discuss workplace issues to promote the Resolution before they escalate. There was also strong evidence that the project contributed to the strategy of promoting labour standards through the training of the judiciary in international labour standards. Moreover, content on labour standards and social dialogue was included into syllabi and a manual for handling workplace disputes (2023-41).
- ▶ Social dialogue was at the heart of the SDIR project in Bangladesh, in its capacity-building and discussions with the tripartite partners. The project supported the establishment of the Workers' Resource Centre, a single platform for trade unions, as well as a National Tripartite Consultative Council and an RMB Tripartite Consultative Council, to institutionalize social dialogue in the sector (2023-2).
- ▶ Several RBSA-funded projects in the Syrian Arab Republic built the capacity and empowered the tripartite constituents to engage in social dialogue with respect to child labour and occupational safety and health issues. The Syrian Arab Republic is one of two countries in the Arab States region in which labour inspection is permitted to be conducted on a tripartite basis. The projects helped the Syrian labour inspectorate to modernize its working modalities and work towards having a better compliance system, and to work towards greater involvement of tripartite stakeholders in inspection activities (2022-1).
- ▶ A project in Somalia specifically supported targeted actions to strengthen the capacity of trade unions. Tripartite stakeholders jointly formulated policies, and the project organized different tripartite policy dialogues on various dimensions of decent work for peace and resilience (2022-15).

Strong average weighted performance for overall effectiveness was also found for CPOs associated with policy outcome 7: "Adequate and effective protection at work for all" across all regions where projects took place, and especially in Africa (three reports), Asia and the Pacific (nine reports), and Europe and Central Asia (one report). Similar results were found for sustainability and impact. Projects linked to policy outcome 7 focused on decent work and rights for migrant workers, refugees, forcibly displaced people and host communities.

There was evidence that ILO projects had contributed to strengthening knowledge on "what works" in driving decent work in the garment sector supply chain in Asia. Capacities on social and environmental safeguards had been built in Timor Leste; and plans were made for implementing newly ratified Conventions in Fiji and strengthening institutional inspection capacities of the Ministry of Labour in Colombia, among others.

In Africa, there were very strong results related to the promotion of the ILO, normative work, social dialogue and tripartism. This was fostered and reinforced through effective knowledge development and capacity-building, leading to good progress in policymaking and the achievement of strategic results.

In Asia and the Pacific, there was good performance for criteria related to the ILO's means to achieve results and sustainability and impact. The promotion of international labour standards and normative work was an area of strength, and projects also successfully promoted and used social dialogue and tripartism.

Important areas of success in Latin America and the Caribbean were related to knowledge development and capacity-building. Results achieved had strategic importance, and there was evidence of the promotion and use of social dialogue and tripartism.

Results were more heterogeneous for interregional projects (nine reports), and for projects in the Arab States (two reports), although the representativeness of the sample for this latter region may be too limited to draw conclusions. Interregional interventions showed good performance for knowledge development and tripartism and social dialogue, as well as for capacity-building and international labour standards/normative work, although results were lower than in Africa and Asia and the Pacific.



EXAMPLES OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH OUTCOME 7 INCLUDED:

- ▶ The “Free Movement of Persons and Transhumance in the IGAD Region” project in Africa aimed to improve the treatment of migrants and focus on human rights in policies. Short-term impact was observed through the project’s contribution to developing the Djibouti Declaration, the Protocol of Free Movement of Persons and Transhumance, and guidelines on BLAs, which were all based on evidence and knowledge generated through the project. Stakeholders indicated that the project strengthened their knowledge and capacity to work on labour migration, and were using project results to start their own bilateral negotiations on labour migration, mostly with the Gulf States. There was also evidence that the achievements in the field of social dialogue had good potential to continue influencing policymaking in the field of labour migration, including at the regional level (2023-38).
- ▶ In Iraq, the ILO’s technical support to draft national legislation related to the worst forms of child labour led to international labour law standards being embedded in the national law and policy framework, as well as at the regional level in Kurdistan. The National Action Plan Against Child Labour was developed in close consultation with tripartite constituents. This was based on qualitative and quantitative evidence gathered by the project, as well as assessments of the law and policy framework, combined with extensive capacity-building at different levels, including with UN agencies, academic institutions and NGOs. Child labour was noted as one of the few topics where it was possible to get federal and Kurdish government officials to collaborate (2023-13).
- ▶ In Latin America, the Vision Zero Fund developed a broad information and knowledge base on occupational safety and health: it compiled all the guidelines, protocols, case studies and methodologies validated in various interventions in Mexico, Colombia and Honduras, and designed and published the first occupational safety and health toolkit for the global coffee chain. Almost 60 per cent of the knowledge products developed by the project were translated into English; and around 95 per cent of the knowledge products included in the toolkit developed by the VZF secretariat for coffee have been produced by the project. This toolkit was sent to all project partners in the three countries, and regional and global organizations, constituting more than 500 actors in the global coffee chain. Notably, the ILO Regional Office for Latin America recognized the toolkit as the best innovative intervention of the 2020–21 biennium. The knowledge developed also included the first studies on the informal coffee sector, and contributed to the development of draft laws and policies (2023-10).
- ▶ The Joint Cities Programme produced many instruments and tools to improve the care and services aimed at people in human mobility, with partners such as IOM and UNHCR. One of these outputs was a systematization of good practices in public policies and civil society initiatives for the integration of people in mobility in different Latin American cities, through a compilation of research papers and published documents available online and in academic libraries. These good practices were categorized and visualized on an interactive map. The programme also elaborated a methodological guide presenting essential human rights concepts and good practices based on experiences in Mexico and Chile for different types of migration governance approaches that could be replicated in different local contexts. There was evidence of constant social dialogue between the different constituent groups and CSOs, and strengthening of their individual and institutional capacities (2023-33).

There were variations in performance for policy outcome 3: “Economic, social and environmental transitions for full, productive and freely chosen employment and decent work for all”, with the strongest performance for projects in Latin America and the Caribbean (one report) and Europe and Central Asia (one report),⁹ followed by those in Asia and the Pacific (nine reports), Africa (eight reports), the Arab States (six reports), and interregional projects (six reports). Several of the evaluations were cluster evaluations of RBSA-funded interventions in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

In Latin America, projects focused on economic reactivation following COVID-19, and there was high strategic value of results. The intervention in Europe aimed to promote local job creation through social dialogue and promoting decent and safe working conditions in the context of COVID-19 recovery. In Africa, work focused mainly on the promotion of local economic and sustainable livelihood opportunities in different countries, including for host and refugee communities, and there was high variability in performance across the different areas, with strongest performance related to capacity-building. Performance was also mixed in the Arab States, where interventions focused on creating employment opportunities for host communities and refugees, formalizing their access to the legal labour market, and enhancing labour governance, inspection and working conditions in response to the COVID-19 crisis. In Asia and the Pacific, performance was heterogeneous, and capacity-building was also an area of relative strength. The interregional interventions from 2023 had components focusing on employment creation in conflict-affected areas. There was partly successful performance overall for this group.

EXAMPLES OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH OUTCOME 3 INCLUDED:

- ▶ In Zimbabwe, an RBSA-funded project, through its support for transitioning informal business units and jobs to the formal economy, directly contributed to the ILO Transition from the Informal to the Formal Economy Recommendation, 2015 (No. 204), where Member States committed to (a) facilitate the transition of workers and economic units from the informal to the formal economy, while respecting workers’ fundamental rights and ensuring opportunities for income security, livelihoods and entrepreneurship; (b) promote the creation, preservation and sustainability of enterprises and decent jobs in the formal economy, and the coherence of macroeconomic, employment, social protection and other social policies; and (c) prevent the informalization of formal economy jobs (2023-14).
- ▶ In Iraq, ILO support led to the development of a National Labour Policy and occupational safety and health policy and profile, as well as an Action Plan. The development of the policies was heavily informed by evidence coming from assessments done early in the project, and policies were validated with tripartite constituents, including the governments in Federal Iraq and in the Kurdistan region, which facilitated their endorsement (2023-7).
- ▶ In the Republic of Moldova, the ILO assisted the Government and social partners on the adjustment of the legal framework, implementation of COVID-19 prevention and mitigation actions. It also provided technical support on implementation of the occupational safety and health-related measures foreseen in the national legislation of the Republic of Moldova and achieving better compliance with ILO Conventions Nos 81 and 129 (2023-29).

Wider heterogeneity in effectiveness was seen for projects contributing to policy outcome 4: “Sustainable enterprises as generators of employment and promoters of innovation and decent work”, with positive performance in Europe and Central Asia (1 report), Latin America and the Caribbean (four reports), Africa (ten reports) and Asia and the Pacific (seven reports), partly successful performance for an interregional intervention, and poor performance in the Arab States (two reports), where none of the performance and subperformance areas were rated well in an EIIP intervention in Jordan, where workers participating in the project did not obtain new marketable skills, and stakeholders were not convinced by the EIIP method, due to its inefficiency relative

⁹ There was low representativeness for these regions, as there was only one evaluation report per region.

to skilled contractors, and concerns about the quality and durability of deliverables. A similar trend was found for a project in Iraq. In contrast, the projects in Latin America and the Caribbean performed well on all aspects of effectiveness and sustainability and impact, with evidence of support to the adoption and implementation of National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights for a project evaluated in 2023. In Africa, there was overall good performance related to means to achieve results, with highest performance related to capacity-building and strategic partnerships; a similar trend was found for interventions implemented in Asia and the Pacific. Both regions had high variability in performance in the other areas, including poor performance related to policy influence and strategic results, especially for projects evaluated in 2023. Highly variable performance was also found for the interregional project.

EXAMPLES OF KEY ACHIEVEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH OUTCOME 4 INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:

- ▶ A project on responsible business conduct in Latin America and the Caribbean supported the adoption and implementation of National Action Plans on Business and Human Rights through a combination of regional and national activities. The National Action Plan for Business and Human Rights of Peru 2021-25 was found to be the most significant milestone, as it became the fourth country in Latin America to have a plan of this type. Work supporting the development and review processes of National Action Plans also took place in Ecuador, Colombia, Chile, Panama, Argentina, Mexico and Brazil (2023-15).
- ▶ In the Republic of Moldova, ILO support used Local Employment Partnership models to promote local job creation, which empowered young women and men, mostly from rural areas. There was also a successful mini-grant scheme that supported job creation for those not in education, employment or training (NEET), returned migrants, business development support and vulnerable groups affected by COVID-19 (2023-29).
- ▶ Knowledge generated through the AFERE project in Tunisia (including national-level analyses, value chain studies, and mapping of service providers operating in target regions) and tools developed to introduce gender-sensitive interventions have led to a better understanding of the needs of rural women entrepreneurs and the constraints preventing them from entering economic life. This led to (a) the promotion of productive and decent employment in an inclusive and sustainable way; (b) the definition of informal employment; and (c) support to the national policy for the economic and social empowerment of rural women (2023-11).health-related measures foreseen in the national legislation of the Republic of Moldova and achieving better compliance with ILO Conventions Nos 81 and 129 (2023-29).

Moderate representativeness: outcomes 5 and 8

Performance for policy outcome 5: “Skills and lifelong learning to facilitate access to and transitions in the labour market” was strongest in the Arab States (one report), followed by interregional projects (two reports), while those in Asia and the Pacific (six reports), Latin America and the Caribbean (two reports), and Africa (four reports) had moderate performance. There were no interventions associated with policy outcome 5 in Europe and Central Asia.

There was successful performance for a project aiming to improve access to skills and employment opportunities for vulnerable Lebanese hosts and Syrian refugees through relevant vocational training based on market needs, and post-training support. The project had highly successful performance in all areas related to the ILO’s means to achieve results, as well as for the promotion and use of tripartism and social dialogue, policy influence and strategic results, with strong performance related to normative work and international labour standards.

The interregional interventions showed particularly strong results related to normative work and international labour standards, and tripartism and social dialogue, with good results related to knowledge development, capacity-building, policy influence and the generation of strategic results. The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation-funded programme was found to have contributed significantly to the development of the ILO's Skills and Employability Branch's 2030 strategy and the global skills programme for lifelong learning, including the development of a functional innovation facility. The global component has established networks and gained presence beyond the six countries involved in the skills space, and most importantly created ownership for the programme from ACTEMP and ACTRAV. The regional component was able to generate outreach beyond partner countries and generated significant additional demand for technical support in the ILO's skills-related areas in 28 countries within the African subcontinent (2023-42).

Results were variable, but moderately successful, in other regions: (a) there were overall positive results for capacity development in Africa; (b) there were good results for knowledge development, capacity-building and strategic relationships, as well as good prospects for sustainability in Asia and the Pacific; while (c) areas of strength in Latin America and the Caribbean were related to capacity-building, the achievement of results of strategic importance, and the development and use of strategic relationships. A socio-labour conversion project in Colombia performed adequately overall, although cross-cutting policy issues could have been better addressed.

There was good performance in many regions for interventions associated with policy outcome 8: "Comprehensive and sustainable social protection for all". Similar overall effectiveness performance was found for interregional interventions (three reports), and those in the Arab States (one report), in Latin America and the Caribbean (three reports), and in Asia and the Pacific (six reports), while performance was weaker in Africa (one report).

The intervention in the Arab States had very strong performance related to knowledge development, policy influence and strategic results, and strong performance related to capacity-building, strategic relationships, and normative work and international labour standards. Weaker results were noted for social dialogue and tripartism. The project in Lebanon made strong progress in shaping a national vision on a Social Protection Strategy, with initial approval from the Government of Lebanon in May 2022, although the final approval of the strategy was pending (2022-50).

There was good performance related to the means to achieve results and sustainability and impact in Asia and the Pacific, as well as for normative work and the promotion of international labour standards, and variable but overall positive performance related to the use and promotion of social dialogue and tripartism. One project evaluated in 2023 was related to the future of work and post-COVID-19 in different Asian countries, and there was strong performance across all areas of effectiveness and sustainability and impact, but below average performance for efficiency. Another intervention aimed to improve China's institutional capacity towards universal social protection, and its key areas of strength were related to the means to achieve results and sustainability and impact, while there was average performance related to the ILO's cross-cutting policy areas.

In Latin America and the Caribbean, there was also good performance related to ILO means to achieve results, as well as for policy influence and the achievement of strategic results. Effectiveness performance was variable in a project aiming to support social protection in South Africa, with key strengths related to knowledge development, normative work and the promotion of international labour standards, strategic relationships and the achievement of strategic results, and weaknesses related to capacity-building and policy influence, as well as tripartism and social dialogue.

Low representativeness: outcomes 2, 6 and A

Performance for policy outcome 2: “International labour standards and authoritative and effective supervision”, was strongest in the Arab States (one report), followed by Europe and Central Asia (one report), and more moderate in Asia and the Pacific (three reports) and at the interregional level (one report). There was good performance overall related to ILO support/means to achieve results, which included the ILO’s efforts for capacity-building, knowledge development and strategic partnerships, but performance associated with the ILO’s cross-cutting areas and sustainability and impact was highly variable, and not as strong.

There were only four projects linked to policy outcome 6: “Gender equality and equal opportunities and treatment in the world of work”. While there was some variability in performance across the different regions – Asia and the Pacific (one report), Latin America and the Caribbean (one report), and at the interregional level (two reports) – it was positive overall, with key strengths related to social dialogue and tripartism, the strategic importance of results, policy influence and strategic relationships, as well as capacity-building. While performance related to gender responsiveness was positive in three of the four interventions, results related to disability inclusion were weak, with no project performing well.

Performance related to enabling outcome A: “Improved knowledge and influence for promoting decent work”, was mixed, with moderate performance in Asia and the Pacific (four reports), interregional interventions (two reports), and the Arab States (one report), and suboptimal performance in Latin America (one report). These interventions performed well in knowledge development and capacity-building, and most also had good performance related to normative work and the promotion of international labour standards, while there was high heterogeneity in the other performance areas. The three interventions that were only linked to enabling outcome A (versus those also contributing to other outcomes) had poor performance related to policy influence, the strategic importance of results, and tripartism and social dialogue.



07

► Conclusions

► CONCLUSIONS

Overall, ILO interventions demonstrated strategic relevance and coherence. They were well aligned with ILO, UN and national, regional and global frameworks, and work done under a common UN framework was positive. Results were more variable regarding the ILO's responsiveness to the national decent work needs of constituents, and the involvement of stakeholders in project design and implementation. An important weakness was related to the validity of project design, where approaches were often inadequate and overambitious, and were not consistently endorsed by constituents.

In a majority of cases, outputs and outcomes were not achieved in a timely manner. Best performance was found for capacity-building, knowledge development and strategic relationships. The promotion of international labour standards and normative work was another area of success, and there was evidence of pro-poor focus in projects. The promotion and use of social dialogue, tripartism and gender responsiveness had positive yet mixed results. Disability inclusion and environmental sustainability were two areas of underperformance.

Sustainability and impact was a performance area with good ratings, and there was strong evidence of strategic results generated by ILO interventions. The acknowledgement and use of ILO expertise was an important area of success, from both stakeholders and other partners (such as donors and UN agencies). There was more variability in the extent to which ILO projects allowed stakeholders to influence policy, and for the visibility and accessibility of knowledge and information – both internally and externally. Prospects for sustainability were positive overall, with evidence of ownership by stakeholders and beneficiaries.

There was mixed performance for efficiency, with strong results for the ILO's support to interventions and internal coordination, promoting synergies and efficiencies, while implementation management had variable success. Poor performance was found regarding the goal orientation of interventions and results-based management frameworks, as well as monitoring and reporting mechanisms. Many interventions were cost-efficient, but there were often inadequacies noted regarding the availability of human resources and the delivery of financial resources, as well as the ILO's ability to leverage additional resources.

Eight projects and/or clustered interventions were categorized as “most successful”, based on their overall average weighted performance ratings. While many factors contributed to these results, areas of highest performance were related to knowledge development, capacity-building, policy influence, the strategic importance of results, the promotion and integration of international labour standards and normative work, and social dialogue and tripartism, as well as the development of key relationships and high prospects for sustainability. There was evidence that project success was also associated with clear implementation management processes, good support from the ILO and effective internal coordination. Projects were cost-efficient and provided good value for money.

There was evidence of specific objectives and strategies in place to improve the lives of those at risk of being left behind, with a strong pro-poor focus and evidence of gender-responsiveness. Most projects achieved their main outputs in a timely manner, with indication of use by stakeholders and evidence of good quality, and nearly all made strong progress towards achieving their immediate objectives. There was strong performance related to most of the ILO's cross-cutting policy areas, with strongest results linked to normative work and the promotion and application of international labour standards, as well as social dialogue and tripartism. Interventions consistently generated high-quality research and knowledge development that raised awareness and supported policy

dialogue and key decisions at different levels. There was also extensive evidence of capacity-building at individual and institutional levels, thus providing ILO constituents and partners with requisite tools and knowledge to promote sustainability of results achieved. Successful projects leveraged and built strong strategic relationships with different groups, including donors, constituent groups, UN agencies, academic institutions and other civil society groups, and public and private sector actors in specific sectors, leading to synergies and ensuring sustainability of achievements. All projects achieved results of high strategic importance, and policy influence was also an area of strong performance. There were good prospects for sustainability of results achieved, with evidence of ownership and commitment from stakeholders. Clear implementation management processes were in place, and there was good quality technical, administrative, financial and political support from the ILO, as well as strong internal coordination. Finally, these projects were cost-efficient and there was evidence of good value for money.

Looking at performance trends over time, key areas of strength were related to the alignment of project objectives with P&B outcomes and DWCPs/CPOs, as well as contributions to the SDGs and collaboration with other UN agencies. While validity of design was an area of weakness, results in 2023 were slightly better than in previous years. In contrast, there was a decrease in performance regarding constituent support in 2023 compared with 2022. Effectiveness performance was lower overall in 2023 compared with 2022, and was closer to those of previous years, except for capacity-building, knowledge development and the promotion of international labour standards and normative work, where projects performed more strongly than in previous years. Performance related to sustainability and impact was slightly lower in 2023 compared with 2022, but stronger than the two previous years and positive overall: there was improvement in 2023 regarding sustainability of results and in visibility and accessibility of information and knowledge generated through ILO interventions. The areas of strongest performance for efficiency in 2023 were related to the cost-efficiency of ILO projects, the quality of the ILO's technical, programmatic, administrative and financial support to projects, and internal coordination within ILO programmes and units; similar trends were found in previous years.

Analysis of effectiveness based on CPOs, aggregated by policy outcome and region, showed that the strongest overall average effectiveness performance was related to interventions linked to policy outcomes 1 and 7. Overall effectiveness by policy outcome varied across regions. Due to the low representativeness of the sample, deeper analysis could not be performed.



08

► Suggestions for improvement

► SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Key strengths and challenges linked to the effectiveness of ILO development cooperation interventions have been identified through this meta-study. The following suggestions should be considered to consolidate and improve the ILO's performance in future work:¹⁰

- The findings of the meta-analysis highlight the importance of promoting the participation of constituents and other key stakeholders from the planning stages onwards. The ILO should ensure sufficient time in the initial project design phase to guarantee an assessment of local contexts and the validation of assumptions and risks, in order to promote a realistic approach, as well as sustainability and ownership. This should be complemented by having sustainability and exit strategies.
- Related to this, the ILO should prioritize designing and implementing well-structured results frameworks and monitoring systems, which allow project teams to adapt to changing conditions.
- The ILO has shown strong collaboration with other UN agencies, building on synergies to achieve common results. Such partnerships should be consolidated and promoted.
- There should be improvements in recruitment processes and in the flexibility of financial procedures, to allow the ILO to be more reactive, and to ensure that sufficient human resources are available in a timely manner.
- While the ILO is able to provide quality results through capacity-building, knowledge development and its strategic relationships, these do not always translate to effective policy influence and strategic outcomes. This is particularly the case for EIIP and other local development projects. While livelihood and local economic development projects may be entry points to awareness-raising about international labour standards and normative work, as well as social dialogue and tripartism, the time frame of interventions is often insufficient to achieve results in these areas, and constituents may not share the ILO's priorities. Interventions should be designed to ensure that progress will be made towards the ILO's distinctive comparative advantages, taking a more strategic approach to programming.

¹⁰ Some of these points reiterate those made in previous years, thus identifying key areas where further work is required.



Annexes

▶ ANNEX 1 EVALUATION REPORTS REVIEWED

2023 Final Independent Evaluation Reports

	Evaluation Title	TC/DC Symbol	Region	Policy Outcome
2023-1	Decent Work in the Garment Sector Supply Chains in Asia	RAS/18/05/SWE	Asia and the Pacific	Multiple: 1, 2, 4
2023-2	Promoting Social Dialogue and Harmonious Industrial Relations in Bangladesh	BGD/15/03/MUL	Asia and the Pacific	1
2023-3	ILO/PBSO Programme to sustain peace and foster development through employment creation in conflict-affected situation	GLO/18/04/CHE & GLO/20/43/CHE	Interregional	3
2023-4	Closing the gender data gap on unpaid care and domestic work to support monitoring the 2030 Agenda	GLO/19/25/UNF	Interregional	A
2023-5	Final independent group evaluation of two projects regarding strengthening the Union Archive Information System (SIAS II) of the Ministry of Labor of Colombia.	COL/19/01/CAN & COL/21/11/COL	Latin America and the Caribbean	Multiple: 1, 7
2023-6	EU/ILO collaboration in the monitoring of labour aspects in the implementation of the EU's rules of origin initiative for Jordan, Phase II - Final Independent Evaluation	JOR/18/54/EUR	Arab States	3
2023-7	Enhancing Labour Governance, Inspection and Working Conditions In Response to COVID-19 Phase 1 – Final Independent Evaluation	IRQ/20/03/EUR	Arab States	3
2023-8	Building Resilience for the Future of Work and the Post COVID-19: Promoting rights and social inclusion through organization and formalization (PRS); Building Resilience for the Future of Work and the Post COVID-10: Strengthening integrated policy framework for formalization and decent work (STRIDE)	RAS/21/03/JPN; RAS/21/04/JPN	Asia and the Pacific	Multiple: 3,6,7,8
2023-9	Roads for Development – Cluster Independent Final Evaluation	TIM/12/01/AUS; TLS/16/03/AUS; TLS/21/01/AUS; TLS/20/01/RBS	Asia and the Pacific	Multiple: 1, 3
2023-10	Independent Clustered Evaluation of Vision Zero Fund projects in the global coffee supply chain	RLA/18/08/EUR & VNM/20/01/DEU	Interregional	Multiple: 1, 7
2023-11	Support for the economic empowerment of rural women in Tunisia	TUN/18/01/CAN	Africa	4
2023-12	Sustainable supply chains to build forward better: Decent work in five global supply chains of key importance to the European Union for a fair, resilient, and sustainable COVID-19 crisis recovery	GLO/20/40/EUR	Interregional	2
2023-13	Tackling the Worst Forms of Child Labour amongst IDPs, Refugees, and Vulnerable Host Communities	IRQ/19/02/MUL	Arab States	7
2023-14	Zambia project: More and better jobs created for sustainable livelihood opportunities for youth and women and Zimbabwe project: Employment and decent work mainstreamed into national development plans and programmes	ZMB/18/01/RBS and ZWE/18/01/RBS	Africa	3
2023-15	Final independent evaluation of the Responsible Business Conduct in Latin America and the Caribbean project	RLA/18/04/EUR	Latin America and the Caribbean	4

2023-16	Towards Safe, Healthy and Declared Work in Ukraine	UKR/19/01/EUR	Europe and Central Asia	1
2023-17	A Road to Decent Jobs for All Afghans (R2DJ4All) Project	AFG/20/01/USA & AFG/20/02/USA	Asia and the Pacific	4
2023-18	Final Independent Cluster Project Evaluation: Improved access to skills and employment opportunities in Lebanon	LBN/16/08/CEF & LBN/18/04/ITA	Arab States	5
2023-19	Building community resilience with young people in Mayo Suburb of Khartoum through improved access to water	SDN/20/03/JPN	Africa	3
2023-20	Cluster evaluation of eight RBSA-funded interventions with ILS focus in the Asia and Pacific Region	AFG/18/01/RBS, FJI/20/01/RBS, LAO/20/01/RBS, MMR/20/01/RBS, PHL/20/02/RBS, VNM/20/01/RBS, IDN/20/01/RBS, TLS/20/02/RBS	Asia and the Pacific	Multiple: 1,2,3,7,A
2023-21	Improving China's institutional capacity towards universal social protection (USP China)	CHN/18/01/EUR	Asia and the Pacific	8
2023-22	Migrant Rights and Decent Work Project (MiRiDeW), Phase - I	NPL/18/01/CHE	Asia and the Pacific	7
2023-23	Inclusive Labour Market for Job Creation in Georgia	GEO/17/01/DNK	Europe and Central Asia	Multiple: 1, 2
2023-24	Data Analysis to Observe Success (DATOS)	MEX/20/01/NAA	Latin America and the Caribbean	A
2023-25	Egypt Youth Employment (EYE): Jobs and Private Sector Development in Rural Egypt (EYE-RAWABET)	EGY/17/06/NOR	Africa	4
2023-26	MAE financial contribution for the implementation of Alliance 8.7 as well as ILO action in the Sahel zone	GLO/19/01/FRA (GLO/19/53/FRA, RAF/19/51/FRA)	Interregional	Multiple: 3, 7
2023-27	ILO's Cluster of Interventions funded under RBSA round 2020-21 (improved employment opportunities COVID response focused)	BGD/20/01/RBS, LKA/20/02/RBS, TLS/20/01/RBS, & VNM/20/01/RBS	Asia and the Pacific	Multiple: 2, 3, 4, 5, A
2023-28	ILO-DFID Partnership Programme on Fair Recruitment and Decent Work for Women Migrant Workers in South Asia and the Middle East (Phase 2)	RAS/17/11/GBR	Interregional	Multiple: 7, A
2023-29	MDA826 Protecting workers and ensuring decent and safe working conditions in times of COVID-19 crisis and recovery; and MDA102 Reactivating social dialogue for an effective Covid-19 response in Moldova and applying it to local job creation through Local Employment Partnerships	MDA/21/01/RBS; MDA/21/02/RBS	Europe	Multiple: 3, 4
2023-30	Final Independent Project Evaluation: Towards a more inclusive economy through immediate job generation and enterprise development in Jordan	JOR/19/09/ITA	Arab States	Multiple: 3, 4
2023-31	Income generation project that promotes the reconversion of people who distribute fuels without meeting legal requirements – Final independent evaluation	COL/ 21/08/ COL	Latin America and the Caribbean	5
2023-32	Support for boosting local economic development in disadvantaged areas	MRT/18/01/FRA & MRT/16/01/EUR	Africa	Multiple: 3, 5

2023-33	Capacity development of local governments in Santiago (Chile) and Mexico City to strengthen the socioeconomic integration of migrants, refugees and forcibly displaced people through access to decent work, sustainable livelihoods and social dialogue (Joint Cities Program)	CHI/20/50/UND & MEX 20/51/UND	Latin America and the Caribbean	7
2023-34	Support for awareness raising, training, organization of beneficiaries, rural animation, skills development and economic empowerment of rural communities in the Kasai province, Democratic Republic of Congo	COD/20/01/BAD	Africa	Multiple: 3, 5
2023-35	Market-Based Livelihood Improvement Interventions for Refugees and Host Communities in Niger (PAERCA)	NER/19/01/USA	Africa	Multiple: 3, 4
2023-36	Employment for Youth in Egypt (EYE): Providing a Reason to Stay	EGY/17/04/HSF	Africa	4
2023-37	Independent Final Evaluation of the Project "Decent Jobs for Egypt's Young People-Tackling the Challenge in Damietta.	EGY/18/01/MTX	Africa	4
2023-38	Free Movement of Persons and Transhumance in the IGAD Region: Improving Opportunities for Regular Labour Mobility	RAF/16/06/EUR	Africa	7
2023-39	The Inclusive Growth through Decent Work in the Great Rift Valley Project, Public Private Development. Partnership (PPDP)	KEN/17/01/SWE	Africa	4
2023-40	Local Empowerment through Economic Development and Reconciliation Project (LEED+)	LKA/18/01/MUL	Asia and the Pacific	3
2023-41	Access to justice in labour disputes through mediation and conciliation	ALB/18/03/SWE	Europe and Central Asia	3
2023-42	The ILO-Norway Programme Cooperation Agreements on Skills Development (2016-2023)	GLO/20/26/NOR (GLOBAL: GLO/20/61/NOR, REGIONAL: RAF/20/53/NOR; ETHIOPIA: ETH/20/54/NOR; GHANA: GHA/20/51/NOR; LEBANON: LBN/20/50/NOR; MALAWI: MWI/20/50/NOR; SENEGAL: SEN/20/50/NOR; TANZANIA: TZA/20/51/NOR)		Multiple: 5, 7
2023-43	The 2021– 2023 ILO/Korea Partnership Programme funded projects in ASEAN, Cambodia and Lao PDR	RAS/21/50/KOR, RAS/21/51/KOR, RAS/21/52/KOR		Multiple: 7, A
2023-44	UK Skills for Prosperity Programme for Southeast Asia (SfP-SEA) - Final Independent Evaluation	RAS/20/52/GBR; PHL/20/52/GBR; IDN/20/52/GBR; MYS/20/52/GBR		Multiple: 1, 5

2022 Final Independent Evaluation Reports

	Evaluation Title	TC/DC Symbol	Region	Policy Outcome
2022-1	Enhanced capacity of government and social partners to reduce child labour and improve occupational safety and health in Syria	SYR/16/01/RBS, SYR/20/01/CEF, SYR/20/01/RBS	Arab States	1
2022-2	Independent Final Evaluation of the Project "Promoting Economic Empowerment of women at Work through Responsible Business Conduct – G7 countries, WE-EMPOWER-G7"	GLO/17/37/EUR	Inter-regional	3
2022-3	Final evaluation of the project "Decent Work for a Sustainable and Inclusive transformation in Mozambique (Moztrabalha)"	MOZ/16/01/SWE	Africa	Multiple : 1, 3
2022-4	Independent final evaluation of "The way forward after the revolution: decent work for women in Egypt and Tunisia" project (Phase II)	RAF/17/05/FIN	Africa	3
2022-5	SCORE (Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises) Programme Phase III	GLO/17/54/MUL	Inter-regional	4
2022-6	Improvement of Water Supply Equipment Management Capacity for the Establishment of Peace in Mindanao (Water Project)	PHL/18/04/JPN	Asia and Pacific	5
2022-7	Independent Final Evaluation of "Supporting Ministry of Labour and Social Development in Analysis, Policy and Capacity Development"	SAU/18/01/SAU	Arab States	3
2022-8	Responsible Supply Chains in Asia (RSCA)	RAS/16/13/EUR	Asia and Pacific	Multiple : 3, 4, 7
2022-9	Programme d'appui à l'emploi, l'employabilité et à l'insertion	CPV/16/01/OUF	Africa	4
2022-10	Formalizing Access to the Legal Labor Market for Refugees and Host Communities in Jordan, Phase II	JOR/19/05/USA	Arab States	3
2022-11	ACTION/Portugal (Phase 2): Strengthening of the Social Protection Systems of the PALOP and Timor-Leste - Final evaluation	GLO/19/50/PRT	Inter-regional	8
2022-12	Employment Policies Formulated in Iraq Using Strengthened LMI Systems and LM Statistics	IRQ/18/01/RBS	Arab States	A
2022-13	Develop inclusive insurance market and stimulate innovation in Asia and Latin America	GLO/17/36/PRU	Inter-regional	3
2022-14	Final independent clustered evaluation of outcome-based funding support to ILO projects in the field of employment and skills, social dialogue and labour relations, protection for all at work, gender equality and equal opportunities, and just transition to the green economy for the period 2020–21	GLO/20/04/SWE; GLO/20/05/SWE; GLO/20/06/SWE; GLO/20/07/SWE; GLO/20/08/SWE	Inter-regional	Multiple : 1, 3, 5, 6, 7
2022-15	Strengthening Capacity of Somali Trade Unions to promote decent employment, peace and resilience in Somalia - Final evaluation	SOM/18/02/ITA	Africa	1
2022-16	Mitigando el impacto socioeconómico del COVID-19 sobre el empleo y los ingresos de mujeres trabajadoras por cuenta propia de la economía informal en Bolivia	BOL/20/50/UND	Latin America and the Caribbean	4

2022-17	Evaluación Final Independiente Agrupada del Programa de Formación Profesional de la OIT Colombia / ILO Colombia's Vocational Training Programme - Final Independent Cluster Evaluation	COL/21/01/COL (Formándonos para el futuro); COL/21/03/COL (Tus habilidades son oportunidades); COL/21/04/COL (El futuro es de los jóvenes)	Latin America and the Caribbean	5
2022-18	PATSS- Programa de Asistencia Técnica para la Seguridad Social	ECU/18/02/ECU	Latin America and the Caribbean	8
2022-19	Independent Final Evaluation of National Rural Employment Strategy in Lao PDR towards increasing opportunities for decent and productive employment in rural areas	LAO/16/01/CHE	Asia and Pacific	3
				3
2022-20	Cerrando brechas: protección social para las mujeres en México	MEX/19/50/UND	Latin America and the Caribbean	8
2022-21	Inclusive Economic Recovery through Sustainable Enterprises in the Informal Economies of Fiji, Palau, Tonga, and Vanuatu	RAS/20/53/UND	Asia and Pacific	Multiple : 3, 4, 5
2022-22	Evaluation of Indicators and methodologies for wage setting project	GLO/18/23/NLD	Inter-regional	7
2022-23	Mongolia – MNG 176: Formal Employment is promoted for inclusive and diversified economic growth	MNG/18/01/RBS	Asia and Pacific	7
2022-24	Accelerating Progress towards an Integrated and Modernized Social Protection System for All in Thailand (United Nations Joint Programme on Social Protection for All in Thailand)	THA/19/50/UND	Asia and Pacific	8
2022-25	Projet d'appui à la Jeunesse Tunisienne à travers l'Entrepreneuriat Social et Solidaire (PAJESS)	TUN/18/03/LUX	Africa	4
2022-26	Empowerment for Women and Youth Project (E4WAY) in Zimbabwe	ZWE/16/01/BAD	Africa	4
2022-27	Final Independent Grouped Evaluation of Labor Migration in Peru and Ecuador	RLA/19/03/USA & PER/20/03/ESP	Latin America and the Caribbean	Multiple : 4, 7
2022-28	Evaluation of "Decent Work Opportunities for Refugees and Host Communities in Turkey" Project	TUR/19/02/USA	Europe	7
2022-29	Extending Social Protection to Herders with Enhanced Shock Responsiveness in Mongolia (United Nations Joint Programme on Social Protection for Herders, Mongolia)	MNG/19/50/UND	Asia and Pacific	8
2022-30	Final independent evaluation of the project "Strengthening the capacities of employers' and workers' organizations for greater participation in public and labor policies in São Tomé and Príncipe" (RBSA)	STP/18/01/RBS	Africa	4
2022-31	Industry Skill for Inclusive Growth -Phase 2 (InSIGHT-2)	RAS/19/01/JPN	Asia and Pacific	Multiple : 1, 5
2022-32	Integrated Programme on Fair Recruitment (FAIR), Phase II	GLO/18/08/CHE	Inter-regional	7
2022-33	Final Independent Evaluation of the Technical Cooperation Programme in Qatar (2018 – 2021)	QAT/17/01/QAT	Arab States	2

2022-34	"Improved Business Development Support Services and Entrepreneurship Education Targeting MSMEs and Youth for the Creation of Decent Work Opportunities in Iraq"	IRQ/19/03/DEU	Arab States	4
2022-35	Women in STEM Workforce Readiness 'Women in STEM' Program	RAS/17/04/JPN	Asia and Pacific	5
2022-36	Independent final evaluation of Project "Enhancing Rural Access Agro-Forestry - Improving access to agro-forestry areas (ERA-AF)"	TLS/16/04/EUR; TLS/16/02/EUR	Asia and Pacific	3
2022-37	Training in the Structured HIMO Approach for Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and Design Offices, carrying out school sites.	MDG/19/04/IFA	Africa	3
2022-38	AMEM: Support for fair migration for the Maghreb	RAF/16/10/ITA	Africa	7
2022-39	Protecting garment sector workers: occupational safety and health and income support in response to the COVID-19 pandemic	GLO/20/20/MUL	Inter-regional	Multiple : 7, 8
2022-40	Towards fair and sustainable global supply chains: Promoting formalization and decent work for invisible workers in South Asia	RAS/17/06/JPN	Asia and Pacific	Multiple : 4, 8
2022-41	Support to university centers for career development (UCCD) in Egyptian public universities	EGY/17/02/AUE	Africa	5
2022-42	The Application of Migration Policy for Decent Work of Migrant Workers Phase II	BGD/18/03/CHE	Asia and Pacific	7
2022-43	Public Private Development Partnership for Renewable Energy Skills Training and Women Economic Empowerment in Somalia	SOM/17/02/SWE	Africa	5
2022-44	Addressing the Worst Forms of Child Labour in Jordan	JOR/20/52/NOR	Arab States	7
2022-45	Independent grouped evaluation of RBSE recovery and economic reactivation projects in the face of the pandemic	BRA107 HND102 JAM104 MEX104 PER157 SLV105	Latin America and the Caribbean	Multiple : 1, 3, 4, 6, 7
2022-46	Enhancing COVID-19 Prevention at and through Workplaces	IDN/21/01/JPN	Asia and Pacific	7
2022-47	Enhancing Social Protection for Female Tea Garden Workers and Their Families in Sylhet Division, Bangladesh	BGD/19/51/UND	Asia and Pacific	Multiple : 4, 8
2022-48	ILO-Irish-Aid Partnership Programme 2016-2022 Inclusive Growth, Social Protection and Jobs	GLO/16/33/ IRL (Umbrella), GLO/16/63/IRL, RAF/16/54/IRL, TZA/16/51/IRL, VNM/16/54/IRL	Inter-regional	Multiple : 1, 3, 8
2022-49	Better Regional Migration Management (BRMM)	RAF/21/10/GBR	Africa	7
2022-50	Transforming national dialogue for the development of an inclusive national SP system for Lebanon	LBN/19/51/UND	Arab States	8
2022-51	Global Indigenous Navigator Initiative (GINI)	GLO/16/24/EUR	Inter-regional	6
2022-52	Expanding the social protection system for young men and women in the informal economy - Final evaluation	ECU/19/50/UND	Latin America and the Caribbean	8
2022-53	Develop inclusive insurance market and stimulate innovation in Asia and Latin America	GLO/17/36/PRU	Inter-regional	7
2022-54	Decent Work in Jordan's Floriculture Sector - Final evaluation	JOR/19/02/AUS	Arab States	3

2022-55	An integrated and universal social protection linked to Social Protection in South Africa developmental social welfare services in South Africa - final joint evaluation	ZAF/19/51/UND	Africa	8
2022-56	Enhancing Occupational Safety and Health Standards in the Construction Sector in Cambodia	KHM/17/01/JPN	Asia and Pacific	Multiple: 7, A

▶ ANNEX 2 APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY USED

This meta-analysis rates and synthesizes findings related to performance from final independent evaluations completed in 2023, using the revised methodology applied by EVAL. The key question addressed was: “How effective are ILO projects in delivering Decent Work results?” and recommendations based on the findings will be formulated. Similarly to the latest meta-study covering 2022 evaluations, this study employed a calendar year-based approach.

REVIEW AND SCORING PROCESS

The framework used in the effectiveness review focuses on an ex-post performance rating based on findings of evaluation reports. Performance information related to a list of 29 criteria (see Figure 1) was obtained from the evaluation reports. The criteria cover elements related to strategic relevance and coherence and alignment; effectiveness, sustainability and impact; and operational and resource efficiency (in alignment with OECD-DAC recommended evaluation parameters), as well as areas of strategic interest to ILO.

FIGURE 22. PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES, WITH ASSOCIATED APPRAISAL CRITERIA

Strategic relevance and coherence	▶ Link between project purpose and/or objectives with P&B outcome ▶ Causal link between project objectives and DWCP outcome(s) ▶ Constituent support ▶ Validity of design/approach ▶ Consistency and contribution of the intervention to SDGs
Overall effectiveness	Achievement of outputs and outcomes: ▶ Quality and completeness of outputs ▶ Achievement of immediate objectives ▶ Promotion of cross-cutting areas: ▶ Pro-poor focus ▶ Gender-responsive ▶ Normative work / standards promotion ▶ Tripartite processes and social dialogue ▶ Disability inclusion ▶ Integration of just transition to environmental sustainability ▶ Other key types of ILO support/means to achieve results ▶ Knowledge development ▶ Capacity building ▶ Strategic relationships
Sustainability and impact	▶ Policy influence ▶ Strategic importance of results achieved ▶ Sustainability of policies, knowledge & capacities ▶ Acknowledgement and Use of ILO expertise and involvement ▶ Visibility and accessibility to knowledge and information

Overall efficiency

Operational efficiency:

Results-Based Management approach and goal orientation
Implementation management
ILO support to project
Internal ILO coordination
Monitoring and reporting
Resource efficiency:
Resource leveraging
Cost efficiency
Adequacy of resources

Performance categories used for this meta-analysis were composed of different pre-defined criteria (aligned with OECD-DAC recommended evaluation parameters), that were used to rate information from the evaluation reports, using a four-point scoring system, as presented below, with a rating of 4 representing the most successful performance. A matrix containing detailed descriptions of each level of scoring for each criterion was used for this meta-analysis. Based on limitations identified by the review team in a previous exercise, some of the rubrics associated with certain performance criteria were slightly modified in 2022, to make them more understandable for assessors, keeping in mind that comparability with previous years would be essential

FIGURE 23. FOUR-POINT SCORING SYSTEM

UNSUCCESSFUL	PARTLY SUCCESSFUL	SUCCESSFUL	HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL
▶ Rating of 1 ▶ Highly deficient performance	▶ Rating of 2 ▶ Basic level of performance but stated need for improvement	▶ Rating of 3 ▶ Adequate level of performance and results	▶ Rating of 4 ▶ Very good level of performance and results

Criteria with insufficient evidence received a score of '0' and were excluded in the quantitative analysis of performance. To achieve a top score of 4, evidence needed to justify all aspects of the criterion description.

Qualitative information was obtained from each evaluation report to present evidence and justification for the score of each performance criterion and to allow for more in-depth analysis. Both quantitative and qualitative results were entered in a master table in the form of an Excel spreadsheet, with information on project performance and the availability of performance information "coverage" for each criterion. This allowed for the information to be centralised and facilitated subsequent analysis of trends and differences in performance data.

ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

Evidence from all independent evaluation reports completed in 2023 was synthesized in the annual meta-study report. Qualitative data was used to provide narratives to support and explain the quantitative findings, and to deepen the thematic synthesis of trends, lessons learned and good practices from the meta-analysis. This also allowed to identify factors contributing to the most successful projects¹¹. As such, all findings are backed by evidence and analysis.

Drawing from insights presented in the i-eval Think Piece, No 23 (2023), the meta-study continued piloting the rating of each evaluation report using a composite weighted performance rating.¹² The report includes a specific section identifying trends in ILO's performance over the past three years (2021-2023), and a comparative assessment of performance based on Country Programme Outcomes (CPOs), aggregated by Policy or Enabling Outcomes (PO) and region was conducted to contribute to the ILO's Outcome-based Work planning exercise.

¹¹ Following the approach used in previous Effectiveness Reviews, this group of projects consists of projects with an average weighted effectiveness score of 75% or higher

¹² See Table 4 for the proposed weighting approach.

Comparative assessment of average weighted performance ratings of interventions evaluated in 2023

Each ILO intervention is linked to one or several Country Programme Outcomes (CPO), which contribute to Policy or Enabling Outcomes (PO). They are also linked to a region. Based on metadata provided by EVAL, CPOs were aggregated based on their associated PO, and region.

The quantitative analysis used weighted performance ratings of interventions linked to the same PO and region to provide an overview of average performance, based on key performance categories and sub-categories, such as overall performance, overall effectiveness, and sustainability and impact. Findings were supplemented by qualitative analysis, which drew from the individual assessments of the evaluated interventions.

Pilot approach: weighted performance

The use of weights to better assess performance was piloted by assigning weights to each criterion, based on values suggested in the 2022 Think Piece, and based on extensive experience reviewing these criteria in previous meta-analyses. The idea was to give more weight to the overall effectiveness category, and to “mature” criteria that were at the core of ILO’s work, such as normative work and the promotion of ILS, the use and promotion of tripartism and social dialogue, and the other key types of ILO support /means to achieve results, as well as the achievement of immediate objectives, sustainability of policies, knowledge and capacities.

The strategic importance of results achieved, cost efficiency, and adequacy of resources, as well as the link between project objectives and DWCP/CPOs, constituent support, and validity of design and policy influence were also important criteria in the weighted approach. While the other criteria are also important for evaluative assessments, they are not systematically addressed in evaluation reports, and some were only recently introduced as part of the meta-analysis criteria, therefore their maturity levels are lower.

TABLE 3. PILOTED WEIGHTS BY PERFORMANCE CATEGORY AND CRITERIA

Strategic relevance and coherence	15
▶ 1.1 Link between project purpose and/or objectives and P&B outcomes	1.5
▶ 1.2 Causal link between project objectives and DWCP outcomes/CPOs	4
▶ 1.3 Constituent support	4
▶ 1.4 Validity of design/approach	4
▶ 4.1 Consistency and contribution of the intervention to SDGs	1.5
Overall effectiveness	63
Achievement of outputs and outcomes	9
▶ 2.1 Quality and completeness of outputs	3
▶ 2.2 Achievement of immediate objectives	6
Cross-cutting policy areas	19
▶ 1.5 Pro-poor focus	2
▶ 1.6 Gender-responsiveness	3
▶ 2.5 Normative work / promotion of international labour standards	6
▶ 2.9 Tripartism and social dialogue	6
▶ 4.2 Disability inclusion	1
▶ 4.3 Integration of just transition to environmental sustainability	1

Other key types of ILO support / means to achieve results	18
▶ 2.3 Knowledge development	6
▶ 2.4 Capacity-building	6
▶ 2.8 Strategic relationships	6
Sustainability and impact	17
▶ 2.6 Policy influence	4
▶ 2.7 Strategic importance of results achieved	5
▶ 2.10 Sustainability of policies, knowledge & capacities	6
▶ 2.11 Acknowledgement and Use of ILO expertise and involvement	1
▶ 3.6 Visibility and accessibility to knowledge and information	1
Overall efficiency	22
Operational efficiency	11
▶ 3.1 Results-Based Management approach and goal orientation	2
▶ 3.2 Implementation management	2
▶ 3.3 ILO support to project	2
▶ 3.4 Internal ILO coordination	3
▶ 3.5 Monitoring and reporting,	2
Resource efficiency	11
▶ 2.12 Resource leveraging	1
▶ 3.7 Cost-efficiency	5
▶ 3.8 Adequacy of resources	5
TOTAL	117

When calculating weighted performance scores, ratings for individual criteria were multiplied by the weight factor and divided by 4 (highest possible rating).

Weighted performance for Category "N" = $((\text{rating for criteria 1} * \text{weight factor for criteria 1})/4) + ((\text{rating for criteria 2} * \text{weight factor for criteria 2})/4) + ((\text{rating for criteria 3} * \text{weight factor for criteria 3})/4) / (\text{total number of criteria for Category "N"})$

QUALITY ASSURANCE

For methodological robustness and quality assurance purposes, the two independent reviewers tested the Performance Appraisal template using the same report to determine shared understanding of the concepts defined in the rubrics, and to ensure inter-observer consistency and reliability. Each evaluation report was then appraised by the two independent reviewers (except for exceptional cases when agreed upon with the EVAL task manager), and ratings were compared and discussed, as relevant, to come up with a final rating for each report. Extreme cases were discussed with the EVAL task manager, as deemed appropriate.

LIMITATIONS

The main limitation concerns the extent and depth of information provided in the evaluation reports, which directly influenced the scoring process. In some cases, insufficient detail regarding certain criteria hindered the attribution of a top score, despite potentially different realities on the ground.

Two reports in the initial sample were not utilized in the scoring process, as they lacked coverage of many criteria and the evaluation type does not align with the scoring matrix (e.g., assessments of specific strategies or joint evaluations).

Scoring thematic, cluster or regional evaluations sometimes posed challenges when results varied across countries or areas. While it was possible to qualitatively highlight variations, quantitatively representing these differences was more difficult, potentially leading to misrepresentations of effectiveness and possibly diminishing the utility of results. This underscores the importance of combining quantitative results with a nuanced narrative, which is the approach used in these meta-studies. Additionally, overlapping criteria within a rubric may result in situations where one criterion is met, while others are absent, thereby influencing results. This was highlighted in the narrative discussion, as relevant.

